

## Weak Twos in Three Suits

This is a form of Acol very popular in duplicate bridge circles. It changes the meaning of an opening bid at the 2 level as follows:

- 2♣ - 23+ points, or fewer points with game in your own hand. This is the same as in normal Acol.
- 2♦ - Weak: 5-10 points, 6 diamonds
- 2♥ - Weak: 5-10 points, 6 hearts
- 2♠ - Weak: 5-10 points, 6 spades

The 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ bids are like mini pre-empts. They often cause a problem for the opponents, and they come up much more frequently than Acol Strong Twos.

### The Weak Bids 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠

These are a bit like a mini pre-empt, except that they show

- A good quality 6 card suit – at least 2-3 honours
- 5-10 points

i.e. a hand too weak to open with 1 of a suit. As with other pre-empts, you need to take into account your vulnerability.

Examples of hands are:

♠ K Q J 9 7 5 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 6 ♣ 9 6 3 4	A minimum in terms of points, but a good-quality spade suit. Open 2♠
♠ Q 10 9 7 5 2 ♥ 7 5 ♦ 6 4 ♣ K 10 5	A minimum in terms of points and suit quality. Open 2♠ non vulnerable, but pass if vulnerable.
♠ K Q 10 ♥ Q J 9 7 6 5 ♦ 9 8 ♣ J 6	A maximum in points, and an adequate suit quality - suitable for 2♥
♠ K Q 4 ♥ J 10 6 4 3 2 ♦ Q 8 ♣ 9 6	Suit quality is too weak – just pass
♠ K Q 8 6 3 2 ♥ J 10 ♦ A 8 ♣ J 6 3	11 points is too strong - Open 1♠

#### Alert!

Weak Two opening bids are not alertable – but they should be announced.  
When you open 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠, your partner says: 'Weak'

## Responding to Weak Twos

When your partner opens with a weak two, you normally need about 16 or more points to make game. The weak two's main function is pre-emptive – to keep the opponents out of the auction. So you will often pass. This will be on a wide variety of hands.

North	South
2♥	Pass

Partner denies an opening hand, so pass quietly.

South  
 ♠ K 9 3  
 ♥ A 3  
 ♦ A Q 9 7 6  
 ♣ 7 6 3

North	South
2♠	Pass

You have an 8 card fit in spades – do not try to find a better suit.

South  
 ♠ 10 9  
 ♥ 10 9 3  
 ♦ K Q 10 9 7  
 ♣ 7 6 3

Sometimes you will have a hand where you can bid game – either expecting to make it, or advancing the pre-empt.

North	South
2♥	4♥

With 15 points (plus 3 dummy points) opposite partner's 6-10, and a 9 card fit, game is likely.

South  
 ♠ K Q 7 2  
 ♥ K 5 4  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ A K 7 6 3

North	South
2♠	4♠

With a 10-card fit, you bid 4♠ - not necessarily expecting to make it, you are advancing the pre-empt.

South  
 ♠ J 10 9 6  
 ♥ 10  
 ♦ A K 8 6 3 2  
 ♣ 7 6

## Bidding a New Suit

If you bid a new suit in response to a Weak Two, this is forcing, if below game. (This is the same rule as applies to responding to a higher-level pre-empt). A new suit shows at least an interest in game (16+ points) and a good 5+ card suit.

North ♠ K J 10 8 5 4 ♥ J 9 8 ♦ -- ♣ J 10 9 8	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>North</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	North	South	2♠	3♥	4♥	Pass	South ♠ 3 2 ♥ K Q 10 7 3 ♦ A 7 ♣ A K Q 5
North	South							
2♠	3♥							
4♥	Pass							

South's 3♥ is forcing, and North can support this. Without 3 card support, North would rebid 3♠.

The system whereby a new suit in response to a weak two is forcing, is sometimes referred to as Raise Only Non Forcing (RONF). In other words, all responses below the level of game are forcing, except for a raise to the 3 level.

## Raising to the 3 Level

A raise to the 3 level is *not invitational*. It is weak, and just advancing the pre-empt.

North ♠ K Q J 8 5 4 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ 5 ♣ J 10 3	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>North</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	North	South	2♠	3♠	Pass		South ♠ 9 3 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ K 10 8 3 2 ♣ A 5 2
North	South							
2♠	3♠							
Pass								

South's 3♠ is a weak sign-off bid. **North must not bid again.**

It turns out that using a raise to the 3 level is very useful as a pre-emptive bid, especially when not vulnerable. On the hands above, it is very likely that EW can make game in hearts.

