

110. Higher Pre-empts

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♠ 963
 ♥ A63
 ♦ 9
 ♣ AJ10985

♠ --- ♥ KQ109 ♦ KQJ864 ♣ K32		♠ K52 ♥ J875 ♦ A1032 ♣ Q4
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♠ AQJ10874
 ♥ 42
 ♦ 75
 ♣ 76

W	N	E	S
			3♠
Dbl	4♠	5♥	P
P	5♠	Dbl	All Pass

--East-West Vulnerable--

Pre-empting rules of thumb:

- You do not want to give opponents more than their game if doubled and down (Rule of 123).
- Weak two's are typically six card suits.
- Weak three's are typically seven card suits.
- Weak four's are eight card suits, etc.

Cover cards:

Cover cards are the aces and kings and the queen of trump. Count your cover cards, look at the vulnerability and subtract the number partner expects to be down. This is the number of levels the pre-empt can be raised. This is not an exact science because partner may be higher or lower than he should be. So if one is in the ballpark of slam, ask for keycards.

The bidding:

South with seven spades and less than ten points, opens three spades. West with 14 high card points, four hearts and a void in spades has enough to double in direct seat. North furthers the pre-empt with

four spades and East bids five hearts. North now bids five spades which gets doubled. North is not afraid of pushing them to slam because he has two bullets including the ace of hearts.

North is the captain and South cannot bid anymore. South will not know whether North is bidding to further the pre-empt at favourable vulnerability or based on values. In this auction, South has only the one bid of three spades.

The contract: Five spades by South doubled

The opening lead: The king of diamonds.

Since an opponent may be void in hearts, there is not a lot of future gain in leading hearts. Try a side suit instead.

The play:

West wins the king of diamonds and then switches to a heart. The defense will get a heart trick and a club trick before declarer can make discards on dummy's clubs. The defense will only get three tricks. This is an excellent sacrifice, because -100 is better than any part score in hearts and certainly better than a game in hearts.

The result: Five spades doubled down one for -100.

The alternate contract: Five hearts by East makes five.

South will lead trump and North will win the ace of hearts and looking at dummy's diamonds, he will cash the ace of clubs.

Note:

-Do you have a question or a hand of note that occurred at your bridge table? If yes, send it to me at warren.t.watson@gmail.com and I will answer it.

-To see the columns published in the Times, go to <http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/column.htm>.