

Notes on convention card for Acol with Weak 2s.

The system whereby 2H and 2S show a weak six card suit, game forcing sequences start with 2D and other strong bids with 2C is usually referred to as Benjaminised Acol, after its inventor. There are a lot of different agreements and treatments under this umbrella. My suggestions as to how it is best played are to keep it as simple as possible and to retain all the advantages of Acol Strong 2s by incorporating them within the 2C opener.

1) Strong NT bids.

2N retains its usual meaning of **20-22 points**. Many “Benji” players use 19-20, to avoid having to rebid 3N with 19 points after a 1level opener and 1level response. I avoid this by using eg 1D 1S 1N to show 15-17 (not 15 to 16) and 1D 1S 2N to show 18-19 points. After the 1N rebid, responder can invite with 2N, and after this, and an initial 2N rebid, both partners can check back for a 5-3 major fit.

2C 2D 2N shows 23 to 24 points and 2D 2H 2N 25+. In both cases subsequent bidding uses the same conventions (eg Stayman and transfers) as over an opening 2N.

2) An Acol 2H or 2S bid is forcing for one round (negative response 2N), because it may show a single suited hand with 8 playing tricks, or it may show a strong 2suited hand or a distributional game forcing single or two suited hand which is going to jump on the second round. It is important therefore when playing weak 2s, after an opening 2C bid, that responder always replies 2D (a relay bid, not a negative) whatever his shape or strength, and after opener rebids 2H or 2S, bids 2N with less than 8 points, to allow opener to complete the description of his hand. All other responsive rebids are game forcing and slam tries.

3) An opening 2D bid is unconditionally forcing to game. (You must not pass after 2D 2H 2N, as you can after an Acol 2C opener). The convention card assumes that 2H is a negative (<8 points), but you can play it as a relay, or even natural if you prefer.

4) When partner opens 2H/S, 3H/S is pre-emptive, not invitational and 4H/S is also pre-emptive. Invitational, game forcing or stronger sequences go via a 2N enquiry. Opener describes his hand (see note 8).