





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.

Once partner has opened 2♣ then you are required to keep bidding until you reach 3NT, 4♥, 4♠, 5♣, 5♦, or better. There is one exception which we will talk about later.

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♦ to keep the bidding open and allow partner to describe his hand. This is not optional. Please as both the 2♣ and the 2♦ are artificial both of these bids need to alerted.

Here are some hands that were opened 2♣ recently;

A	A2 K854 AKJ64 AK  643 A973 62 JT72	B	Q2 AQJ652 AKQ QJ  A75 K3 T864 9752	C	AK642 5 AJ7 AKQ9  J97 J97542 KT6 5	D	AQ7 A6 AK53 AQJ6  K96 K8743 J86 54
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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

A

North	South
2♣	2♦
3♦	3♥
4♥	P

B

North	South
2♣	2♦
2♥	3♣
3♥	4♥
P	

C

North	South
2♣	2♦
2♠	4♠
P	

D

North	South
2♣	2♦
2NT	3♦ (Tr)
3H	3NT
P	

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♦ – 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♠ 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. ♥AQJxxxxx 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 too 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;

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

Answers

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