

Week 2: Weak Twos

When we agree to play 'three Weak Twos', the meaning of our opening bids of 2♦, 2♥, and 2♠ changes.

Strong Twos (old agreement)

20-22 HCP (or equivalent playing strength: 8-9 'playing tricks') and 5+ cards in the suit opened. The suit opened should be of good quality. The hand will not be balanced (with a balanced hand and 20-22 HCP, open 2NT).

Example ♠ A K 5 Open 2♥ (Strong Two)
 ♥ K Q J 9 8 3
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ A 7

Weak Twos (new agreement)

5-10 HCP (less than an opening bid at the 1-level) and 6 cards in the suit opened. The suit opened should be of good quality (honours in that suit and 'texture' – intermediate cards like 8s and 9s).

Example ♠ 9 8 5 Open 2♥ (Weak Two)
 ♥ K Q J 9 8 3
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ 7 3

Purpose of Weak Twos

Weak Twos are like mini pre-emptive bids. As with any pre-empt, they serve two purposes:

1. **Constructive ('making')**. Opening a weak two gives your partner an excellent description of the kind of hand you hold. A Weak Two is useful if the long suit is trumps but less help otherwise. Partner is well placed to decide which contract will be makeable.
2. **Destructive ('spoiling')**. Starting the bidding at the 2-level with a Weak Two makes life much more difficult for the other side. Often one or both of the opponents will hold a strong hand. It is much more awkward for your opponents to bid with less room available.

Where do the Strong Twos go?

When Weak Twos are agreed, our Strong Twos are no longer available. Such hands (with 20-22 HCP) are either opened at the 1-level or we stretch a little and open 2♣ (our strongest bid).

Responding to Weak Two opening bid

Decide whether we can reach a making contract of our own or whether we are spoiling the auction for our opponents (when they have stronger hands).

1. **Constructive ('making').** With 15-17 HCP, game is possible. With 18+ HCP, game is likely to make. If partner has opened with 2♥ or 2♠, the priority is game in that major if a fit of at least 8 cards is present. Having additional trump support (3 or 4 cards) adds value to the hand (particularly with shortage in another suit). If the opening bid is 2♦, 3NT is usually easier than 5♦. If unsure whether to bid game or which game to bid, use the response of 2NT – a special enquiry (see below).

Examples

If partner opens 2♠:

♠ Q 2
♥ A K 3
♦ A K 9 4 2
♣ K 9 3

♠ A 7 3 2
♥ K Q 4 2
♦ A Q 9 5
♣ 7

♠ K J 5
♥ K 6
♦ A 7 3
♣ K Q 5 4 2

Bid 4♠

Bid 4♠

Bid 2NT

2. **Destructive ('spoiling').** Bid to the 'level of the fit' (the level at which the total number of trumps held equals the number of tricks bid e.g. with 9 trumps, bid to the 3-level for 9 tricks).

Examples

If partner opens 2♥:

♠ 7 2
♥ A Q 3
♦ K 9 4 2
♣ T 9 5 3

♠ 9 8 3
♥ K J 4 2
♦ Q T 9 5 3
♣ 7

♠ A J 5 4
♥ K 6
♦ J 7
♣ 9 6 5 4 2

Bid 3♥

Bid 4♥

Pass

2NT enquiry

This shows 15+ HCP and asks the Weak Two bidder to describe the hand further. Over a 2NT enquiry, the Weak Two opener bids as follows:

Minimum (5-7 HCP)

Repeat the suit opened e.g. 2♥ - 2NT - 3♥

Maximum (8-10 HCP)

Bid a 4-card major (3♥ or 3♠)

Bid 3NT with two of the top three honours (A, K, Q) in the Weak Two suit

Bid the better or stronger minor (3♣ or 3♦)

Examples

After opening 2♠ and a 2NT response (strong enquiry):

♠ A Q 9 8 6 2
♥ T 8 3
♦ 4 2
♣ 5 3

♠ A K 9 8 3 2
♥ K 4
♦ 9 5 3
♣ 7 2

♠ K J 9 7 3 2
♥ 6
♦ 8 7 2
♣ K Q 4

Bid 3♠ (minimum)

Bid 3NT (maximum,
two of the top three)

Bid 3♣ (maximum, better
minor)

Overcalling Weak Twos

As Weak Twos are mini pre-empts, the approach is the same as bidding over any pre-empt. For example, if 2♥ (Weak Two) is opened by your right-hand opponent:

2NT 15-19 HCP, balanced hand, stop or guard in hearts

2♠ / 3♣ / 3♦ Good quality suit (ideally at least 6 cards) and 12+ HCP

Double Take-out: 12+ HCP, at most two hearts, support (3+ cards) for all unbid suits