

The 'Weak Two' bids

Essentially, 'Weak Twos' are mini pre-empts.

Traditional pre-emptive bids are based on a 7 card suit, and opened at the 3 level. Natural 4 level pre-empts are rarely played by inexperienced players but can be considered. Although such pre-empts are difficult to counter, they do not crop up frequently.

On the other hand, weak hands with 6 card suits are much more common. Previously such hands would be passed and although a chance to overcall may have occurred, their pre-emptive value was lost.

Variations on these two level pre-empts include:

There are a number of systems that use weak twos. The most prevalent are:

1. **Weak twos** in the majors. The most popular variation is **Benjaminised Acol** or **Benji** for short.
2. A three way **multi two diamond** bid. (Thankfully rare in the North East.)
3. **Weak twos** in diamonds, hearts & spades. (Where 2♣ has to cover all strong hands.)

When to open a 'Weak Two'

Your hand *should* satisfy the following criteria:-

- 1.) You hold a decent six card **major suit**.
- 2.) You do not hold four cards in the other major.
- 3.) You have 6-10 pts.
- 4.) You have a hand which is usually an eight loser.
- 5.) *You cannot make a one level opening. (*See below*)
- 6.) *Your hand does not comply with the rule of 19. (*See below*)

However

Please remember the suggested criteria for opening 1 of a suit.

12+ HCPs
7 loser (or better)
3 Control (A=2, K=1)

With any TWO of these three criteria in place, consider opening 1 of a suit. BUT - make sure it conforms to Rule of 19.

♠ J4 ♥ KQ9862 ♦ J965 ♣ 8	♠ AK7432 ♥ 83 ♦ J95 ♣ 74	♠ 74 ♥ AQ10853 ♦ A1064 ♣ 9	♠ ♥ QJ10974 ♦ K1065 ♣ 732	♠ K987543 ♥ QJ7 ♦ J96 ♣	♠ KQ86 ♥ QJ9742 ♦ ♣ 864
Open 2♥	Open 2♠	Open 1♥	Open 2♥	Open 2♠	Pass
7 HCPs x 7 loser ✓ 1 control x	8 HCPs x 8 loser x 3 controls ✓	10 HCPs x 6 loser ✓ 4 controls ✓	6 HCPs x 7 loser ✓ 1 control x	7 HCPs x 7 loser ✓ 1 control x	7 HCPs x 7 loser ✓ 1 control x

Hand 3 has two of the three criteria for opening 1 of a suit (*and it conforms to the rule of 19**). Hand 4 is difficult. IF you open 2♥, it may work but you are never likely to find a spade fit. After an original pass, you may get the opportunity to double or to overcall. With any kind of major fit, hand 4 could play well. The hand certainly has little defensive strength.

*Rule of 19

Add the number of cards in your two longest suits to your HCPs. If this comes to 19 or more you can open 1 of a suit

e.g.

♠ A10754 ♥ KQ986 ♦ 65 ♣ 8	♠ 109 ♥ KQ986 ♦ AJ106 ♣ 87
9 HCPs x 6 loser ✓ 3 control ✓	10 HCPs x 7 loser ✓ 3 control ✓

Both of these hands conform to the rule of 19 AND they each have two of the three criteria for opening 1 of a suit.

WEAK TWOS in THREE SUITS

Benji Acol is the most popular system which uses weak twos, but there are two other system variations which use weak twos. You are more likely to meet them in large congresses than in your local club.

One of these is the *multi coloured two diamonds* and thankfully this is now a rare animal in our area.

An opening bid of 2♦ shows any one of a number of hands.

One variation is that it shows a weak two in the majors, or a strong two in the minors, or a strong balanced hand of a specific range. Unless you have masochistic tendencies avoid it.

The other system which is much simpler, uses 'Weak Twos' in diamonds, as well as for the majors.

The disadvantage is that your *only* strong opening bid now is 2♣, and you need to be convinced that an opening bid of 2♦ has sufficient pre-emptive value to compensate for this lack of clarity with big hands.

Of course you still have the limit bid of 2NT to show a balanced 20-22 count, but you lose the distinction between the traditional Acol opening bid 2♣ and the Acol 'Strong Twos' (2♦, 2♥, and 2♠)

In 'old' Acol 2♣ was forcing to game but the 'Strong Two' openings were not.

