



# Please! Stay Out of the Auction

## Competitive Bidding At Bridge

by  
Warren Watson  
of the  
Kootenay Jewel  
Bridge Club

Last Revised March 16th, 2014

Excerpts from the Latest Revision may be found at:  
<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/Workshops/StayOut-SP-notes.pdf>  
(copy the above address into your browser)



## CONTENTS

Contents .....	2
1.0 Introduction .....	5
2.0 Competition Over 1NT .....	6
2.1 Introduction .....	6
2.2 DONT .....	7
2.3 Cappelletti .....	8
2.4 Defense Against Weak Notrump .....	8
2.5 Bidding Over Interference .....	9
2.6 Run-out After One Notrump Doubled .....	10
2.7 Examples .....	11
3.0 Notrump Overcall .....	20
3.1 One Notrump Overcall .....	20
3.2 Notrump Overcall of a Weak Two .....	20
3.3 Penalty Doubles .....	21
3.4 New Suit at The Two-Level .....	21
3.5 Sandwich Bids .....	22
3.6 Examples .....	23
4.0 Doubles .....	32
4.1 Takeout Doubles .....	32
4.1.1 Requirements .....	32
4.1.2 Responding .....	32
4.1.3 Competing .....	33
4.1.4 New Suit at the Two-level .....	33



4.2 Negative Double .....	34
4.2.1 What is it? .....	34
4.2.2 Requirements .....	34
4.3 Penalty Conversion .....	34
4.4 Penalty Doubles .....	35
4.5 Examples .....	36
 5.0 Simple Overcall .....	45
5.1 One-level .....	45
5.2 Two-Level .....	45
5.3 Jump Overcall .....	46
5.4 The Cuebid .....	46
5.5 Examples .....	47
 6.0 Pre-empts .....	56
6.1 In general .....	56
6.2 Weak Two's .....	57
6.2.1 Opening .....	57
6.2.2 First or Second Seat .....	57
6.2.3 In Third seat .....	57
6.2.4 In Fourth seat .....	57
6.2.5 Ogust .....	58
6.2.6 Rule of 17 .....	58
6.3 Higher Pre-empts .....	59
6.3.1 Rule of 1,2,3 .....	59
6.3.2 Count Your losers .....	60
6.3.3 Responding: Count your cover cards .....	60
6.4 Competing Over Pre-empts .....	62
6.4.1 2NT Overcall .....	62
6.4.2 Direct Seat .....	62
6.4.3 Balancing Seat .....	62
6.5 Examples .....	63



7.0 Competitive Auctions .....	72
7.1 Bidding Ahead of Partner .....	72
7.2 Battlegrounds .....	72
7.2.1 One or Two Level .....	72
7.2.2 Three-Level .....	72
7.2.3 Five-Level .....	72
7.3 Balancing .....	73
7.4 Sacrifices .....	73
7.5 Bidding Over Sacrifice Bids .....	74
7.6 Third Seat Opening .....	76
7.7 Drury .....	76
7.8 Examples .....	77
8.0 Two-Suited Bids .....	86
8.1 Types .....	86
8.1.1 Direct Cuebid .....	86
8.1.2 Unusual .....	86
8.1.3 Sandwich .....	86
8.2 Requirements .....	86
8.3 Unusual versus Unusual .....	86
8.4 Other Cuebid Situations .....	87
8.5 Examples .....	88



## 1.0 Introduction

How often have you said to yourself:

"The bidding would have been so much better

had the opponents been quiet!"

Yes, competition does muddy the waters a little, but it is a fact of bridge. The best way is not to hope it does not happen but to prepare yourself for when it does happen.

Competition serves several purposes:

- to take away bidding room.
- to steal a part score auction
- to investigate whether a sacrifice is wise.
- to push you where you can be set.
- to help their defense with lead direction

Competition takes away bidding room and the availability of certain bids but it adds three new possibilities:

- Pass
- Double
- Cuebid

The following pamphlet gives a basic system that makes the best of competition.



