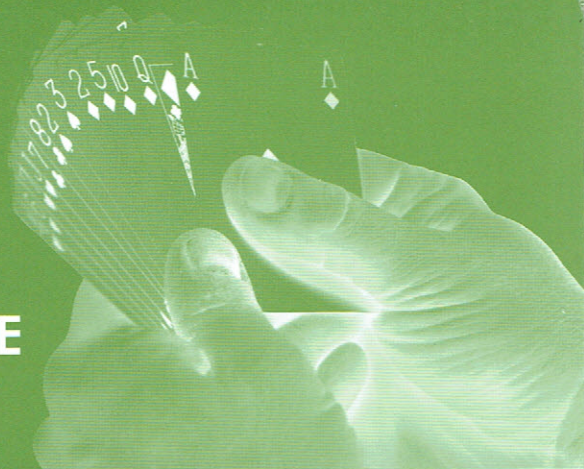
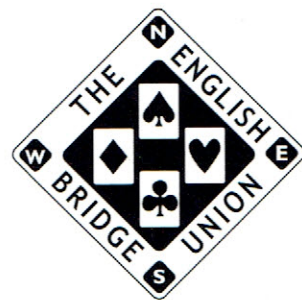


# BOOK TWO CONTINUING BRIDGE



THE COMPLETE LEARN & PLAY PROGRAMME  
FROM THE ENGLISH BRIDGE UNION

2014 EDITION



## Weak two opening bids in three suits

Acól two openings are very good when they come up, but sadly they have a low frequency – we get more bad hands than good ones. So many players play weak two bids. Some play them only in the majors, others in diamonds as well. The latter is both popular and simple to play.  $2\clubsuit$  is kept as a strong bid – we must have one bid that shows a really good hand. A weak two opening bid is a kind of mini pre-empt. It is mainly obstructive and seeks to take away opponents' bidding space, so they haven't room to investigate their best contract.

In Standard English Acól a weak two is usually played as a 6-card suit and about 5–9 points. In fact points aren't the major consideration – the suit should be sound and the hand should have more playing strength and less defence. First to speak, what do you think of these possible weak twos?

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| ♠ | K Q J 10 5 3 |
| ♥ | 6 5          |
| ♦ | 7 5 3        |
| ♣ | 8 2          |

Perfect

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| ♠ | 9 6 3        |
| ♥ | A J 10 9 5 2 |
| ♦ | Q J 5        |
| ♣ | 4            |

OK

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| ♠ | A 10 8 7 6 3 |
| ♥ | Q 9 2        |
| ♦ | 10 4         |
| ♣ | K 2          |

Not very suitable

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| ♠ | Q 7 5 2     |
| ♥ | Q 9 8 6 4 2 |
| ♦ | A 7         |
| ♣ | 8           |

No!

Vulnerability will affect your bid. You can take some liberties when not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents. But when vulnerable you need the security of a good suit with good intermediates. Best position for a weak two is first in hand, before either opponent has bid. Second to speak, after a pass from RHO, you have only one opponent to obstruct and the chances of partner having a good hand are increased, so follow the guidelines more closely. In third seat you don't worry about partner, so anything goes! Even a decent 5-card suit is acceptable. Third in hand, not vulnerable, open  $2\spadesuit$  on

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| ♠ | K Q 10 9 3 |
| ♥ | 8 2        |
| ♦ | Q J 10 4   |
| ♣ | 6 5        |

Fourth in hand after three passes you should revert to Acól two openings, since you are more likely to have a strong hand.

### RESPONDING TO A WEAK TWO WITH A GAME TRY

The Losing Trick Count is a good guide. An opening weak two will probably have eight losers, consider trying for game with 16+ HCP (or a hand with six or fewer losers) and a partial fit. Imagine three trumps and 13 points opposite the first hand above – you wouldn't want to be in game most of the time.

