

Modified Jammer 2♦ Convention

By Neil H Timm

There are many conventions for the bid of 2♦, some use strong bids (16/18+ or 22+), others employ weak bids (5-8 or 6-10), and many use intermediate bids (11-15). There is no “best” convention. What one should consider is the frequency of the hand patterns and the HCP requirements.

The Flannery 2♦ Convention, 4=5 (4 spades and 5 hearts) in the majors, and the Mini-Roman 2♦ Convention (4-4-4-1) with 11-15 HCP each occur about 0.5% of the time, the Ekren 2♦ Convention which is 4=4 in the majors with 9+ HCP occurs about 2% of the time, and the weak 5-card 2♦ bid with 6-10 HCP occurs about 3% of the time; all have low frequencies of occurrence. The strong two diamond hands (16+HCP) also occur with low frequency, about 3% of the time.

To evaluate the best convention, we first consider hand patterns.

The 39 hand patterns can be classified into four *hand types*: balanced hands, three-suited and single suited hands. The table below gives the *a priori* likelihoods of being dealt a certain hand-type.

Hand type	Patterns	Probability
Balanced	4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2	0.4761
Two-suited	5-4-2-2, 5-4-3-1, 5-5-2-1, 5-5-3-0, 6-5-1-1, 6-5-2-0, 6-6-1-0, 7-6-0-0	0.2902
Single-suited	6-3-2-2, 6-3-3-1, 6-4-2-1, 6-4-3-0, 7-2-2-2, 7-3-2-1, 7-3-3-0, 7-4-1-1, 7-4-2-0, 7-5-1-0, 8-2-2-1, 8-3-1-1, 8-3-2-0, 8-4-1-0, 8-5-0-0, 9-2-1-1, 9-2-2-0, 9-3-1-0, 9-4-0-0, 10-1-1-1, 10-2-1-0, 10-3-0-0, 11-1-1-0, 11-2-0-0, 12-1-0-0, 13-0-0-0	0.1915
Three-suited	4-4-4-1, 5-4-4-0	0.0423

Or in more detail, we have the following probabilities.

Pattern	Probability	#	Pattern	Probability	#	Pattern	Probability	#
4-4-3-2	0.2155	12	5-5-3-0	0.0090	12	9-2-1-1	0.00018	12
5-3-3-2	0.1552	12	6-5-1-1	0.0071	12	9-3-1-0	0.00010	24
5-4-3-1	0.1293	24	6-5-2-0	0.0065	24	9-2-2-0	0.000082	12
5-4-2-2	0.1058	12	7-2-2-2	0.0051	4	7-6-0-0	0.000056	12
4-3-3-3	0.1054	4	7-4-1-1	0.0039	12	8-5-0-0	0.000031	12

6-3-2-2	0.0564	12	7-4-2-0	0.0036	24	10-2-1-0	0.000011	24
6-4-2-1	0.0470	24	7-3-3-0	0.0027	12	9-4-0-0	0.000010	12
6-3-3-1	0.0345	12	8-2-2-1	0.0019	12	10-1-1-1	0.000004	4
5-5-2-1	0.0317	12	8-3-1-1	0.0012	12	10-3-0-0	0.0000015	12
4-4-4-1	0.0299	4	7-5-1-0	0.0011	24	11-1-1-0	0.0000002	12
7-3-2-1	0.0188	24	8-3-2-0	0.0011	24	11-2-0-0	0.0000001	12
6-4-3-0	0.0133	24	6-6-1-0	0.00072	12	12-1-0-0	0.000000003	12
5-4-4-0	0.0124	12	8-4-1-0	0.00045	24	13-0-0-0	0.000000000006	4

If you only consider hands that include at least 3 cards in any one suit and no more than 5 cards in a suit, we have the following hand patterns.

4-4-3-3 (11%), 4-4-3-2 (22%), 5-3-3-2 (18%), 5-4-3-1 (13%), 5-5-3-0 (1%), 4-4-4-1 (3%), and 5-4-4-0 (1%) which comprise (67%) of the patterns, a very high frequency.

The frequency changes to about 50% if we add the restriction that one has 5/6-10 HCP. This is the requirement for the “wide-open” Modified Jammer 2♦ bidding convention. Hence, you would open 2♦’s in the first seat **more often than any other one level bid except perhaps PASS**. The original “Jammer 2♦” convention considered a subset of these distributions and may be found on web at: www.bridgebuff.com.

Of course there are risks with this preemptive convention, especially vulnerable verses non vulnerable since you may not find the best fit at the two-level. Using the “LAW” you need to take about 8 tricks for a 2-level contract. Hence, we allow the same hand patterns but add the restriction that the hand **in addition contains 4 spades** to reduce the risk. Now if partner has a two suited hand, neither of which is spades you are guaranteed a 4-3 fit at the two level in at least one suit.

The Modified Jammer 2♦ bid is used with any three-suited hand (no less that 3 cards in any suit and with no more than 5 cards in any suit) with 4 spades and 5/6-10 HCP, a preemptive bid.

How does it work?

When one opens 2♦, partner bids 2♠ with four spades. Not having 4 spades, one bids 2♥ with 3/4/5 hearts, even if your distribution is 2=3=3=5, never bid 3♣. Without 3 hearts and at least 3-3 in the minors bid 2NT (forcing) which asks partner to bid his best minor. With 5+ diamonds, pass and with 6+ clubs bid 3♣, opener will pass.

For a strong shapely hand 3♥/3♠ are preemptive (showing 5♥/4♠, respectively) but invitational after 2NT (2♦/2NT/3♣ or 3♦) 3♥or 3♠ are invitational. The 3♦ bids by opener asks responder to bid his 4-card suits up the line slipping spades.

When responding to the bid of 2♦, remember that partner will have a 3-card suit 90% of the time and 4 spades 80% of the time, and five spades about 20% of the time. Opener's shortness (1 or 2 cards) occurs more than 55% of the time. If you have a two-suited hand, neither one being spades, you are guaranteed a fit in one suit, but it may be only a 4-3 fit. However, even with some 4-4-3-2 shapes, without spades, you will have a poor fit less than 5% of the time.

In review, a spade contract is the safest bid with a 4-3 or 4-4 fit even with a 4 card minor do not bid 2NT, partner may have 3 hearts if 4=3-3-3 or 3=5-3-1. When in doubt, bid conservatively and remember partner has 5/6-10 HCP so that game requires 15-19/20 support points in a major and 25 HCP in notrump contracts. Most bidding stops at the 2-level when vulnerable and the 3-level when non vulnerable.