## 4.0 Doubles

### 4.1 Takeout Doubles

#### 4.1.1 Requirements

To make an opening double, one must have the following:

- an opening hand (12 HCP's)
- shortness in the suit doubled
- three or four cards in the unbid suits
- suggests an absence of a five card major

**Rule of 2:** When one doubles, one does not have a difference in length of two between two unbid suits.

**Balancing (more in section 7.3):**

If partner is willing to bid or double if the auction is going to pass-out at a low level (balance), a player can pass instead of making a poor opening double or poor overcall.

#### 4.1.2 Responding

When partner makes an opening double, one must not pass unless one has ten points and good length in opponent's suit. (Another Rule of 22)

One cannot make a simple bid for a weak hand and a good hand.

W	N	E	South	South has:
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♦, 1♥, 1♠	0-7 points, 4-card suit
			1NT	8-10 HCP's and a stopper
			2♦, 2♥, 2♠	8-12, 4-card suit
			2♣	13+ or 8+ "you choose the major p"
			2NT	11-12 and a stopper
			3NT	13-15 and two stoppers



East has 0-5 points or 0-7 points with a flat hand and 4 ♣'s.

#### 4.1.3 Competing

W	N	E	South	South has:
1♣	Dbl	1♦	Pass	0-4 HCP's
			1♥, 1♠	8+ points, 4-card suit or 5+, 5-card suit and good side- fits with partner
			1NT	8-10 HCP's stoppers
			2♥, 2♠	8-12, 4-card suit
			2♣, 2♦	shortest suit, 13+ or 8+ "you choose the major p"
			2NT	11-12 and a stopper
			3NT	13-15 and two stoppers
W	N	E	S	East has:
1♣	Dbl	1♥	Pass	5 ♥'s or a good 4 ♥'s
1♣	Dbl	1NT		8-10 points, poor 4 card majors

#### 4.1.4 New Suit at the Two-level

W	N	E	S
1♠	Dbl	2♦	P

East would redouble with 10+ HCP's so 2♦ is just a good six card points and less than 10 points.



## 4.2 Negative Double

### 4.2.1 What is it?

Partner opens and opponent makes an overcall or a jump overcall.

W N E S

1♣ 1♠ Dbl

W N E S

1♣ 4♥ Dbl

### 4.2.2 Requirements

- One is weaker than making a free-bid
- One holds the unbid suits
- If partner will be forced to the two-level, the doubler only needs 6-9 points.
- If partner will be forced to the three-level, the doubler needs 10+ points.
- One can be slightly weaker after a jump overcall to be competitive.

## 4.3 Penalty Conversion

When partner makes a takeout double, one must take it out unless one has length and strength sufficient enough to convert the double to penalty by passing. One does not pass a takeout double because one is weak or one does not have a suit to bid. Sometimes a three-card suit must be bid.



## 4.4 Penalty Doubles

Penalty doubles are:

- usually at the three-level or higher
- not done over a low level in the pass-out seat
- doubles when you and your partner have found a fit
- done when opponents take you out of game with a sacrifice.
- When partner had a chance to make a negative double but either passed or bid No Trump.

Penalty doubles are not:

- Usually done at a person's first chance to bid.
- a repeated takeout double. When opponents bid so partner can pass, a second double just asks him to bid.
- The opponents should never be doubled for penalty at the one or two level in their eight-card or better fit.



## 4.5 Examples

### Example 19

South Dealer East West Vulnerable

♠ 654	♦ J103	♣ Q76
♥ 10987		
	♦ J103	
	♣ Q76	
♠ AQ32	♠ J87	
♥ AK54	♥ QJ63	
♦ 42	♦ K765	
♣ 1098	♣ A5	
	♠ K109	
	♥ 2	
	♦ AQ98	
	♣ KJ432	



<b>S</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>
1♦	Dbl	P	2♥

All Pass

**Opening Lead:** 2♣

**Result:** 2♥ E+1 +140

**Note:**

- East denies a full opener so West settles for a part score



## Example 20

West Dealer Both Vulnerable

♠AQ32  
 ♥AK54  
 ♦432  
 ♣109  
 ♠K10  
 ♥2  
 ♦AQ98  
 ♣KJ5432  
 ♠654  
 ♥J1098  
 ♦KJ10  
 ♣AQ7  
 ♠J987  
 ♥Q763  
 ♦765  
 ♣86

