

Third Hand Actions OR Action in 3rd Seat

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“It’s a bidder’s game, and bidders have more fun!” – Jeff Meckstroth

It is also a game of mistakes, and the winners are not the ones who make no mistakes, they are the ones who make the fewest mistakes. Good players or even average players don’t always make mistakes on their own, you have to help them out, steer them a bit, and nudge them off the path.

Any hand you would open in 1st or 2nd seat will almost certainly be opened in 3rd. You might open light in 3rd for many reasons, but you should be aware of the risks vs. rewards. In all cases opening light must have some reason behind it. Lead direction and stealing bidding room are two common reasons.

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| ♠ KQJT5 ♥ AQ6 ♦ 654 ♣ 83 | - Everyone would open in 1 st or 2 nd |
| ♠ KQJT5 ♥ AJ6 ♦ 654 ♣ 83 | - Probably a hand most would open in 1 st or 2 nd |
| ♠ KQJT5 ♥ KJ6 ♦ 654 ♣ 83 | - A hand most would pass in 1 st or 2 nd ; but open in 3 rd |
| ♠ KQJT5 ♥ QJ6 ♦ 654 ♣ 83 | - A hand most would pass in 1 st or 2 nd ; but open in 3 rd |
| ♠ KQJT5 ♥ QT6 ♦ 654 ♣ 83 | - Most would pass in 1 st or 2 nd ; but some open in 3 rd |
| ♠ KQJT5 ♥ J65 ♦ 654 ♣ 83 | - Most would pass in 1 st or 2 nd ; but some open in 3 rd ,
but is this a light opener, a semi-psyche or a psyche? |
| ♠ KQJ5 ♥ J65 ♦ 9654 ♣ 83 | - Is this a light opener, a semi-psyche or a psyche? |

Pre-empts in 3rd seat sometimes follow the rule “the gloves are off” ☺. I am not a five card weak two person, but in 3rd seat I might be. Sometimes third seat preempts can even be heavy. The only guideline should be that opposite most passed hands, I think we have no game.

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| ♠ 5 ♥ AKJ986 ♦ KJ54 ♣ 83 | - A clear 1♥ in 1 st or 2 nd , possibly 3♥ in 3 rd in hopes of blocking out the spade suit and buying the contract. |
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One of the many advantages of 3rd hand bidding is that, after partner has passed, you are better equipped to gauge the opponent’s resources. Your hand might be poor enough, you are almost certain they have a game or slam.

Pluses & Minuses

Advantages

May get partner off to a good lead
May compete for a partscore
If they play the hand, may lead them to misplace high cards and misguess distribution
Preemptive value: Steal bidding room
Might keep them out of the right contract
Disrupting their normal flow of bidding

Dangers

May get partner off to a bad lead
Partner might hang you!
If they play the hand, may help them locate high cards and deduce distribution
Might push them into a good contract they weren’t bidding
Partner might hang you!
Might get doubled and go for a number

