

## 3 February

### Jumping around

Rakesh Kumar

If your right-hand opponent opens a weak 2H promising a 6-card suit, what will you do with this hand?

♠AQJ762  
♥5  
♦KQJT8  
♣Q

It's awkward, isn't it? You have a powerful 2-suiter but how do you tell partner? Things may not turn out well if you simply have to guess whether you are you better off in the major or the minor.

In fact there's a convention for hands like this – it's called leaping Michaels and involves the overcaller jumping to the 4-level in a minor suit. This promises at least 5/5 in the minor suit and the other major. It could be regarded as an extended version of Michaels cue bids, the difference being that you also promise strength, say a 5-loser or better hand.

Leaping Michaels would have worked perfectly on this deal from Wednesday 1 February:

<b>BD: 1</b>	♠4	<b>Dlr: N</b>			
	♥A83	<b>Vul: Nil</b>			
	♦A7652				
	♣T963				
♠KT853		♠9			
♥KQ9		♥JT7642			
♦3		♦94			
♣K852		♣AJ74			
	♠AQJ762				
	♥5				
	♦KQJT8				
	♣Q				
	♣♦♥♠	N			
		T			
N	6	3	1		8
S	6	3	1	11	6
E	3	4			15
W	3	4			

If South can show her/his hand by bidding 4D over East's weak 2H bid, reaching game is trivial – and 5D fares a lot better than 4S!

Did you like this idea? You can learn more about it, as well as about other variations that can be used over 3-level pre-emptive bids, in this [Bridgewebs article](#).



## 28 February

# Hamman's Law

Rakesh Kumar

The legendary American bridge player Bob Hamman is widely regarded as one of the greatest exponents of our game. He is also well known for what is sometimes referred to as Hamman's Law viz. "if you have a choice of reasonable bids and one of them is 3NT, then bid it".

Looking at the results from Monday 27 February, one might have concluded that many members of our club hadn't heard of Hamman's Law. Of the 28 boards played, there were at least 7 where 3NT was a reasonable contract and would make. However, on four of them, rather less than half the field played in 3NT.

Below is one of those boards – only 4 of 13 pairs reached 3NT this time. One of those pairs – Fiona Khoo and Margaret Malcolm – played against us. They bid and made the game to earn 83% on the board, giving us a correspondingly poor score.

How should you bid on this deal? I liked their auction – 1C-1D, 1H-1NT, 2NT-3NT. This sequence conveyed East's shape and indicated some 16-17 hcp. With a maximum 1NT rebid, a club fit and a sure stopper in spades, West was happy to continue to game, which cannot be beaten.

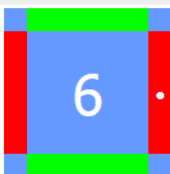
**Optimum:**  
EW 3N+1; -430  
LoTT: 16-17 = -1

♠ 8 7 4 2  
♥ 8 7 4 2  
♦ J 10 3  
♣ A 10

Bridge Solver Online:  
John Goacher

Double Dummy Solver Module:  
Bo Haglund

♠ A 3  
♥ K 10 9  
♦ Q 9 4 2  
♣ 9 8 4 2



♠ K J 5  
♥ Q J 6 3  
♦ A  
♣ K Q 6 5 3

9      5      16  
10

♠ Q 10 9 6  
♥ A 5  
♦ K 8 7 6 5  
♣ J 7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	2	4	1	4
W	4	1	4	1	4

Have a look at the deal and their auction. Would you have got there? Or would you have languished in a part-score in clubs or notrump, as so many others did? If the latter, perhaps you need to take another look at your bidding methods and be a bit braver when you next sit down ...



## 8 March

### An Iredale endplay

Rakesh Kumar

The first session of the Iredale Teams on Wednesday 1 March featured quite a few interesting deals. I'd like to focus on one that illustrates a relatively simple approach to avoiding a guess – an endplay.

On this board, a fairly normal auction might have been 2H-Pass-4H-All Pass. As you can see, this contract should make, while East-West have a cheap non-vulnerable sacrifice available in diamonds, but are never going to find it.

