

Strong Opening Bids

2 NT opening

With a balanced 20 – 22 HCP open 2 NT

- Responder needs only 5+ points to bid game
- The responses to 2 NT are similar to those over 1 NT

Responses to 2NT

Pass	0 – 4	game unlikely
3 ♣	5+	Stayman - at least one 4 card major
3 ♦/♥/♠	5+	5 + card suit - invitational to 3 NT 4♥ 4♠ or 5 ♦
4 ♥/♠	5+	6-card suit
3 NT	5+	balanced, no 5 card major, may have 5-card minor

Responses to 2 NT		
4 ♠	5 +	6 card suit
4 ♥	5 +	6 card suit
4 ♣/♦	Partnership agreement	
3 NT	5 +	balanced
3 ♦/♥/♠	5 +	5 card suit
3 ♣	5 +	Stayman
Pass	0 - 4	

2 ♣ opening

Either balanced 23+

OR unbalanced 8 **playing trick** hand (see below)

2♣ is a **conventional bid**. It has *nothing* to do with clubs. It just describes a very strong hand. Responder **must** bid, even with no points. Since opener may have an unbalanced hand, it *may* be important for them to know whether responder has an ace, and if so in which suit. The requirement for a positive response is at least one ace and one king anywhere in the hand (ie at least three **controls**)

Responses to 2 ♣		
3 ♥/♠/NT	Partnership agreement	
3 ♦	9 - 10	Ace of diamonds
3 ♣	9 - 10	Ace of clubs
2 NT	Partnership agreement	
2 ♠		Ace of spades
2 ♥		Ace of hearts
2 ♦		No Ace + King

With a positive response responder bids the suit of the cheapest Ace (3 ♦ shows the A♦)
The bidding now **forcing to game**

For example: 2♣ 2♥ 2♠ 2 NT 3♠ 3NT (game reached, opener has an 8 playing trick hand with 6+ spades. Responder doesn't have a spade fit but has tricks in other suits)

Without these honours responder would bid:

2 ♦ no Ace + King

The opener then describes their hand. This is **non-forcing** on Responder

For example, after 2♣ 2♦

opener would now bid

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| • 2 NT | 23 – 24 balanced |
| • 3 NT | 25 – 26 balanced |
| • 2 ♥/2 ♠ | 8 playing tricks in nominated suit |
| • 3 ♣/3 ♦/3♥/3♠ | 9 playing tricks in nominated suit |
| • Game | 10 playing tricks in nominated suit |

Responder should only bid if they can promise that their hand can take a trick or tricks

Lesson 4

Playing trick hands

When you have a long suit (at least 6 cards) headed by at least two honours, you should look at the suit from a playing trick point of view. You take the length of the suit and subtract 1 for every honour (Ace, King, or Queen) missing

Example A K 9 7 6 2 6 card length missing the Q - counted as 5 tricks
This is applied to the whole hand

♠ A K Q 10 9 2	(6)	♠ A 2	(1)	♠ -	
♥ 6 5		♥ A K Q 4 3 2	(6)	♥ 8	
♦ K Q J 5	(2)	♦ 9 4		♦ K Q J 8 7 5	(5)
♣ 9		♣ K Q 7	(1)	♣ A K 10 4 3 2	(5)

The reason why, in my view, it is better to show **controls** rather than suit can best be illustrated by the bidding on hands 2 and 3. Partner held

♠ 10 9	♠ K J 9 3
♥ J 6 5	♥ A 9
♦ 7 6 5	♦ A 9 3 2
♣ A J 4 3 2	♣ Q 10 5

And the bidding went

2 ♣ - 2 ♦	2 ♣ - 2 ♠
2 ♥ - 3 ♥	3 ♦ - 3 NT

Opener didn't see any more tricks and passed

4 ♣ - 4 ♠

(Gerber ace ask – responder shows 2 Aces)

5 ♣ - 5 ♥

(Gerber king ask – responder shows 1 King)

6 ♦

It would have been more informative if the bidding had gone

2 ♣ - 2 ♦	2 ♣ - 2 ♥ (Ace of hearts)
2 ♥ - 3 ♣	3 ♣ - 3 ♦ (Ace of diamonds)
4 ♥	6 ♦ - 7 ♣ (showing the missing club honour)
♣ KQ7 to 3 tricks	7 ♦

Declarer can now upgrade

Examples of hands you should open with 2 ♣

♠ AK2	♠ AK83	♠ AKQ743	♠ A	♠ A7	♠ 96
♥ AQJ	♥ AK4	♥ KQJ	♥ AKQ10972	♥ A3	♥ 52
♦ QJ10	♦ AK42	♦ 8	♦ KQJ	♦ 108	♦ AKQ9765
♣ AQ32	♣ KQ	♣ A83	♣ 83	♣ AKJ8754	♣ AK

Rebid after 2♦ response

2NT	3NT	3♠	4♥	3♣	3♦
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