

## HIGH LEVEL PREEMPTIVE OPENINGS

An opening bid of 4♥ or 4♠ in first or second seat shows a hand that is not good enough in high cards for an opening bid of one in the suit or for an opening bid of 4♣ or 4♦ (NAMYATS --see below). The hand will typically have five or six losers, depending on vulnerability. A side suit headed by KQ counts as one loser, even if there are one or more small cards in the suit. A void in the other major is okay, but a minor suit void is undesirable. In deciding on slam with a big hand, partner may consider that you could be void in a major, but not in a minor.

A preempt in second seat should be quite sound, since there is more of a likelihood that partner has a good hand.

In third or fourth seat the hand can have a little more defense, enough for an opening bid of one in first or second seat, provided that opener is quite sure there is no slam opposite a passed hand.

Opening bids of 5♣ or 5♦ are also preemptive, require an additional playing trick, and tend to deny adequate trump support for a major suit. They also deny opening bid values or a hand suitable for notrump play (e.g., AKQ suit).

### Responses to Game Bids

A response of 4♠ to an opening bid of 4♥ is natural, a signoff. The 4♠ bidder might have ten tricks in her own hand and a void in hearts, so opener must pass. All other new suit responses are asking bids (see section 6-5):

A raise of 4♠ to 5♠ or of 4♥ to 5♥ asks opener to bid six if his trumps are good: one loser at most, even with a singleton opposite.

A 4NT response is Roman Key Card Blackwood. See section 6-6 for responses to RKCB.

A response of 5NT is the Grand Slam Force (see section 6-4).

Opener	Responder
4♠	5♣/5♦/5♥ - asking bids
	4NT - Roman Key Card Blackwood
	5♠ - not invitational
	5NT - Grand Slam Force

A response of 5♦ to a 5♣ bid is also an asking bid, but a response of 5♥ or 5♠ to a 5♣ or 5♦ opening is natural.



## Opening Bids of 4♣ and 4♦ (NAMYATS)

These openings are artificial, showing a major suit preempt with fewer losers than a normal preempt: 4♣ shows hearts and 4♦ shows spades. The hand should have no more than four losers in top cards, except that the queen of trumps can be another potential loser. You can assume that finesses are possible, so AQJ is 1/2 loser, Kx is 1-1/2 losers. With three losers only, a forcing two bid is usually in order, but with fewer than five controls (ace 2, king 1) a 4♣ or 4♦ opening with ten tricks is acceptable.

In fact, these openings deny as many as five controls, and they deny having a void suit. Open one of a suit with five controls or a void, if the hand is not good enough in high cards for a strong two bid. A 7-4-1-1 hand is also undesirable for NAMYATS.

Typical hands for NAMYATS:

♠AKQ8732 ♥4 ♦KQJ ♣65

♠K3 ♥AQJ107654 ♦K3 ♣8

♠AKJ109732 ♥KQ ♦3 ♣75

♠KQJ1085432 ♥KQJ ♦3 ♣A

## Responses to NAMYATS

Responder knows that any ace will be worth a trick because opener cannot have a void. The king or queen of trumps is obviously worth 1/2 trick or more. Outside kings, even when accompanied by an ace, may not be of value. Twelve playing tricks will not produce a slam if the other side can take two tricks off the top. An outside singleton will not produce a ruffing trick if opener also has a singleton there.

With less than two key cards (aces, or king of trumps) responder signs off by bidding the next higher ranking suit. With two or more key cards (aces, or king of trumps), responder can employ Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB, see section 6-6) or show her hand by step bidding:

Opener	Responder
4♣	4♦ - signoff, one or no keys
	4♥ - two key cards
	4♠ - three key cards
	4NT - RKCB
	5♣ - four key cards

The "retransfer" signoff lets opener, who is likely to have more high cards to be led up to, play the hand. This supposed signoff may also be used as a device to get opener to bid his suit, prior to using RKCB. Responder should do this when she has no reason to play the hand (i.e., no tenace to protect):

Opener	Responder
4♣	4♦
4♥	4NT - RKCB

Opener	Responder
4♦	4♥ - signoff, one or no keys
	4♠ - two key cards
	4NT - RKCB
	5♣ - three key cards
	5♦ - four key cards

If opener jumps to five of his suit, or raises from four to five, he is asking about trumps:

Opener	Responder
4♦	4♠ - two key cards
5♠	Pass - bad spade holding
	6♠ - Q, xx, or better in trumps

Similarly, a jump by responder or non-competitive raise to five of opener's major asks about the trump queen, without which opener passes (unless he has nine trumps to the AKJ!).