North D V

♠ K J 10  
♥ Q J 8 7 3 2  
♦ 9  
♣ Q 9 5

West NV East NV

♠ Q 8 7 3  
♥ 5  
♦ A K J 10 4  
♣ J 4 2

♠ 6 4 2  
♥ 9 4  
♦ Q 7 5 2  
♣ K 10 8 7

South V

♠ A 9 5  
♥ A K 10 6  
♦ 8 6 3  
♣ A 6 3

HCPs

9  
11 5  
15

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
North	1	-	4	1	2
South	-	-	4	1	2
East	-	2	-	-	-
West	-	2	-	-	-

Anyway, here you are as declarer in 4H by North. Taking 10 tricks is child's play if East leads a spade or a club, which happened at 4 of the 7 tables. However, what if East finds a diamond lead, as happened at our table? There are no losers in trumps and only one in diamonds, but there are potentially 2 losers in clubs, as well as a spade loser if declarer doesn't manage to find the queen – that would mean the contract would go one down.

As it happens, there's a simple solution to that problem – make the defenders play the spade suit for you! The way to do that is to ruff the diamond continuation, draw two rounds of trumps finishing in dummy, then ruff the last diamond in hand. This eliminates diamonds from both hands. Now when you play a club to the ace and a club back, the bad news is that no king appears on your right and your queen of clubs doesn't survive. The good news, though, is that while East-West can cash one more club trick, they are now stuck.

Think about it: if East plays back ♣10 and holds the next trick, she must lead a spade into your ♠KJ10 while if West wins with ♣J, on the spade return you insert ♠10 and it takes the trick. The defenders cannot play a fourth round of clubs or diamonds, as this would allow you to ruff in one hand while discarding a spade from the other, after which ♠A, ♠K and a ruff takes care of the spade loser.

Every time you have enough trumps between your hand and dummy, you should try to avoid taking a finesse in one suit if you can ruff out another and exit in a third while exhausting that suit. This sort of endplay is quite simple to effect and saves a lot of guessing!



*15 March*

## Opening lead headaches

Rakesh Kumar

The opening lead (and partner's interpretation of it) can often determine the outcome on a deal. When playing for matchpoints, a poor (or unfortunate) opening lead may give away a crucial overtrick. Playing for IMPs, the opening lead can make or break a borderline game contract – and such contracts get bid with much greater frequency at IMPs because of the much greater reward for the risk!

So it was in the IMPs session on Monday 13 March, one of two qualifying sessions for the Country Teams. Consider your opening lead with this hand:

♠ Q J 9 3  
♥ A 5 2  
♦ A 10 9 4 3  
♣ 4

With both sides vulnerable, your left-hand opponent (LHO) dealt and opened 1H. Partner passed and RHO responded 1S. You decided to keep quiet and now LHO bid 2D. Partner remained silent, RHO rebid 2NT and LHO, after a moment's thought, raised this to 3NT.

That auction certainly sounded like another push to a thin game, looking for the vulnerable game bonus ... but what are you going to do? Dummy has hearts and diamonds, declarer has spades and surely has clubs stopped. If you lead a club you might finesse partner's holding; if you lead a diamond or a spade you might give the opposition a gift; if you lead a heart and dummy has a good suit, that won't work too well either. It's a headache.

I'm not suggesting there is a guaranteed cure for this type of headache, but when nothing stands out as an opening lead, it's often a reasonable choice to lead dummy's second suit, irrespective of what you hold. Here's the full deal – you are sitting East.

**Optimum:**  
**NS 1C+3; +130**  
 LoTT: 16-17 = -1

**Bridge Solver Online:**  
 John Goacher  
 Double Dummy Solver Module:  
 Bo Haglund

♠ 8 7 5 2 ♥ J 7 6 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ Q J 7	♠ A K 10 4 ♥ 8 ♦ J 5 ♣ K 10 6 5 3 2	♠ Q J 9 3 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ A 10 9 4 3 ♣ 4																														
	23																															
	♠ 6 ♥ K Q 10 9 4 ♦ K 7 6 2 ♣ A 9 8																															
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	4	1	2	1	1	S	4	1	2	1	1	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																											
N	4	1	2	1	1																											
S	4	1	2	1	1																											
E	-	-	-	-	-																											
W	-	-	-	-	-																											

Why does leading dummy's second suit make sense even when you have a poor holding? Well, if you have nothing much, partner may have something and may even have a lot – and whatever partner has will be sitting over dummy's honours. Of course this time around, you have plenty in the suit, so you might just lead diamonds on the grounds that it's your longest suit and if partner isn't completely destitute, the outcome could be good.

