

ACOL 2♣ OPENING BID

An opening bid of one in a suit is liable to be passed out if partner has less than six points. If your hand is so powerful that you want to ensure a response with less than six points you must open with a forcing bid.

One form of forcing bid is a natural 'two of a suit' showing approximately a seven-card suit and probable game values (assuming 'strong-twos; if not, the equivalent 'Benji' strong single-suited bid). However not all powerful hands can be classified as such. For these hands you need to open an artificial Acol 2♣ (or if 2♦ playing Benji – the principles are the same).

In some examples an alternative 'strong-two' bid is specified. It is assumed you are playing Acol 'strong 2s' – i.e. 8 playing tricks in a specified suit. If playing Benjaminised Acol, where reference is made to an 'Acol Strong 2', use the appropriate Benji bid, i.e. 2♣ - ordinary Benji; 2♦ - reverse Benji.

2♣ Opening Bid

- a balanced hand of 23+ points.

or

- an unbalanced hand. The hand can nearly make game itself (usually within one trick of game), and as a practical **guideline** it should also have 5 Quick Tricks (A – 1, K – ½, AK – 2, KQ – 1, AQ – 1½). No suit should contain more than 2 QTs. By definition, these hands have some defensive values.

To determine the probable number of tricks in a long suit (i.e. 6+ cards) that you are will probably need to lead from hand, a **practical** approach is to halve the number of remaining cards and assume one of the opponents has that holding (note – this is not the same as the EBU/WBU 'legal' definition when assessing a 'strong' hand).

or

- in principle, a hand containing two five card suits and 21+ points (also possibly some 5-4 hands), but any short suit honour holdings may make the 2♣ bid unsuitable.

Exercises:

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) ♠ AKQ3
♥ K92
♦ AQ5
♣ KQ7 | b) ♠ AKQ863
♥ AK62
♦ A9
♣ 5 | c) ♠ AKQ93
♥ AK6
♦ KQ732
♣ - | d) ♠ 4
♥ AKQJ1073
♦ AK
♣ AQ6 | e) ♠ 4
♥ AKQJ1073
♦ AK
♣ Q76 |
| f) ♠ AKJ6
♥ -
♦ AKJ542
♣ AQ8 | g) ♠ A5
♥ 86
♦ AKQ109742
♣ 7 | h) ♠ AKQ93
♥ AK
♦ Q9732
♣ K | | |

- a) 2♣ - balanced 23 points
- b) 2♣ - (or Benji equivalent) – 20 points not quite a game forcing hand – assume the opposition will make ½ trick in spades. Over a negative 2NT from partner, bid 3♥. With ♥Q instead of a small one, open 2♣.
- c) 2♣ - 21 points – 5-5 and 5QTs - possible game in either ♠ or ♦. No other practical bid.
- d) 2♣ - 5QTs – almost certain game in hearts. Too good for 2♥. If partner bids 2♦ (as expected), with ten sure tricks jump to 3♥ (committing the partnership to a heart

game). Partner would now be expected to bid any ace or king to assist in the decision for a slam.

- e) 2♥ - (or Benji equivalent) - similar to d) but with weaker clubs - only 4½ QTs.
- f) 2♦ - (if 2♦ is natural). With a good six-card diamond suit, and a secondary four-card major, usually open with the strong minor – you are showing your main feature at the two-level. The sequence 2♦ - 2NT – 3♠ is far more economical than 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♦ - ?? (and even then, you've not shown a six-card diamond suit). If a 2♦ opening is not natural, open 2♣.
- g) 4♦ - pre-emptive. Only 3QTs – so not a defensive enough hand. Not even worth a strong 2♦ opening bid.
- h) 1♠ - reluctantly. 5-5 and 21 points, but the ♣K should be discounted.

Responses

- **a positive suit response should show 1½ 'Quick Tricks'**, for example either an Ace and a King, or King and King/Queen in any suit, or Ace and Queen in the same suit. The bid suit should contain a 'positive' honour. A four-card suit is acceptable at the two-level, but a five-card suit is needed to respond at the three-level. **Even with a positive it can often be better to bid 2♦ instead**, to enable opener to bid out his hand (often preferred if you have a choice of suits).
- with any other 7 - 8 point hand, the technically correct bid is 2NT. However I prefer to restrict this to 4-3-3-3 hands. With other distributions, it's better to bid 2♦ and await opener's re-bid – he may bid one of your four-card suits. Also by bidding 2NT the contract will invariably be played from the 'wrong' hand.
- otherwise bid 2♦ - the negative response.

