

BIDDING IN 4TH SEAT

Arasu's Questions :

Q-1) about Fourth seat opening (P-P-P-?), though some guidelines are there, enough study materials is not available. What do you suggest for fourth seat opening?

Q-2) How do find a bridge player 'In-form' or 'out of form' ?

Sridhar's Views :

Dear Mr. Arasu,

Q 1 : Yes , you are right that bidding in 4th seat is relatively less covered in books . However, there are some popular principles which may interest you :

- (a) In case you hold a hand that is in the Minimum range of HCP(10 to 12 Hcp), then the No of spades added to the HCP is counted and if it exceeds 15 then it is an opening bid , else no. To illustrate KQXXX,AQ10X,XXX,X --- there are 5 spades and 11 hcp, totaling to 16 and hence it is an opening bid ; however X, AQ10X,XXX,KQXXX- here there are 11 HCP and 1 spade totaling to 12 , so you should consider passing out , the logic being if opponents hold spades they may be able to compete comfortably to say 2S and make it too , then you would have opened the door for them to bid when they had already passed .
- (b) Since the opponents have passed , there is no need for PREEMPTS ; hence the normal preemptive bids in your system should represent different meanings - the weak 2 opening (2D / 2H / 2S) should now represent a SOUND opening hand with a GOOD ONE SUITOR hand ; eg you can open 2S with KQJXXX, AX, KX,XXX - it basically tells partner that you have a hand which can play only in your suit and you have very little support for other suits that Partner may seek a fit for. Do NOT open 2S in 4th seat with KQJXXX,XX,XX,XXX ! The 3 Bids can now represent a Solid suit with an outside card eg Open 3C in 4th seat with XX,KX,XX,AKQ10XXX , so that partner can bid 3N with 2 aces OR pass your 3C .
- (c) In general make SOUND opening bids in 4th seat , light shapely hands that contain Spades can be considered subject to the guidance in point (a).
- (d) All other systemic bids remain unaltered.

Q 2 : 'In form ' and ' out of form ' are popular terms in every sports and Bridge is no different . Basically it refers to how close to one's potential one is playing(in form) OR how far away from his potential he is playing (out of form) at any given point in time .

Let me illustrate with examples : Normally we expect K.R Venkatraman to win the TNSC pairs event every Tuesday ; if he finishes 5th on a particular day , I would conclude he was ' out of form' that day. On the contrary , if an inexperienced player , who is expected to finish at the lower half of the rankings, finishes half way (say 6th in a field of 12 pairs), I would say he was ' inform' that day. Zia has written an excellent book which contains a detailed chapter on this subject , where he has elaborated on Heat 1 , Heat 2 and heat 3 levels of play ; I recommend you to read that for more insight on this topic.

However , you must bear in mind that Bridge is essentially a Partnership game and scope for individual brilliance is limited ; hence what is written above must be read in this context.