Therefore you may need to build into your system a subsequent bid which is not 100% forcing to game.

You may decide for instance that after the 2♦ negative response to 2♣, 2♥ and 2♠ are none forcing.

Now, a definition of a 2♣ opening bid might be:

a hand which is either 23+ balanced, OR it is no worse than a 4 loser with 7 controls (A=2, K=1).

So, the hand has at least three aces and a king, or two aces and three kings.

Opening bids using this system

1	2	3	4	5	6
♠AKJ95 ♥KQ2 ♦AKJ10 ♣7	♠KJ9874 ♥83 ♦K52 ♣J2	♠J98 ♥KQJ653 ♦J8 ♣74	♠7 ♥852 ♦AK7652 ♣J83	♠AQJ543 ♥86 ♦AK8 ♣A2	♠KJ9 ♥AQ ♦AKJ54 ♣KQ8
Open 2♣	Open 2♠	Open 2♥	Open 2♦	Open 2♣	Open 2♣

Hand 5 is an example of a hand which you might open 2♣ but after a 2♦ response by partner you may decide that game is not clear in your hand alone and simply rebid 2♠ which partner *could* pass.

You have described a four loser hand with spades. If partner has no fit and no points game is unlikely but with a ten loser and three spades he would be expected to do something other than pass.

SUMMARY

Standard Weak Twos:

Defined as 5-10 points and a six card suit of reasonable quality. Decide the range with partner.
 'Weak Twos' are ANNOUNCED as "weak"

Response 2NT shows game interest. (*Ogust responses* are popular but need to be learned/agreed).
 Decide with partner whether a change of suit is forcing!

The 2♣ Opening:

Defined as "Strong" and forcing = At least 7 controls and no worse than a 4 loser.
 2♣ opening bids must be alerted.

Responses 2♦ = Relay.
 Thereafter opener bids a 5+ card suit (showing 7 controls/4 loser) or 2NT 23+ balanced.

NOTE Because 2♣ is your only strong bid, you lose the ability to show a 'Strong Two' with 8 playing tricks.

Without the agreed criteria, you may have to open strong hands at the 1 level (*and risk it being passed*)

WEAK TWOS - OGUST RESPONSES

When partner has opened a 'weak two' in hearts or spades, read it as an eight loser.
Your options as responder are as follows :-

- With fewer than three of partner's suit and fewer than 16 H.C.P.s - generally pass.
- With three cards in opener's suit you can continue the pre-empt according to the L.T.C.
- **2NT** is 'OGUST' showing game interests.
It is asking partner for a clearer definition of the strength of the suit AND the hand.

A strong SUIT is defined as having *two of the top three honours*. i.e. AK or AQ or KQ.
A strong HAND is defined as being 9/10 H.C.P.s.

So after an opening bid of 2♥ or 2♠ by partner - **2NT is forcing and asks for more definition.**
Opener will rebid as follows:

- 3♣ = WEAK pts. and WEAK suit
 3♦ = WEAK pts. and STRONG suit **MINor** = **MINIMUM POINTS (5-8)**
- 3♥ = STRONG pts. and WEAK suit
 3♠ = STRONG pts and STRONG suit **MAjor** = **MAXIMUM POINTS (9/10)**

3NT = AKQ x x x (Top three honours)

or for the brave/foolish warriors who bid 'weak twos' with only five card suits you could agree to play 3NT as showing only five cards and maximum pts.

When you play with a new partner DOUBLE CHECK that you are playing Benji, and whether or not you are playing Ogust responses.

After a 2♥ open by partner, bid a pre-emptive jump to game on the first hand and use an Ogust 2NT on the last two.

♠ K6
♥ J7542
♦ 94
♣ AQ92

Bid 4♥

♠ A32
♥ 84
♦ AQ943
♣ KQ42

Bid 2NT

♠ J7
♥ KJ6
♦ AKJ43
♣ A92

Bid 2NT

After a 2♠ opening on each of the following hands, responder responds 2NT. What is opener's rebid?

♠ AQ8732
♥ 4
♦ K43
♣ 642

♠ QJ9862
♥ 753
♦ K8
♣ K6

♠ KJ9872
♥ 753
♦ 9
♣ K65

♠ AQ10872
♥ 73
♦ J542
♣ 8

♠ AKQ872
♥ 73
♦ 1095
♣ 86

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