

## Two club openings and responses

### When to open 2C

Open 2C when you have a hand that is:

- balanced but too strong to open 2NT, with 22+HCP
- unbalanced and is within 1 trick of making game, with 8 ½ or 9 playing tricks.

Generally in the 23HCP range but it is a matter of judgment as with these types of hands you need very little from partner to make game, even with some 20HCP hands.

### Balanced hands

Balanced hands with 22+HCP are too strong to 2NT, which shows 20-21HCP if you open a 15-17 1NT.

Open these hands 2C and plan to rebid 2NT or 3NT.

With 20-21 open 2NT

With 22-23 open 2C and rebid 2NT

With 24-26 open 2C and rebid 3NT

After a NT rebid, Stayman and transfers are ON.

### Unbalanced hands

Open 2C where you don't want to risk opening 1 of a suit and have partner pass.

Example hands:

**AQJxxxx**  
**KJx**  
**AK**  
**X**

This hand has 6 spade tricks, 2 diamond tricks and 1-1/2 a trick in hearts depending on where the A and Q are.

What would you need from partner to make 10 tricks in spades? Maybe the Q of hearts or the A of hearts or the A of clubs. Don't want to risk opening 1S and partner passing.

**AKQJxxx**  
**AQxx**  
**Kx**  
**-**

19 HCP but 8 ½ playing tricks. Open 2C

**Ax**  
**AKJx**  
**x**

**KQJxxx**

This hand has 18HCP and 9 playing tricks but given the long suit is a minor you would need at least 6HCP to make game in clubs so open 1C

**AKJx**  
**AKJx**  
**x**  
**AQxx**

This hand has 22HCP and 8 ½ playing tricks but struggles for a rebid. Open it 1C and hope partner doesn't pass.

**AKQx**  
**KQxxx**  
**AKx**  
**x**

How many playing tricks does this hand have? Open 2C.

**K**  
**AKQ**  
**Axxxx**  
**KJxx**

This hand has 20 HCP but the bare K is not worth its full value. Open 1D.

**AKQJ109x**  
**AJ10**  
**-**  
**A10x**

This hand has only 19HCP but game is almost a certainty. Open 2C.

**A 2C opening is forcing to game  
unless opener rebids 2NT**

### **Responding to a 2 club opening**

There are several methods used to respond to 2C, depending on partnership agreement.

#### **Steps**

Step responses allow responder to show their HCP range in 3 point increments.

The problem with steps responses are that they:

- Take up a lot of bidding space
- Often 'wrong-side' the contract.

Example:

2C – 2S showing 7 to 9 HCP  
3S showing 5 card spade suit – 4S

Now the weak hand is declarer.

If responder doesn't have 3 card spade support, it is difficult to explore a heart fit or to know if 3NT is the right contract.

## **2D waiting**

The 2D response shows 0+HCP and any distribution. It allows opener to describe their hand, keeps the bidding low and is much less likely to wrong-side the contract.

2H, 2S, 3C or 3D show a good hand with a good 5-card suit with at least 8 HCP and two of the top three honours.

Example:

**xx**  
**AQJxx**  
**Kxx**  
**xxx**

With a balanced hand and 8-9/10 HCP bid 2NT or 3NT with 10/11+ HCP

## **Opener's rebid with a balanced hand**

With a balanced hand, opener rebids NT

2C – 2D  
2NT                    *Shows exactly 22-23HCP. This is the only response that responder can pass if they have a bust.*

2C - 2D  
3NT shows 24-26HCP

2C – 2D  
4NT shows 27HCP        *You should be so lucky!*

## **Opener's rebid with an unbalanced hand**

With an unbalanced hand opener bids their suit at the cheapest level.

2C – 2D  
2H                    *Here shows a 5-card heart suit*

Bidding then continues until a fit or NT is agreed.

Fast arrival – remember that jumping to game in opener's suit shows a weak hand.

2C – 2D

2H – 4H

*Here 4H says I am weak and want to stop in game.*

Compared to this auction:

2C – 2D

2H – 3H

*Here 3H says I want to explore slam*

Can now cue bid showing a control or ace ask for slam.

2C – 2D

2H – 3H

3S

*3S shows control in spades*