Having selected a diamond, which card will you lead? From AJ10 or KJ10 combinations, if playing standard leads the universal recommendation is the top of your internal sequence against a notrump contract i.e. the jack in both cases. From A109 or K109 there is less agreement about what's best. Personally I never lead the 10 from such holdings – it is often wasted. Instead I just try leading my fourth highest card and hoping that partner has at least one fitting honour.

That approach would have worked out well this time – on the lead of a low diamond, declarer goes two down. Leading the 10 or 9 of diamonds will also set the contract, but on any other lead, 3NT makes!



23 March

## A fascinating deal ...

Rakesh Kumar

On Wednesday 22 March, this really interesting board turned up:

<b>BD: 6</b>	♠J7642	<b>Dlr: E</b>
	♥T842	<b>Vul: EW</b>
	♦J6	
	♣86	
♠8		♠AKQ53
♥AKQJ		♥76
♦KQT983		♦A2
♣Q2		♣9543
	♠T9	
	♥953	
	♦754	
	♣AKJT7	
	♣♦♥♠	N
		T
N		2
S		17 13
E	2 5 4 3 2	8
W	2 5 4 3 2	

Of course East opens the bidding with 1S. Should South do anything other than pass? It's a good question: a 2C overcall normally promises at least a good 9-10 hcp and a suit of reasonable quality (length + honours = at least 8 for the 2-level) and this 5332 hand falls short of those requirements. Then again at matchpoints, when not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents, it does no harm to give partner a bit of help with finding the best opening lead if West becomes the declarer. At our table, Luisa Hall did overcall – and that made things tricky for our side.

West's first bid is easy enough, though – 2D is forcing and might elicit something useful from partner. However, this actually puts partner in an awkward situation and she has no choice but to rebid 2S, even without extra length in the suit. When the bidding returns to West, what's the most appropriate action now?

Well, partner has denied 4 hearts and the best bet for game is 3NT if she has a club stopper – so West should bid 3C to ask for one. However, 9xxx does not a stopper make, so partner is again struggling to find a good rebid. The least bad is 3D – this delayed support should imply a holding such as a doubleton honour.

At this point West, knowing that the club suit is a threat and hoping that partner's diamond holding is Ax, can bid 5D. Unsurprisingly, North leads ♣8 and South cashes the ace and king, dropping declarer's ♣Q.

What now for the defence? Well, a third round of clubs makes life very difficult for West, because s/he cannot afford to ruff with ♦8 as this might be over-ruffed by the jack, while ruffing high might promote a trump trick for a 3-carder jack in either hand.

There's only one remaining hope for West – ruff high, cash the other two top diamond honours and hope that the jack drops doubleton. It does – phew!

A fascinating deal in terms of bidding, defence and declarer play ...



6 April

## Staying out of trouble

Rakesh Kumar

As dealer, partner opens 1H and you hold:

♠A  
♥QJT973  
♦Q2  
♣AKT2

Are you excited? Now your right-hand opponent overcalls 1S. What will you do?

Clearly you have slam prospects – partner's opening bid is typically a 7-loser or better hand, you have a 5-loser hand and loser count arithmetic suggests  $24 - (7+5) = 12$  tricks possible so you need to investigate. There's one catch, however – you have 2 potential losers in diamonds. What should you do at this point?

One possible approach is to just bid 4NT Roman Keycard Blackwood. This will work out fine if partner shows 1 keycard (you stop in 5H) or 3 keycards (you bid slam without further thought – or maybe you *should* think, because 7H might be making). But what if partner shows 2 keycards? If partner has ♥AK and also has ♦K, all will be well in 6H. Otherwise, however, there might be two quick losers ...

The full deal, from Wednesday 5 April, is overleaf. Three North-South pairs stormed into 6H and duly went down. Four stopped in 4H and 3 of those made 12 tricks!