Opener may have more problems than just key cards and trump holdings. What if responder has the wrong ace(s), or has the right ace(s) but no other cards to help out? For instance, responder shows two key cards and opener has ♠AKQJ1087 ♥KQJ ♦7 ♣32? If responder's two aces are red, there may be two club losers, but not if responder has KQ of clubs. If her two aces are in hearts and clubs, that is still only eleven tricks unless she has the king of clubs or heart length (and A432 is not good enough with a club lead). If responder shows three key cards (three aces, in this case), that is twelve tricks off the top. Is there a thirteenth? We may need some extra asking ability for these situations. We have two ways for opener to inquire further about responder's hand:

- 1) A 4NT bid by opener (not RKCB, since he knows about key cards from the response), or 5NT if the bidding is at the five level, states that all key cards are accounted for and asks responder how many quick tricks in side suits can be run from her hand, excluding aces. A club response shows none, diamonds one, etc. In doing this responder assumes that the ace of a suit will be played *first*, and that the partnership has all the aces (a prerequisite for the trick-asking bid). With a doubleton KQ responder counts just one playing trick (ace played first). The reason for this is that opener may have a doubleton or singleton ace. With KQx she counts two playing tricks, AKQJ as three, etc.
- 2) A new suit bid by opener (i.e., any suit other than his major) is an asking bid. See section 6-5, Asking Bids and Responses.

These methods may not solve opener's problems completely, but they should help.

## When The Opposition Intervenes

-- If the opening bid gets doubled naturally (i.e., either showing the suit, or for lead direction), responder bids exactly the same except that she passes with no controls and may not bid opener's suit (showing two key cards) with two fast losers in the doubled suit. Instead, she redoubles to show two key cards. A bid of opener's suit therefore not only shows two key cards, but also at least second round control of the doubled suit.

South	West	North
4♣	Dbl	Pass - no key cards
		Rdbl - two keys, no club control
		4♦ - one key card
		4♥ - two keys, club control
		4♠ - three key cards
		4NT - four key cards

The purpose of the redouble, of course, is to let the lead come up to opener's hand when responder lacks first or second round control of the doubled suit.

-- If the opening gets doubled conventionally to show a specific suit plus an unspecified suit (e.g., showing the "other major" plus diamonds), a bid of opener's suit requires not only two controls, but at least second round control of the doubler's known suit. Other calls have the same meaning as when the double is natural. If the double shows two specific suits, a redoubler may have control of one of the suits, but not both.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in the ranking suit, a pass shows no key cards, a double one key card, and other bids the same as over a pass.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in opener's suit, probably a Michaels cue bid:

South	West	North
4♣	4♥	Pass - no key cards
		Dbl - one key card
		4♠ - two key cards
		4NT - RKCB
		5♣ - three key cards
		5♦ - four key cards
		5♥ - preemptive, no key cards

The 4♥ bid was Alerted as showing spades plus a minor. The raise to five in competition is preemptive, not a query about trump quality.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in a suit higher than partner's suit, responder bids whatever she thinks is right. A double is for business.

### Opening Bids of Five in a Major

Opening bids of 5♥ or 5♠ show a hand that is solid except for the ace and king of trumps: ♠QJ108765 ♥AKQ ♦AKQ ♣ void. Partner bids six with one of the missing cards, seven with both. Lacking the ace or king of the suit opened, she must pass unless she can make slam in her own hand (e.g., 12 solid clubs and an outside loser).

### Opening Bids of Six in a Suit

These openings show a hand that is solid except for the ace or king of trumps: ♠KQJ108763 ♥ void ♦AKQ ♣AK. Partner raises with the missing high trump, otherwise passes.