W	N	E	S
1♣	Dbl	Rdbl	1♥
P	P	1NT	P
2♣	All Pass		

Opening Lead: A

Result:  $2 \pm W+2$  +130

### Notes:

- East redoubles showing:
  - 10+ HCP's
  - all subsequent doubles will be penalty
  - West that he must give East a chance to double
- East's 1NT does not show 6-9 because it follows a redouble



## Example 22

East Dealer      East West Vulnerable

♠ QJ10  
 ♥ 109876  
 ♦ AKQ  
 ♣ J5

♠ 9876  
 ♥ 543  
 ♦ J43  
 ♣ 876

♠ K2  
 ♥ A2  
 ♦ 9876  
 ♣ AQ1094

N  
 W E  
 S

♠ A543  
 ♥ KQJ  
 ♦ 1052  
 ♣ K32

E	S	W	N
1♣	Dbl	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	3♥
P	3NT	P	4♥

Opening Lead: 9♦

Result: 4 N+1 +450

## Notes:

- North has a full opener so he cuebids ♣'s.
- South chooses his longer major and North bids again showing a full opener.
- South shows a club stopper and North assures South that having three ♥'s is fine.



## 6.0 Pre-empt

### 6.1 In General

We want to take away the bidding from the opponents when they have points and not your partner when he has points. Obviously, in first or second seat, you cannot tell, but you can be disciplined in case partner does have points.

Pre-empt are always less than 10 points including distribution (singletons and voids not doubletons). A first or second-seat pre-empt does not have a void. They are not done when two-suited especially an outside 4-card major in first or second seat.

You may have a bad ten high card points with 6-3-2-2. If you have a marginal weak two-you are not sure about it, pass with 3 cards or longer in any side major.

#### Rule of lengths:

- 6 cards pre-empt at the two-level
- 7 cards pre-empt at the three-level
- 8 cards pre-empt at the four-level
- 9 cards pre-empt at the five-level.

Most people follow these guidelines. They are roughly correct. I do not follow them however. People always ask me why I opened four with a seven-card suit or three with a six-card suit or two with a seven card suit.

It is because I use the Rule of 1,2,3. I count losers.



## 6.2 Weak Two's

### 6.2.1 Opening

2♦, 2♥, 2♠

A weak two is a descriptive bid. Partner will judge how valuable his points are depending on the fit with your long suit. If partner has a void or stiff in your pre-empt suit, he will consider himself warned to tread lightly.

### 6.2.2 In First or Second Seat

A weak two in first or second seat, shows:

- You will not make game opposite a minimum opening and a fit.  
I was playing against an expert and his mentee pre-empted. As he was putting down his cards, he kept repeating, "You better not have an opening hand." He had five points and 7-1-1-4 distribution. They made 6♦.
- a six card (sometimes five) suit
- three of the top five honours or better and
- 5 to 10 HCP's
  - A 10 point hand will be an ugly ten and perhaps 6-3-2-2 and perhaps not three of the other major.
- certainly not two-suited.
- no outside four-card major, no void

### 6.2.3 In Third Seat

- Could be five cards (QJ10xx or KJ10xx or better)
- Partner is a passed hand so all rules are off.
- It should be Qxxxxx or better and lead directive.

### 6.2.4 In Fourth Seat

- shows the expected length
- opening points 10-13



## 6.2.5 Ogust

With enough for game if partner has a maximum, one asks partner about his point count and the quality of his trump suit.

### Ranges:

Minimum range is 5-7 including distribution and maximum range is 8-9 including distribution. After a weak two in diamonds, one does not count distribution because the target is 3NT.

### Suit Quality:

A good suit contains two of the top three honours (not 3 of 5) and a bad suit does not.

### Ogust Responses:

2♠	2NT
3♣	minimum range, bad suit
3♦	minimum range, good suit
3♥	maximum range, bad suit
3♠	maximum range, good suit
3NT	AKQxxx

## 6.2.6 Rule of 17

When partner opens a weak two, add your high card points to the length of your support. If the total is 17 or more, you can go to the four-level with the expectation of making it. You should only count aces and kings and singletons and voids. You should use Ogust on the way.

Partner opened 2♠ in first seat, do you bid 4♠ with the following?