<b>BD: 17</b>	♠KJ87	<b>Dlr: N</b>		
	♥AK862	<b>Vul: Nil</b>		
	♦T5			
	♣63			
♠T64		♠Q9532		
♥5		♥4		
♦K984		♦AJ763		
♣Q9875		♣J4		
	♠A			
	♥QJT973			
	♦Q2			
	♣AKT2			
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠	N		
		T		
N	1	5	2	11
S	1	5	2	5 8
E	1	1		16
W	1	1		

The important questions for you as South are (1) how do you find out if partner has a minimum or better-than-minimum hand? (2) how do you find out if partner can prevent the loss of 2 quick diamond tricks?

The answer to the first question is quite simple: you bid 2S over RHO's 1S overcall (note that this would also apply if RHO had bid 2H as a Michaels cue bid, because the overcall would show spades). The cue raise promises support for partner's suit, invitational-plus values and requires partner to rebid at the cheapest level with a minimum hand or to jump to game with a better hand. What's a better hand? You are promising an 8-loser or better hand (you actually have a much better hand!) so partner should jump to game with any 6-loser hand because  $24 - (8+6) = 10$ .

On this deal, partner will rebid 3H as she has only a 7-loser hand. What now? You won't stop below game, of course, but can you get some more information, in particular an answer to the second question?

Let me introduce you to the value of control bidding for slams. Here are 3 important concepts you need to get your head around:

1. In a game-going auction in which you have agreed on the trump suit, a bid of a new suit shows a control in that suit and indicates slam interest.
2. You can show either a first-round control (ace or void) or a second-round control (king or singleton).
3. When partner makes a control bid, if there is room below game level for you to show your cheapest control in an outside suit, you must do so.

Thus, for example, if you are in a game-forcing auction and have agreed spades, if partner now bids 4C she is indicating interest in slam and showing a control in clubs. She is also asking you to bid the lowest-ranking suit in which you have a control. So if you have the  $\spadesuit$  K you should bid 4D; if you don't have the ace, king or a shortage in diamonds but do have  $\heartsuit$  A you bid 4H (note that skipping a suit denies a control there) and if you don't have a control in either suit then you have to just rebid 4S (even if you also have a control in clubs, you don't bid 5C).

So on this deal, after partner rebids 3H you can bid 4C, which forces to game, shows slam interest and promises a control in that suit. Effectively you are also asking partner to show a control in diamonds if she has one. When she denies this by rebidding 4H, you know it's time to stop (had she bid 4D, you could *now* bid 4NT Roman Keycard Blackwood).

Why would you make a 4C control bid rather than bid 3S, as that is your cheapest control? Well, if partner holds e.g. KJxx-AKxxx-Jxx-x then *she* will make a 4C control bid (showing the singleton) and you will be none the wiser. Control bidding requires some judgement to ensure that you are asking the right question!



15 April

## How high will you dare?

Rakesh Kumar

Playing IMPs, you are pick up this shapely collection:

♠  
♥ K93  
♦ AKT9  
♣ J97432

The opponents are vulnerable and you are not. Your RHO is the dealer and opens 2S, described as weak and typically a 6-card suit. What will you do?

This is a somewhat awkward hand. You have good shape and reasonable high card strength so need to get into the auction, but you have only 3 cards in hearts, while that club suit is utterly unfit for a 3-level overcall. Not easy, but there is no law against partner having 5 hearts, so I would prefer to double. Something good might happen.

Your LHO jumps to 4S and, rather to your surprise, partner bids 5D! RHO passes, as do you, but LHO goes on to 5S, which is passed back to you. What, if anything, will you do now?

Well, as I said, it's IMPs. Partner obviously has considerable shape and at least a 6-card diamond suit to have bid as high as he did. Equally obviously partner probably doesn't have much high card strength and it's likely that 5S will make – certainly your LHO seems to be bidding with the intention of making. So a penalty double is out. Should you bid 6D as a sacrifice? Will it push the opponents into a making 6S?

