Micro Bridge Lesson 37

Bidding over Pre-empts

Pre-empts are designed to make life difficult for the opponents. We must start our auctions at a higher level making the investigations tougher. On the plus side, they are advertising a *weak* hand with little defence. So, with the right shape, our risk is not great. It is important that our partnership has agreements on the meaning of our actions. Here are some common agreements which you and partner should consider.

1. All our doubles of 4S or higher are penalties. The level is just too high for 4-4 fits with bad breaks likely.
2. 2NT over their weak twos should be natural, 15 – 18 HCP with their suit stopped. Partner continues as for a 1NT overcall. It is suggested that we play "system off". *See Lesson 6.*
3. 3NT over their weak 2M and 3B should be natural, 19 – 20 HCP with their suit stopped.
4. Cue bid of their suit should be michaels. e.g. (3B) – 4B. It should be strong over their weak bids.
5. Overcalls should have the same requirements as a 2 level overcall over their opening 1B. i.e. Goodish 5 card suit, at least 10 HCP and few cards in their suit.
6. A takeout double in the immediate seat should be an opening hand with good shape. It is unwise to reduce it too much in the reopening seat. Your RHO may have a good hand and passed because of a misfit.
7. 4NT bids should be for the minors, strong.

Coping with enemy pre-emptive overcalls

Negative Free Bids (Lesson #8) are our *weak* responsive bids used when the opponents show a *good* hand. e.g. 1H – (2C) – ?
When they make a pre-emptive overcall, they are advertising a *weak* hand. Now, our responsive bids are *forcing*. A good guide for responder is:-

- New suits at the three level are forcing.
- When their bids are *weak*, our bids are *strong* and vice versa

Multi Two Bids (Lesson #29) have caused a rethink to defensive bidding.
When they open multi 2D, it is usually a weak 2M.

- New suits by us are overcalls of a weak 2M. Immediate action suggests a more pre-emptive suit.
- 2NT should be natural with both majors stopped.
- double should be 16+ with a one suited hand or 19+ and a plan

With many hands, you will want to pass. Remember, you *will* get another bid. Once the nature of the opening has been exposed, you can restart the auction as if they had opened a weak 2M. e.g.
(2D!) – P – (2H!) – P
(P!) – X
When opener, passes responder's 2H bid, it confirms that he holds a weak two in hearts. Now, our double should be a classic takeout double of a weak 2H. When we first looked at this hand and saw RHO's 2D bid, we were probably sure that it was a weak 2H. However, even with 4144 shape, it would be wrong to double immediately. Let them have their bid so that we can get our auction right.

- When they open a multi 2M (two suiter), use the same actions that you take over a weak 2M. i.e. Forget about their second suit – nothing's perfect.

Tempo. We are aware of the importance of trying to make our bids at the same speed. Otherwise, *partner's* bids can be scrutinized. Pre-emptive bids will interfere with this and you will be given tolerance, depending on the level of the bids involved. Whatever you do, don't go near the bidding slip until you have decided what you are going to write.

Your RHO has opened a weak 2H. What will you do with each of the following hands :-

♠AKT42 **Bid 2S.**
♥97 Sure, this is not a wonderful hand. However
♦K87 you may not get another chance
♣J65

♠J3 **Pass.**
♥QT87 Double is out because partner is almost
♦AK85 certain to bid spades. Not quite enough
♣A62 for 2NT in the immediate seat but would probably bid 2NT in the passout seat.

♠AK863 **3H.** Michaels – Spades + minor.
♥T Partner will bid 3NT to enquire which
♦AKQ42 minor that we hold.
♣86

♠K4 **Bid 3NT.**
♥AJ9 Yes, we could be a little stronger. However,
♦KQ73 the heart holding is better than it looks and
♣AJ72 we have no good alternative.

♠K4 **Double.** Then bid diamonds at the
♥7 cheapest level. Yes, partner will probably
♦AK8653 bid a lot of spades. However, our hand
♣AQJ6 looks too good for a simple overcall.

Your RHO has opened a Multi 2D. What will you do with each of the following hands.

♠72 **Pass.** Yes, you're fairly sure that it is a
♥AK98 weak 2S. If it turns out to be so, you can
♦A85 make a takeout double at your next bid.
♣K432

♠A74 **Bid 2NT.** You have both majors stopped
♥K94 and full values.
♦A84
♣AK87

♠9 **Bid 3D.** Partner will realize that this is
♥K7 natural over 2D! With a better hand, wait
♦AKT8642 until the next round of bidding. They
♣864 could have "game on".

♠A7 **Pass.** You can bid 3H next round if your
♥K9432 LHO makes no positive action.
♦A842
♣J9