

Ask Jerry



Well-known teacher and player **Jerry Helms** answers your bridge questions. Send your questions to "Ask Jerry," c/o Jerry Helms, 5000 Montclair Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28211.

Dear Jerry: Neither side was vulnerable and I was going to open 2♠ with this hand but the player on my right opened 2♥. So, I overcalled 2♠ instead. Was that all right?

—T. Denman
Omaha, NE

Dear T.D.: Although it's tempting to bid, I'd pass. There's nothing wrong with temptation but yielding to it by coming into the auction is unlikely to produce a good result. Partner will expect a stronger hand. The standard meaning of a two-level

overall in direct position is to show a hand with values. Bids should cater to the types of hand that come up most frequently, and stronger hands occur more often in this position at the table than the type of hand you want to describe.

Here's a useful phrase: "Don't preempt over an opponent's preempt." There shouldn't be two preemptive actions on the same deal by opposing sides. This is very general advice. Let's keep your hand the same but change the auction:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
4♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
		Pass	?

At this point, I'd be lured into bidding 4♠ with your hand. Partner would know I don't have a strong hand since I didn't come in over 2♥. I'm trying to avoid letting the opponents' weak 2♥ bid keep us out of a contract we might make. It's speculative, but a reasonable gamble. So the advice should probably be, "Don't preempt a preempt if you are in direct position with the preemptive bid on your right."

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♥	Pass	Pass	?

When the 2♥ bid is on your left, it would be quite reasonable to come into the auction with 2♠ on this hand. You're counting on some strength from partner who is likely to have some values but a hand unsuitable for coming into the auction in direct position, something like this:

♠	K 5
♥	K J 4
♦	J 8 6 4 2
♣	A 9 5

So, you had good instincts to want to bid. You just had to wait a little longer!
—JH ♣