

Rationale

Pairs who play an opening weak 2H and 2S have an opportunity to investigate game options because the bidding starts a little lower than other pre-empts. While changes of suit after a weak 2M are "to play" unless you and partner agree otherwise, 2NT is commonly used to ask the quality and strength of the weak two. This is called the *Ogust* convention.

Here are opener's rebids after a weak 2H:-

2H	2NT!	
3C!		weak HCP, weak suit
3D!		weak HCP, strong suit
3H!		strong HCP, weak suit
3S!		strong HCP, strong suit
3NT!		AKQxxx

It is presumed that responder will be able to place the contract or move towards slam after hearing opener's rebid.

Let's look at the **characteristics of 2H** when partner is an unpassed hand:-

- HCP. This will normally be in the range 6 – 10 HCP. 6 – 8 HCP is considered "weak"; 9 – 10 is "strong"

- A *strong* suit is one headed by two of the top three honours. The idea is that responder may consider 3NT as playable opposite a "strong" suit and holding Hx with the missing top honour. Even the "weak" suit should be no worse than Axxxxx or KJxxxx

- It is acceptable to open weak 2M with a *seven* card suit where the hand is too weak to open 3M
- Opposite and unpassed hand, a weak 2M should have no outside ace, no void and not 4 cards in the other major.

- When partner is a passed hand, the rules are out the window. After all, the person on your left has a good hand. Now, there are no restrictions. Not vul, a great *five* card suit should be considered!
- With 11 HCP and a six card suit in 1st or 2nd seat, it is generally best to open at the *one* level.

- Using Ogust allows us to bid 3M! as a pre-emptive raise. "*We have 9 trumps, so we bid to the 3 level*".

FAQ: What are we giving up to use Ogust?

ANS: A natural meaning doesn't make sense. We don't want to play 2NT just because we have no fit. Dummy will be useless. A popular alternative to Ogust is to play 2NT as a *Feature Ask*. i.e. It asks opener to bid a new suit if the ace or king in it is held. if you play this convention, it is presumed that your original suit will *always* be sound.

Defence to weak 2M

While not part of the Ogust convention, pairs need to be ready for the opponents opening a weak 2M. The standard treatment is similar to when they open 1M:-

- 1..*Suit bids* have overcall strength.
- 2..*Double* is takeout. See lebensohl in *Lesson 23*.
- 3..*2NT* is natural, 15 – 18 HCP, their suit stopped.
- 4..*3NT* is natural, 19 – 20 HCP.
- 5..*Cue Bid* is strong Michaels.

Ogust

Try bidding these hands. West is dealer

♠754	♠AQ63	2H	2NT!
♥AQT653	♥K72	3D!	3NT
♦862	♦A93	P	
♣9	♣A43		

East can count 9 tricks before dummy goes down. Notice that 4H might fail despite the strength.

♠754	♠AK92	2H	4H
♥AQT653	♥K72		
♦862	♦3		
♣9	♣AK642		

Sure, 4H can be pre-emptive. Not much point in Ogust if you're going to bid it anyway! Notice how good a hand is needed by responder to be sure – quick winners. Aces, kings, singletons etc.

♠754	♠2	2H	4H
♥AQT653	♥K842		
♦862	♦A43		
♣9	♣T8543		

They can easily make 5S. let's see if they can find it!

♠754	♠AQT32	2H	P
♥AQT653	♥--		
♦862	♦A954		
♣9	♣AK72		

This is a bad one for weak twos. Notice that we can probably make 4S. Can west make 2H? Some pairs prevent this mess by not opening 2M with *three* or more cards in the other major. If you make this agreement, make sure that you warn the opponents with a pre-alert.

♠K54	♠AQ2	2H	2NT!
♥AQT653	♥87	3S!	4H
♦862	♦AKT73		
♣9	♣42		

Don't use Ogust if you can't stand the rebid. 4H has good chances.

♠94	♠AKT53	2H	2NT!
♥AKQ643	♥J8	3NT!	?
♦732	♦AQ9		
♣53	♣A92		

What to do? If the spades can be ruffed good, slam might make. NT looks certain for exactly 10 tricks. At pairs, 3NT might be the winning action – especially with DQ protected. On balance, will return to 4H and hope to make exactly 11 tricks.

♠K43	♠A76	2H	2NT!
♥KJT652	♥A4	3H	?
♦K2	♦9864		
♣87	♣AQ92		

Still difficult to judge, isn't it? Depending on the location of west's high cards, there could easily be a loser in every suit.