

## Weasel Over Preempts

Weasel (weak, strong, or "lower the boom") is a powerful treatment for dealing with those pesky enemy preempts. Some players hear an auction like 2♠ - pass - pass and must worry about whether or not to balance on a marginal hand. Most players have gone for 800 or 1100 after balancing in this situation. If you and your partner adopt Weasel, this will never happen to you.

The basic Weasel Convention permits you to show many different hand types on your first call. Here is how it works:

Action	After 8 - 10 seconds	After 0-1 seconds
<b>Pass</b>	Almost enough to act.	Shows almost nothing.
<b>Minimum Notrump</b>	Marginal overcall in values or stoppers.	Full values and at least 1½ stoppers.
<b>Double</b>	Minimum values and shape.	Excellent support for all unbid suits and full values.
<b>Minimum Overcall</b>	Less than an opening bid and/or a weak suit.	Full values and suit quality, suggests 3NT.

With a penalty double, the original Weasel convention called for a fast double (lower the boom) of the preempt, but this is not an approved treatment in all parts of the ACBL. Now most players use a very fast pass to be a "pass with interest." This is known as "Extended Weasel" and is only recommended for more advanced players.

Some players prefer "Reverse Weasel" (which should probably be alerted) but this really is unnatural and has no theoretical merit. It has been reported that some are experimenting with "Encrypted Weasel" but that variant has not been approved for any level of play.

**Note:** Under no circumstances should one hesitate more than ten seconds before making a bid. Everyone knows that this conveys unauthorized information, so your partner may be barred from acting or you may receive an adjusted score. The legal ten-second hesitation should be your longest pause. Since there is no penalty for making your hesitation a bit shorter (or not hesitating at all!), this is the recommended way of showing the alternative hand type.

### Actual Player Comments from Enthusiastic Weasel Users

***An intermediate lady player from Pompano Beach gushes over Weasel:***

"I just love it! I haven't had trouble with preempts in years."

***A high-ranking veteran player from Fort Lauderdale:***

"We don't see Bergen or Berkowitz or those guys around here. We know how to deal with their flaky preempts."

***A National Champion from Pembroke Pines:***

"Since people started using Weasel, I don't even bother to give a skip-bid warning. Oh, I might use it when I have a really 'big' preempt, but it rarely does any good."

***A beginning player from Tamarac:***

"Weasel is so natural and easy to use, I feel like I have been playing it for years."

***An intermediate player from Wilton Manors:***

"That's what it's called? Weasel? I've been playing it for years."

***A National Champion from Weston:***

"This really isn't allowed at the nationals, but I see it a lot at social games."

***A top Boca Raton player:***

"Next to Stayman and Blackwood, this is the most popular convention in the country. It is about time that we give it a name and the recognition it deserves. I only wish that we could find and honor the actual inventor."

***A scientific young player from Dania:***

"With minor variations, you could actually show thirteen different hand types."

***Another South Florida player:***

"Don't give us all the credit for this convention. They play this in Georgia, too."

**A Few Facts about Weasel**

- Weasel is the only convention known to be played more extensively at the club level than at the national level.
- Weasel is also approved for play in Class A convention or "yellow card" games.
- There is no recorded instance of an adjusted score for the Weasel "fast pass." After all, what is the director or committee to do? While we have all seen players balance on "air" in these auctions, the committee can hardly assign an adjusted score of down 800 or 1100.
- There are now buttons and T-shirts saying "I play Weasel" at most bridge supply stores.
- There is a movement under way to form an all-Weasel team to challenge for this year's GNT.