

Preempts and Jump Overcall - Requirements

The point-count and suit-length requirements for a preemptive bid are rather flexible:

0 to 10 HCP — although with 10 HCP you should prefer a one-bid if your hand qualifies.

At least a 6 card suit. No side 4 card major Q-x-x-x or better.

Playing Tricks

In order to determine when and how high to preempt it is necessary to estimate how many tricks your hand will win if your long suit is trumps. In some cases this requires only common sense:

1.

♠K Q J 10 7 5 4
♥8 3 2
♦3
♣7 3



Vul vs. NV _____

Equal Vul _____

NV vs. Vul _____

6 Tricks: Clearly you will win 6 tricks in your own hand if spades are trumps.

In other cases it requires a guess. The best procedure is to estimate how many tricks your *honor* cards will win, then add 1 additional trick for each card over 3 in any suit.:

2.

♠8
♥A Q 8 7 6 4 2
♦Q 8 6 2
♣3



Vul vs. NV _____

Equal Vul _____

NV vs. Vul _____

7 Tricks: You have two honor holdings to consider. The ♥A-Q is worth 1 1/2 tricks. The ♦Q may be worthless or it may win a trick so figure 1/2 trick. That's neat: 1 1/2 + 1/2 = 2 tricks. Add 4 more tricks for the heart length and 1 for the fourth diamond.

3.

♠9
♥10 3
♦Q J 10 8 5 3
♣J 8 4 2



Vul vs. NV _____

Equal Vul _____

NV vs. Vul _____

5 Tricks: The ♦Q-J-10 will win 1 trick; ignore the ♣J. Add 3 more tricks for the diamond length and 1 for the fourth club.

4.

Vul vs. NV _____

♠ 9 5 2

♥ —

♦ K 7 3

♣ K J 9 7 6 5 2



Equal Vul _____

NV vs. Vul _____

6 Tricks: It would be very unlucky if the ♣K-J-9 all lost to the A-Q-10 so figure 1 trick. The ♦K is more likely than not to provide a trick so take the optimistic view and count it. Add 4 more tricks for the club length.

Vulnerability

The primary consideration before making a preemptive bid is the vulnerability. The traditional practice is to overbid two tricks vulnerable or three tricks nonvulnerable. This “rule of 2 and 3” is simple, but it will not give your opponents many problems. The modern “rule of 2, 3 and 4” is far more effective:

Overbid *two* tricks at unfavorable vulnerability (vul. vs. not).

Overbid *three* tricks at equal vulnerability.

Overbid *four* tricks at favorable vulnerability (not vul. vs. vul.).

Universal Rule

A player who makes a preemptive bid surrenders the captaincy. Only his partner may continue bidding for his side. In other words:

Once you preempt *do not bid again* unless you are forced to do so by your partner.

Answers for bidding Examples 1-4 at each vulnerability situation:

1. Open 2 ♠ (a weak two-bid) at unfavorable; open 3 ♠ at equal; open 4 ♠ at favorable.
2. Open 3 ♥ at unfavorable; open 4 ♥ at equal or favorable (never preempt past game in your suit).
3. Pass at unfavorable or equal; open 3 ♦ at favorable.
4. Pass at unfavorable; open 3 ♣ at equal; open 4 ♣ at favorable.