

Strong Opening Bids: The Basics

Acol Strong Two Opening Bids

An Acol Two bid shows a suit of quality in a hand that can likely reach game even if partner holds less than 6 points

Forcing for one round, *partner must bid*.

To open 2♥/2♦/2♠ you must have:

- ❖ A **very high quality suit**, in an unbalanced hand (*usually 6 cards but 54 permitted*)
- ❖ 8 playing tricks, usually 17 to 22 HCP.

Responding:

2NT is the negative. It denies the strength for a positive

A positive requires 8 HCP or an A & K

Positives are:

- ❖ Raise to 3 shows 8-11 HCP, including an A.
- ❖ Raise to 4 shows 8 or more HCP, but without an A. (*without an ace a slam is unlikely*)
- ❖ 3NT shows 8-11 HCP in a balanced hand.
- ❖ Change of suit requires a good quality suit. e.g. 5 cards including 2 of top 3 honours

Suit Quality

A good suit has very few potential losers. With suits only 5 long, you need three picture cards!

A Q J 6 5 is minimum quality for a 5 card suit, and A J 9 6 5 4 for a 6 card suit.

Playing Tricks

To calculate playing tricks you assume the worst outcome if the suit breaks reasonably

- ❖ Holding A Q J 6 5 you assume loss of one trick to the K, leading to 4 playing tricks
- ❖ Holding A J 9 6 5 4 you assume losing to both the K and Q, leading to 4 playing tricks

The 2♣ Opening

An opening bid of 2♣ is the strongest possible opening bid.

A 2♣ opening bid is **forcing to game** unless a negative response is followed by a rebid of 2NT

Partner must bid, and keep bidding till game is reached.

With 23 or more HCP you must open 2♣

With less you must be able to see at least 10 playing tricks in your own hand

2♦ is the negative. It denies the strength for a positive, and lacks controls

A positive requires 8 HCP or an A & K

Positives are:

- ❖ 2NT is a positive without a good suit
- ❖ 2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦ is a positive combined with a good suit, with at least five cards
- ❖ 3♥/3♠ shows an almost solid suit, (one loser)
- ❖ 4♣/4♦/4♥/4♠ shows a solid suit, at least seven cards long.

Rebid by Opener

- ❖ 2NT after 2♦ shows a balanced hand with 23-24 HCP
- ❖ 3NT after 2♦ shows a balanced hand with 25 or more HCP
- ❖ A suit bid, including 3♣, shows the longest suit in an unbalanced hand

2NT Opening

Balanced hands with 20 to 22 points are opened 2NT, including hands with a 5 card major.

Balanced hands with 23 or more points start with an opening bid of 2♣

2NT shows 20-22 HCP in a balanced hand.

The shape should be 4333 or 4432 or 5332. (*Include hands with a 5 card major*)

Responses

- ❖ With a bad 4 HCP you can pass. **Any other response is forcing to game**
- ❖ 3♣ is Stayman
- ❖ 3♥/♠ shows a 5 card suit and at least 4 HCP, (*could be a lot more*)
 - Partner is required to choose the contact: 3NT or 3 of the major
- ❖ 4♥/♠ is to play. It shows a 6 card suit, at least 4 HCP, but denies interest in a slam.
- ❖ 3NT is to play, and requires a hand **worth** at least 5 HCP. (*11 is too much!*)
- ❖ 3♦ shows a 6 card suit and suggests interest in a slam. (*3NT/5♦ denies slam interest*)
- ❖ 5♣/♦ is to play. *This bid is made only when 3NT would be unsafe*
- ❖ 4NT is quantitative. Requires a balanced hand with 11-12 HCP (*33 HCP = slam in NT*)
 - Partner is asked to pass or bid 6NT with a maximum.