Opener's Re-bids

- remember, after any positive response from responder you must eventually bid game (or slam).
- **the only sequence not forcing to game is 2♣-2♦-2NT. This can be passed.**
- with a balanced 23-24 points, bid 2NT. Over this, partner bids as if you had opened 2NT (Stayman, transfers etc.), but adjusting for the extra points.
- with a balanced 25+ hand bid 3NT.
- bid suits naturally, bidding any five-card suits before four-card suits.
- with a 10 or 11 trick hand, jump-bid in the relevant suit. This requests partner to show any aces or kings that he holds (he just bids the relevant suit, or without any signs off at the lowest level of partner's suit).

Responder's Re-bids

- after a suit re-bid from opener (still forcing to game), with 0 - 2 points bid the second negative - 2NT. This should inhibit opener from investigating slam possibilities.
- bid suits naturally, supporting where possible.

Exercises (after 2♣ opening).

h)	♠ 4 ♥ 6543 ♦ J432 ♣ 8654	i)	♠ K73 ♥ KQ108 ♦ 9854 ♣ 75	j)	♠ K872 ♥ J1073 ♦ AK83 ♣ 6	k)	♠ K4 ♥ J652 ♦ K962 ♣ J32	l)	♠ Q97 ♥ Q4 ♦ Q532 ♣ K973
----	-----------------------------------	----	------------------------------------	----	------------------------------------	----	-----------------------------------	----	-----------------------------------

m)	♠ 98763 ♥ 104 ♦ 742 ♣ 642	n)	♠ Q853 ♥ AJ7 ♦ 7 ♣ Q9642	o)	♠ K43 ♥ 85 ♦ 108762 ♣ 632	p)	♠ AQ852 ♥ 75 ♦ 6432 ♣ J6
----	------------------------------------	----	-----------------------------------	----	------------------------------------	----	-----------------------------------

- h) 2♦ - initially bid 2♦. If partner bids 2♠, bid the second negative 2NT (0 - 2 points). If partner then bids 3♣/♦ raise to 5♣/♦ (the fact that partner bids 2♠ initiates a game forcing sequence).
- i) 2♥ - (K + KQ for a positive). If partner bids spades or diamonds, give support.
- j) 2♦ - prospects are good for a slam – but where? You don't want to commit to a particular suit. Don't just lazily bid 2♥, bid 2♦ - partner will take this as negative, but it will allow him to bid his hand. You can then take control by supporting ♦♥ or ♠, or bidding NT over ♣. Over 2NT, look for a slam via Stayman.

Opposite:	1)	♠ AJ ♥ AKQ4 ♦ QJ76 ♣ Q7	2)	♠ A ♥ AK6 ♦ QJ1032 ♣ AKQ7
-----------	----	----------------------------------	----	------------------------------------

- 1) 2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT - 3♣ (Stayman) - 3♥6♥
- 2) 2♣ - 2♦ - 3♦ - 4♦ - 4NT 7♦ (4NT is ideally RKCB to locate the ♦K)
- k) 2♦ - preferred to 2NT. You could bid 2NT but give partner a chance to show his hand. Switch the small heart to a spade and I would then reluctantly bid 2NT.
- l) 3NT - balanced(ish) 9+ points. You would need a five-card suit to bid either of the minors at the three-level.
- m) 2♦ - negative. If partner bids 2NT - bid as if responding to a 2NT opener (i.e. transfer weak take-out). You will rest in 3♠.
- n) 2♦ - not worth a positive 3♣. Also it would be very misleading to bid 3NT with this shape. Temporarily with 2♦, preparing to show you assets on the next bid.
- o) 2♦ - 3♥ - 3♠ - showing ♠K. Partner, having shown 10 tricks in hearts, can better judge slam prospects.
- p) 2♦ - be careful if the positive is to be in spades - partner may have good hearts. If so, the auction would develop far better with - 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠, rather than 2♣ - 2♠ - 3♥ - ??.