- a. ♠AQ ♥A543 ♦AJ32 ♣QJ5 Yes 15+2
- b. ♠QJ ♥QJ32 ♦KQJ3 ♣QJ3 No
- c. ♠AQ ♥AK6543 ♦A43 ♣52 Yes
- d. ♠AQ ♥AK654 ♦A43 ♣542 If partner is max
- d. ♠AJ3 ♥QJ54 ♦QJ3 ♣QJ2 No 2♠ may just make
- d. ♠A53 ♥K654 ♦AK3 ♣432 If partner is max
- d. ♠A432 ♥AK6542 ♦3 ♣42 Yes



## 6.3 Higher Pre-empts

### 6.3.1 Rule of 1,2,3

This rule is extremely important. It takes into consideration vulnerability. The principle is that when doubled you do not want to give opponents more than their game gives them. (this is all I remember)

Down Not vulnerable and doubled goes 100, 300, 500, 800, 1100, etc

Down Vulnerable and doubled goes 200, 500, 800, 1100, etc

#### **The 1 of the Rule of 123**

We are Vulnerable, they are not vulnerable (Hot versus Not)

They can get 400, 420, 430, etc so you do not want to give them 500 like I did last night. Not only that I made a phantom sacrifice. :-(  
You want to be down one or fewer doubled.

#### **The 2 of the Rule of 123 (Equal Vulnerability)**

##### **Both Not vulnerable**

They can get 400, 420, 430, etc so you do not want to give them 500.  
You want to be down two or fewer doubled.

##### **Both Vulnerable (Both Hot)**

They can get 600, 620, 630, etc so you do not want to give them 800.  
You want to be down two or fewer doubled.

#### **The 3 of the Rule of 123**

We are Not Vulnerable, they are vulnerable (Favourable Vulnerability)  
They can get 600, 620, 630, etc so you do not want to give them 800.  
You want to be down three or fewer doubled.



### 6.3.2 Count Your losers

Any suit can only have a maximum of three losers. You just count the missing honours (AKQ)

#### Three losers

Jxx      xxxxx      xxxx      xxxx      xxx

#### Two losers

Qx      Jx      xx      Qxx or Qxxx or Qxxxx, etc

Kxx or Kxxx or Kxxxx, etc      Axx or Axxx or Axxxx, etc

#### One loser

Q      K      Kx (guarded King)      Ax      x (stiff)

KQx or KQxx or KQxxx      AKx or AKxx or AKxxx

AQx or AQxx or AQxxx

#### Zero losers

--- (void)      A (stiff)      AK (frozen or tight)

AKQ or AKQx or AKQxx

### 6.3.3 Responding: Count your cover cards

When partner pre-empted, Queens and Jacks are not counted except for the queen of partner's pre-empt suit.

Cover cards are the aces and kings of the side suits and the top three trump honours (AKQ).

A stiff is one cover card effectively and a void is two.

To make the contract, you need enough cover cards to bring partner to even and then a cover card to raise each subsequent level.

You may further the pre-empt and still not give them more than their game by raising one level for each cover card you hold.



### Example 6.1

Partner opens three spades as above at favourable vulnerability and you hold:

♠Qxx    ♥Qxx    ♦AKxx    ♣Kxx

You hold 4 cover cards. Three to make up for partner being down 3 and one more to raise to 4♠.

Bid Game, 4♠.

### Example 6.2

Partner opens three spades as above at favourable vulnerability and you hold:

♠XXXX    ♥XXX    ♦XXXXX    ♣X

You have a stiff, one cover card. Bid 4♠ to further the pre-empt.

### Example 6.3

Partner opens 3♦, both vulnerable and you have:

♠Kxxx    ♥A    ♦643    ♣Kxxxx

You have four cover cards, counting the stiff.

Partner is down two in his own hand so you give him two cover cards and you have two more cover cards to raise to 5 with 100% expectation of making 5♦.

You can further the pre-empt for each of your four cover cards to 7♦ and not expect to give them more than 500. To be on the safe side you could have sacrificed at 6 diamonds.



## 6.4 Competing Over Pre-empt

### 6.4.1 2NT Overcall

Shows 15 to 18 balanced points and two stoppers in the opponent's weak two or Axx at the very least.

### 6.4.2 Direct Seat

One needs a little over opening points (14+) and shape. A needs 16 points without good shape.

