Strong 2 Clubs

Occasionally, you will get a hand that is too strong to open 1 of a suit. If you have 21 pts then partner only needs 4 and you will have enough for game BUT if you open 1 of a suit partner will pass with only 4 points (Aargh!!). So we need a bid that says, "Keep bidding until we get to game." The artificial 2 & is such a bid.

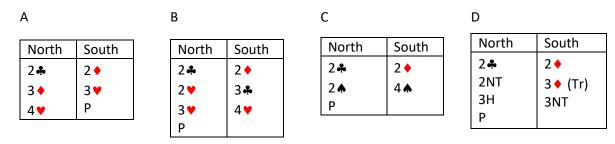
It is really important that you allow opener as much bidding space as possible so he can describe his hand well so that you can set the contract. Consequently, you will bid 2 \blacklozenge to keep the bidding open and allow partner to describe his hand. This is not optional. Please as both the 2 \clubsuit and the 2 \blacklozenge are artificial both of these bids need to alerted.

А A2 В Q2 С AK642 D AQ7 K854 AQJ652 5 A6 AKJ64 AKQ AJ7 AK53 AK QJ AKQ9 AQJ6 643 A75 J97 K96 A973 K8743 КЗ J97542 T864 62 KT6 J86 JT72 9752 5 54

Here are some hands that were opened 2 & recently;

The hands have been rotated so that North has the strong hand. Each of these Norths will open 2♣and each South will respond 2♦. But what then? The bidding is largely natural ie bid your longest suit first.

Here is the bidding



Let's Look at D in more detail and revise our NT ladder

1NT	15-17 pts
1? Then 2NT	18-19 pts
2NT	20-21 pts
2 🏶 then 2NT	22-24 pts

As you can see, if you had a balanced hand
with 21 pts then you would have opened
2NT so now we can add another rung to
the ladder.

Notice that after 2 - 2 - 2 - 2NT Stayman and transfers apply.

NB with 1 point or less it is OK to pass 2NT (this is the exception) with 12+ pts responder should bid a slam.

For the purists

2 - 2 = -3NT says 25-26pts 2 - 2 = -4NT says 27-28pts

Pre-Empts

The purpose of a Pre-Empt is to stop the opposition reaching their optimum contract. It is possible to do this by bidding as high as you can as quickly you and hope that this disrupts the conversation that the opposition wants to have.

Consider, If you open 3 A in first seat, before the opposition has a chance to open, then They have to make their first bid at the four level or bid 3NT. They must guess what the correct contract is and there is a good chance that they will guess wrongly.

What do you need to pre-empt?

Most important you need a long suit. A six card suit should be bid at the 2 level, a seven card suit should be bid at the 3 level and an eight card suit should be bid at the 4 level For example

- 1. AQJxxx bid 2S
- 2. AQJxxxx bid 3S
- 3. VAQJxxxxx bid 4H

You also need some points but not too many

A good guide is 6-9 points. If you are too strong then you may do yourselves out of a good contract too weak and you may go off too many. You can see what I mean when you look at the possible scores If the opposition can make to tricks in 4H then they will score 420 not vulnerable and 620 vulnerable. If you go off 3 tricks doubled (always assume that you will be doubled) you will give them 500 if you are not vulnerable and 800 vulnerable. So you can see that going off three is OK if you are not vulnerable and they are (500 vs 620) but awful if they are not vulnerable and you are (420 vs 800).

Dangers of Pre-Empts

There are three main dangers of pre-empts

- 1. You may be stopping your side getting to game
- 2. The other side may not have a game (phantom sacrifice)
- 3. The penalty you incurred may be too great

The first two problems can be solved by making sure that your hand is weak. Shapely hands, with singletons and voids are inherently strong and should be avoided or if you want to pre-empt with a singleton (not a void) make sure you are at the bottom of your range. Also, bidding with four cards in a major as well as your long suit should be avoided too as if partner has support for your second suit you may be missing out in game there too The weaker your hand is the greater the chance that the opposition will have enough of the high cards to get to game.

Conversely, if your hand is two weak then problem 3 will raise its ugly head. So, make sure most of your points are in the suit you are bidding. One useful guide is you need two of the top four honours if you are not vulnerable and three if you are.

What would you bid with;

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1. ♦ AJxxxx (vul)? 2. ♥ AKQxxxxx (vul)? 3. ♠ KJxxxxx (not Vul)? 4. ♣ QJxxxx (not Vul)?
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Answers

1. Pass 2. 4H 3. 3S 4. 3C or Pass