There have never been any rewards for timidity in the bidding – I think 6D is a standout. This was the full deal, from the Swiss Pairs on Saturday 15 April:

<b>BD: 12</b>	<b>♠KQ6432</b>	<b>Dlr: W</b>	
	<b>♥842</b>	<b>Vul: N-S</b>	
	<b>♦2</b>		
	<b>♣Q65</b>		
<b>♠85</b>		<b>♠</b>	
<b>♥JT76</b>		<b>♥K93</b>	
<b>♦QJ86543</b>		<b>♦AKT9</b>	
<b>♣</b>		<b>♣J97432</b>	
	<b>♠AJT97</b>		
	<b>♥AQ5</b>		
	<b>♦7</b>		
	<b>♣AKT8</b>		
	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠	N	
		T	
N	3 - - 4 -		7
S	3 - - 5 - 4		11
E	- 5 - - -		18
W	- 5 - - -		

It turns out that 6D is only one down (losing just two heart tricks) while 5S is cold except on the double-dummy defence of leading a club for partner to ruff, getting back in with ♦A and then leading another club.

Of course if the opponents take the push to 6S and you lead ♦A, a club switch seems fairly obvious and you will take that contract down.

In the event, at three tables East-West were allowed to play in 5D, doubled on two occasions. At another three tables North-South were allowed to play in 4S. The par result is 6Dx going one down for -100. Remarkably, this was never achieved, as the only pair who saved in 6D were not doubled. However, everyone made 11 tricks no matter what contract they played:

Contract	Lead	Tricks
6♦ W	KS	11
4♠ N	AD	11
5♦X W	KS	11
5♠ N	KD	11
6♠ N	AD	11
4♠ N	AD	11
5♦ W	KS	11
5♦X W	KS	11
5♠ S	6H	11
4♠ N	AD	11

There's no doubt it can be a strange game some (most?) days ...



21 April

## Opportunity missed

Rakesh Kumar

With both sides vulnerable, you open 1D after 2 passes, holding:

♠7  
♥AT  
♦KQJT932  
♣Q54

The opponents display little respect for your opening hand: LHO overcalls 1H, RHO shows a game-invitational hand with support and LHO promptly bids 4H. Partner leads ♦8 and you see this dummy:

♠K642  
♥J53  
♦74  
♣AKT3

♠7  
♥AT  
♦KQJT932  
♣Q54

What can you work out about the diamond suit? That's easy – partner has led the highest outstanding card other than the ace, so she has either a singleton or a doubleton, with the latter being much more likely after LHO's raise to game. If that's so, declarer has  $\heartsuit Ax$  and you will only take one trick in diamonds. Anyway, you overtake with  $\heartsuit 9$  but are unsurprised when declarer wins the ace.

What, then, are your defensive prospects? Not very good, really – the heart ace, of course, and hopefully the  $\clubsuit Q$  as well, but that still comes to only 3 tricks. Partner is likely to have very little by way of high cards, so perhaps you can't defeat their game.

At trick 2, declarer leads  $\heartsuit 4$  to the jack and you take your ace. You cash  $\heartsuit K$ , all following. So diamonds were indeed 7-2-2-2 around the table and it seems there is no point in returning another one for partner to ruff, as declarer has no more diamonds either.

But is that right? Declarer might not have realised you have a 7-card suit and if she fails to ruff high, or discards in another suit for dummy to ruff, partner could win a trump trick. However, that's playing for declarer to make a mistake – in fact she can work out the 7-2-2-2 distribution for herself if she believes that partner's lead was from a doubleton.

There's one other reason for returning another diamond, however – it is just possible that declarer has a 5-card heart suit and that partner started with  $\heartsuit 9xx$ . If so, when you return  $\heartsuit Q$ , if declarer ruffs with  $\heartsuit K$  or  $\heartsuit Q$  then partner's  $\heartsuit 9$  will become the setting trick! Achieving a trump promotion would be excellent defence. Returning your singleton spade instead, hoping for partner to hold  $\spadesuit A$  to give you a ruff, would no be sensible. That would require LHO to have raised to game with only 13 hcp and no particular distributional values, which doesn't seem likely.