### 6.4.3 Balancing Seat

One needs a little less than opening points if one has the correct shape to balance. With a stronger hand, one doubles.



## 6.5 Examples

### \*Example 37

North Dealer None Vulnerable

♠ AKQ10963  
 ♥ 432  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ 73

♠ J87  
 ♥ 95  
 ♦ AQJ109  
 ♣ K65

♠ 4  
 ♥ KQ108  
 ♦ 6543  
 ♣ AJ42

N E S W  
1♠ P 2♣ P  
4♠ All Pass

**Opening Lead:** 5♠  
**Result:** 4♠N= +420

## Notes:

- An opener is defined as a hand that makes game opposite what partner considers an opening.
- North makes game opposite an eleven count and a singleton trump.
- North is an opener.
- You should never pre-empt with North's hand and a pass is fairly disastrous. The auction will pass out.



## Example 39

South Dealer East West Vulnerable

♦87	
♥J1082	
♦K82	
♣AK98	
♠KQJ10432	♠A65
♥4	♥AK
♦543	♦QJ76
♣74	♣QJ65
	♠9
	♥Q97653
	♦A109
	♣1032

N  
W E  
S

S        W        N        E  
P        3♦        All Pass

Opening Lead:        AK♣ then 2♦

Result:                3♦S = +140

### Notes:

- East has 17 points but the Queens and Jacks are not too useful opposite a pre-empt and likely has two quick losers in both minors.
- On the opening lead, South plays the 2♣ showing an uneven number of clubs so North can cash one more club.
- On the second club, South plays the 3♣ asking for a diamond switch.



## Example 40

West Dealer Both Vulnerable

♠87  
♥KJ108  
♦A52  
♣K987

♠KQJ10432      ♠A65  
♥4      ♥A2  
♦Q43      ♦KJ108  
♣43      ♣A652

♠9  
♥Q97653  
♦976  
♣QJ10

Diagram showing the cardinal directions: North (N), South (S), East (E), and West (W) arranged in a circle.

W	N	E	S
3♠	P	4♠	All Pass

Opening Lead: 7♣

Result: 4♠ = +620

### Notes:

- East has 16 points, one less than the last example, but because the points are aces and kings, East raises to 4♠.
- North wants to establish his club trick and does not cash the A♦ because he does not have the king. It may set up opponent's side suit.



## Example 42

East Dealer    East West Vulnerable

♠K654		
♥QJ54		
♦Q2		
♣K87		
♠987	♠AQJ1032	
♥1098	♥76	
♦A109	♦876	
♣A654	♣32	
♠---		
♥AK32		
♦KJ543		
♣QJ109		



E	S	W	N
2♠	Dbl	P	4♥
All Pass			

Opening Lead: 7♥

Result: 4♥N+1 +450

### Notes:

- Declarer cashes AK♥. Declarer must kick on aces before drawing last round of trump.



## Example 44

West Dealer None Vulnerable

♠---  
♥AKQJ2  
♦AJ10872  
♣62

♠QJ109872      ♠AK65  
♥43      ♥765  
♦95      ♦KQ4  
♣A5      ♣743

♠43  
♥1098  
♦63  
♣KQJ1098



W	N	E	S
3♠	Dbl	P	4♣
P	4♦	P	4♥

All Pass

Opening Lead:

Q♠

Result:

4♥ = +420

### Notes:

- West is using length pre-empts. With Rule of 123, he should open 2♠.
- The bidding sequence is called equal level correction.
- 4♥ goes down if trump are 4-1



## Example 45

North Dealer East West Vulnerable

♠1098		
♥4		
♦AK10987		
♣654		
♠K6		♠A543
♥AJ1098		♥KQ32
♦4		♦Q32
♣J10987		♣Q2
	W N E S	
	\ /	
	\ /	
♠QJ72		
♥765		
♦J65		
♣AK3		

N	E	S	W
2♦	P!	P	2♥
P	3♦	P	3♥
P	4♥	All Pass	

Opening Lead: A♦ then 6♣

Result: 4♥S= +420

### Notes:

- North is not strong enough to take direct seat action.
- South can balance with around 10 points and good shape
- Under A♦, East will play lowest diamond to ask for a ♣ switch.