## Simple 2NT Feature Asking - response to a Weak Two

A useful convention, when playing Weak Twos is to use the 2NT response to show interest in game, normally with at least 15 points. It asks for a feature in a side suit: (an Ace or King, or a Q J or Q 10 combination). Responses to 2NT are: If you have a 'feature' in a side suit and have more than a minimum hand (i.e. 8, 9 or 10 points), bid the suit – otherwise rebid 3 of your major.

North ♠ 8 6 ♥ K Q 9 8 5 4 ♦ 8 4 ♣ K 10 2	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">3♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">4♥</td> </tr> </table>	North	South	2♥	2NT	3♣	4♥	South ♠ A 3 2 ♥ J 10 3 ♦ A K Q 7 ♣ Q 4 3
North	South							
2♥	2NT							
3♣	4♥							

North's 3♣ shows a feature in clubs and shows more than 7 points – enough for South to bid game.

North ♠ 10 7 2 ♥ K 10 9 8 5 4 ♦ 7 4 ♣ K 6	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">3♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	North	South	2♥	2NT	3♥	Pass	South ♠ A 3 2 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ A K Q 3 ♣ Q 4 3
North	South							
2♥	2NT							
3♥	Pass							

North is a dead-minimum for a Weak Two, so do not show your feature.

The only other response to 2NT is 3NT, which shows a 6 card suit headed by AKQ, which can make it possible to find a contract of 3NT.

**Alert!**  
The 2NT response, and any responses to the 2NT, other than a rebid of the trump suit should be alerted.

## Interference to Weak Twos

If the opponents intervene over a Weak Two bid, with a double or overcall, the 2NT Feature Asking bid still applies, if it can still be made. If the 2NT response is doubled or overcalled, opener can still bid to show a 'feature' if that bid is still available.

## Defence to Weak Twos

This is quite straight forward. The best guideline is to respond as you would to a pre-emptive bid at a higher level:

- Double is for takeout
- Suit overcall is 10+ points and a 6 card or good 5 card suit
- 2NT overcall is 16-19 points, with a stopper in the opponents suit.

As with pre-empts at the 3 level, you and your partner should bid on the assumption that your partner has about **seven points**.

West ♠ 10 ♥ A Q 8 4 ♦ K 10 7 6 ♣ A J 8 7	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Dbl</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South				2♠	Dbl	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass			East ♠ J 9 2 ♥ K 10 6 5 3 ♦ A J 8 2 ♣ 5
West	North	East	South															
			2♠															
Dbl	Pass	4♥	Pass															
Pass	Pass																	

West makes a takeout double. With more than 7 points, and very good heart suit, East jumps a level, to game.

West ♠ 10 ♥ A Q J 10 8 4 ♦ 10 7 6 ♣ A J 8	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">3♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South				2♠	3♥	3♠	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass			East ♠ J 9 2 ♥ K 6 2 ♦ A K J 8 2 ♣ 5 2
West	North	East	South															
			2♠															
3♥	3♠	4♥	Pass															
Pass	Pass																	

Here West must overcall at the 3 level – showing something like an opening hand and a good suit. Whether or not North bids, East should go to game. Note that North's 3♠ is not invitational – just pre-emptive.

West  
 ♠ A 10 4 3  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ 10 7 6 3  
 ♣ Q J 7 4

West	North	East	South
			2♥
Pass	3♥	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

East  
 ♠ K Q  
 ♥ A J 9 4  
 ♦ A K J 8 2  
 ♣ K 8

With what should be two heart stoppers, East should bid what seems to be the most likely contract. If the opponents have bid correctly, they should be weak, and partner should have something.

## Disadvantages of Weak Twos

As with any convention, there are always disadvantages and advantages.

The advantages of Weak Twos are

- They make it hard for the opponents to enter the bidding
- A Weak Two bid narrowly defines your hand, which often allows partner to find the correct response.

Disadvantages

- That you or your partner will forget you are using them
- That you will enter the bidding with a Weak Two, and suffer a large penalty. This will be quite rare, as long as you have a good 6-card suit for your opening bid.
- The only strong 2-level bid is now 2♣ (23+). This means that with an unbalanced hand of about 20-22pts (where you would have opened a Strong Two), you will have to open 1 of a suit. If your partner opens with 1 of a suit, you should probably try to find a bid with as few as five points, (or even four points, with good distribution), as your partner may have up to 21 pts.

Because hands suitable for Weak Twos come up much more often than hands suitable for Strong Twos, they have become much more popular in bridge duplicate and tournament circles.