

# A Basic Modern Acol Bidding System

## LESSON 4: Bidding as Opener at Level Two

### INTRODUCTION

The "PRINCIPLE OF FAST ARRIVAL" states that when you have a strong hand and want to have a conversation with your partner you bid slowly to conserve bidding space; conversely when you are weak you should bid FAST to remove bidding space from your opponents. This is by making a pre-emptive bid or at level two, a mini pre-empt.

The only other time you open at level 2 is when you are simply too strong to bid at level 1 or to bid 2NT.

Because weak hands are far more frequent than strong hands, the weak two opener is very popular worldwide. The simplest approach is to play:

2♣: 23+ points balanced or any game-force unbalanced hand

2♦, 2♥, 2♠: weak two's in the bid suit showing 5-10 points and a fair/good six-card suit

### WEAK TWO

On which of the following hands would you open a Weak Two?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
♠AJ1092	♠J6	♠KJ10853	♠64	♠5
♥432	♥KQ104	♥J1063	♥A75432	♥76
♦Q742	♦QJ9532	♦6	♦K52	♦QJ10642
♣5	♣4	♣173	♣62	♣KJ73

- a) Pass - you don't have a 6 card suit
- b) Pass – you have a good 4 major that may be missed if you open at level 2
- c) Bid 2♠ - your 4 card heart suit is poor and a spade bid pushes the opponents to level 3
- d) Pass - your heart suit is poor with only one honour, ideally it should have 2
- e) Bid 2♦ - this hand has perfect distribution and points in the right places

(Some players prefer not to mini pre-empt in seats 1 or 2 but here we are definitely suggesting that you do!)

### RESPONDING TO PARTNER'S WEAK TWO OPENER

The main purpose of a pre-empt is to obstruct the opponents. You are removing their bidding space, perhaps even stealing the deal. But this does not mean you should pass your partner's weak two opening bid

- If you have a fit for partner's suit you should bid to the LEVEL OF THE FIT. With 3 card support you bid 3, with 4 card support bid 4. Up to 14 points and no fit, pass OR

- Bid a new suit (best with 6 cards) as constructive but non-forcing. This shows around 11-16 points. The weak two opener will normally pass but should support with 3, or a good doubleton, or repeat their suit if it is solid and self-supporting.

BUT with 15+ points you are INTERESTED IN GAME

You can bid directly to game: 4 of a major or 5♦ is either a continuation of the pre-empt (level of the fit) or a genuine game bid. Either way you have used your opponents bidding space and they will have to guess whether to pass, double or enter the bidding at possibly too high a level. Your weak two opening has reduced your opponent's chances of success.

Sometimes responder with a good hand will not know the final contract and will need to find out more about the weak two bidder's hand. To continue the bidding 'conversation' RESPONDER BIDS 2NT (alerted by opener). This is a strong inquiry.

You now need PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT on how the weak two opener describes their hand.

There are three basic mechanisms after a 2NT asking bid:

1) OGUST

- 3♣: Poor hand, poor suit - 1 of the top 3 honours
- 3♦: Poor hand, good suit - 2 of the top 3 honours
- 3♥: Good hand, poor suit - 1 of the top 3 honours
- 3♠: Good hand, good suit - 2 of the top 3 honours
- 3NT: Good hand, very good suit AKQxxx

2) THE LOSING TRICK COUNT - your answer is with your trump suit

- 3♣: 9 losing tricks
- 3♦: 8 losing tricks
- 3♥: 7 losing tricks
- 3♠: 6 losing tricks
- 3NT: Good hand with AKQxxx

3) FEATURES - as recommended by Andrew Robson in Weak Two Bridge Lessons Deal 10 -16 and available from our self-help BRIDGE LIBRARY.

- A bid of three of any suit other than the weak two suit shows a feature, typically a high-card with some length Ax, Kxx, Qxx, Jxx, etc. You show a feature with an upper range hand. A bid of three of the weak two suit show a low range hand.
- You can decide whether your hand is upper range or lower range by gut-feel or by this method of HAND EVALUATION: add the number of high card points in your hand to the number of honours in your suit (counting one for each AKQJ and 10). NORMALLY if the total is 9 or less you are lower range, with 10+ you are upper range.
- When playing features you rebid a four-card major, or
- You can reply 3NT to 2NT if you don't have a four-card major and have 2 of the top 3 honours in your suit. In particular after 2♦ (3NT is 2 tricks less than 5♦).