This was the full deal, from Monday 17 April, now in its correct orientation:

<b>BD: 7</b>	$\spadesuit 7$	<b>Dlr: S</b>
	$\heartsuit AT$	<b>Vul: ALL</b>
	$\heartsuit KQJT932$	
	$\clubsuit Q54$	
$\spadesuit K642$		$\spadesuit AJ$
$\heartsuit J53$		$\heartsuit KQ864$
$\heartsuit 74$		$\heartsuit A5$
$\clubsuit AKT3$		$\clubsuit J876$
	$\spadesuit QT9853$	
	$\heartsuit 972$	
	$\heartsuit 86$	
	$\clubsuit 92$	

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N	
					T	
N	1					12
S	1				11	15
E	4	4	1			2
W	4	4	1			

No, I didn't have the good sense to return another diamond – as you can see, partner did indeed have the necessary holding of ♥9xx. That was truly a missed opportunity.

But wait – the table of makeable contracts suggests that 4H should never go down. How come? Well, it's counter-intuitive, but declarer needs to start on trumps by playing a *high* heart from her hand, keeping the jack in dummy. Now declarer can discard on the diamond return and if South ruffs with ♥7 or 9, dummy can over-ruff. No trump promotion!

Since almost everyone made 10 (or even 11) tricks in hearts on this board, either I wasn't alone in failing to return a third round of diamonds or the rest of the room was filled with really sharp declarers who played ♥K or Q from hand at trick two ...



*27 April*

## Cue bids when the opponents overcall

Rakesh Kumar

Playing matchpoint pairs, as dealer at favourable vulnerability your partner opens 1C (whether promising 2+ or 3+ cards really doesn't matter for this discussion) and your RHO overcalls 1H. You hold:

♠K74  
♥A3  
♦K9  
♣K86532

What are you going to do? Opposite anything but a shabby minimum opening you surely have enough for game. However, opposite a minimum you might not have quite enough for 5C. In any case, you probably do not want to play in 5C at matchpoints, when you might be able to make 3NT with less effort, as the long clubs are surely a source of tricks. Ten tricks in 3NT would be a better score than 11 (or even 12) tricks in 5C.

Then again, for you to bid some number of notrumps with just ♥A as a stopper would be most unwise – the opponents might take 5 or 6 tricks before your 9 tricks are set up. What you really need is to be able to ask partner whether she has a stopper in hearts. Moreover, even if her holding is no better than ♥Qxx, it would be preferable to have a notrump contract declared from her side of the table, so that the overcaller is on lead. How can you achieve that?

The answer is to bid the opponent's suit to ask for a stopper. If you bid 2H and partner bids 2NT, you can happily raise to 3NT. If partner bids anything else, you can assume she has all her values outside hearts, which would work in favour of bidding 5C – you might then simply jump to game and hope for the best.

This was the deal, from Wednesday 26 April:

<b>BD: 15</b>	♠A953	<b>Dlr: S</b>		
	♥Q9652	<b>Vul: NS</b>		
	♦Q2			
	♣A4			
♠QT		♠K74		
♥KT87		♥A3		
♦A76		♦K9		
♣QJ97		♣K86532		
	♠J862			
	♥J4			
	♦JT8543			
	♣T			
	♣♦♥♠	N		
		T		
N	1			12
S	1	1		12 13
E	5	1	4	3
W	5	1	4	

As you can see, East-West are cold for 10 tricks in notrumps and 3NT would easily be reached if the auction began 1C-(1H)-2H. Yet this was the table of results:

			Score	
Contract	Lead	Tricks	NS	EW
1NT E	JH	9		150
4♣ W	5H	11		150
3♣ W	5H	11		150
3♣ E	4H	11		150
3♣ W	2H	11		150
3♣ W	AS	11		150
3♣ W	9S	11		150

No one reached 3NT! That's disappointing ...

But wait ... there is more to this topic. Cue bidding the opponent's suit as a two-way bid, either asking for a stopper or possibly showing support for opener's suit, only applies when opener has bid a *minor* i.e. 1C or 1D. When your partnership has strength/length in a minor suit, playing in 3NT should always be a consideration.

However, modern competitive bidding has abandoned the use of the cue bid to ask for a stopper after partner's major suit opening is overcalled – instead the cue bid shows a good raise. So 1H-(2C)-3C is a good raise to 3H, which allows 1H-(2C)-3H to become a pre-emptive raise with a weak hand and 4-card support. That approach is consistent with the so-called Law of Total Tricks.

You and your partner need to make sure you are on the same wavelength about what a cue of the opponent's suit means. You also need to be clear about the difference in the use of cue bids over partner's major and minor suit openings.