All three hands on the next page have 16+ HCP and 7 losers. As you will see that does not mean game is a good prospect. As when we looked at splinter bids, shape can be a great deal more useful than high card points.

| West        | East           |
|-------------|----------------|
| ♠ 9 4 2     | ♠ K Q J 10 5 3 |
| ♥ K J 9 8 2 | ♥ 6 5          |
| ♦ Q 2       | ♦ 7 5 3        |
| ♣ A Q J     | ♣ 8 2          |

You'd be pleased to make  $2\spadesuit$  with this pair of hands, let alone any more. So you need a better hand than West to try for game, at least the  $\heartsuit A$  rather than the  $\heartsuit Q$ .

With a genuine interest in game, responder bids 2NT. Opener will sign off in three of his suit with a minimum weak two, otherwise show values in another suit or

perhaps try 3NT with a good main suit (three of the top four honours including the ace) and little outside the suit.

**2♥ opener      Responder      Opener Responder**

|                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| ♠ J 3          | ♠ A Q 9    |
| ♥ Q J 10 9 6 2 | ♥ K 5 3    |
| ♦ J 10 5       | ♦ Q 9 3    |
| ♣ 6 4          | ♣ A J 10 8 |

|    |      |
|----|------|
| 2♥ | 2NT  |
| 3♥ | pass |

Opener is very weak in high cards since jacks aren't much use in doubletons, but the heart suit has good intermediates.

|                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| ♠ 7 6 3        | ♠ A Q 9    |
| ♥ A J 10 9 6 2 | ♥ K 5 3    |
| ♦ 5            | ♦ Q 9 3    |
| ♣ K 6 4        | ♣ A J 10 8 |

|    |     |
|----|-----|
| 2♥ | 2NT |
| 3♣ | 4♥  |

This 2♥ is a near maximum, so West shows his club feature – but 4♥ still needs a few finesses to work if it's going to make.

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| ♠ 3           | ♠ A Q 9    |
| ♥ A Q J 9 6 2 | ♥ K 5 3    |
| ♦ 10 6 5      | ♦ Q 9 3    |
| ♣ 6 4 2       | ♣ A J 10 8 |

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 2♥  | 2NT |
| 3NT |     |

The good hearts make 3NT the best response to 2NT and 3NT is a reasonable contract.

**RAISING THE WEAK TWO OPENING BID**

A raise to three of opener's suit is not a game try; it shows 3+ cards and is just "raising the ante" as poker players say. A raise to game could either be pre-emptive or a genuine expectation of making ten tricks. Partner opens 2♠ and you bid 4♠. Let the opponents guess the hand you have:

|             |    |              |
|-------------|----|--------------|
| ♠ A 4       | or | ♠ K J 9 5    |
| ♥ A Q 9 8 4 |    | ♥ 6 5        |
| ♦ Q J 3 2   |    | ♦ A 10 5 3 2 |
| ♣ A K       |    | ♣ 8 2        |

**BIDDING A NEW SUIT**

A response in a new suit is never a rescue attempt. At the two level it is encouraging but not forcing. At the three level it is game forcing. It shows a good hand with a good long suit. It doesn't show a fit, so opener should not insist on rebidding the weak two suit.

**Responder's hand**

|                 |
|-----------------|
| ♠ 5             |
| ♥ A 10 6        |
| ♦ A Q J 9 7 6 3 |
| ♣ K 5           |

**Opener's hand 1**

|                |
|----------------|
| ♠ K Q 10 9 6 3 |
| ♥ 9 5 2        |
| ♦ 5            |
| ♣ J 8 4        |

**Opener's hand 2**

|                |
|----------------|
| ♠ A J 10 8 6 3 |
| ♥ 2            |
| ♦ K 4 2        |
| ♣ 9 7 3        |

After 2♠ – 3♦ opener will rebid 3♠ on the first hand and should bid 5♦ and expect to make it on the second.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A STRONG TWO OPENING**

You need to be able to cope with the big hands when they come along. You can count the losers in the hand. An Acol two opener usually has four losers. A 2♣ opener usually has three losers. If you have a four loser hand where you can't bear the thought that partner will pass, open 2♣. Otherwise open with a bid at the one level and force to game with your next bid.

**DEFENDING AGAINST WEAK TWOS**

Simply bid more or less as you would over an opening bid of one of a suit, using takeout doubles, natural suit overcalls, a 16–19 2NT and just jump to game with a long strong suit.