

## 2C Opening

In standard systems we use 2C to describe very strong hands. That is balanced hands with at least 23 HCP and unbalanced hands that are too strong to open at the 1-level. Club level players seem to have adopted strong to mean anything with more than 19HCP, but too often I have seen it used on the wrong hands. 2C should be a very powerful hand which normally has lots of HCP but with an unbalanced hand there is not a minimum HCP as it is more about loser count. Use this bid when you want to be in game but are worried your 1-level bid will be passed around the table.

Starting with balanced hands I suggest the following structure.

1X-1Y-1NT = 12-14 HCP

1NT = 15-17 HCP

1X-1Y-2NT = 18-19 HCP

2NT = 20-22 HCP

2C-2D-2NT = 23-24 HCP

3NT = 25-26 HCP

2C-2D-3NT = 27-28 HCP

I also recommend including balanced hands with 5 card majors in this bidding. If you have 20-22 points you should open 2NT and not 2C. You need at least 23 HCP with a balanced hand to open 2C. It is a good idea to add length points for long suits (+1 for a 5 card suit and +2 for a 6 card suit) when you are describing your hand as balanced. Advanced players can look into using Kokish relays for 25-26 HCP hands.

When you have a strong hand many “semi-balanced” hands are better to be described as balanced as it shows a narrow point range which is very helpful for partner. Strong hands with 6 card minors and/or singleton Aces or Kings are better off described as balanced. I recommend stayman and transfers to the majors after 2NT has been bid. Advanced players can look into using puppet stayman to find out about 5 card majors.

Examples:



19 HCP balanced.

**Do not open 2C.**

Open 1D planning to rebid 2NT to show 18-19 balanced.

Note: If partner bids 1H you should raise hearts (4H) instead.



23 HCP. Semi balanced. 6 card minor and singleton A are okay.

I would add 2 length points for the club suit but take away a point for poor long suit quality and tight honours (A and AKQ would be better with more cards in the suit) for total value for 23 HCP.

Open 2C planning to rebid 2NT

♠ Q 9 5  
 ♥ A K 5 4 3  
 ♦ A J 8  
 ♣ A K

21 HCP. Balanced but contains 5 card major.  
 Add one length point and describe as 22 HCP balanced.  
 Open 2NT showing 20-22 HCP.  
 This is a much better description than 2C-2D-2H. Often these hands play just as well in NT even if you have a heart fit.

♠ A 5  
 ♥ A K 9  
 ♦ K 9  
 ♣ A K J 8 7 2

22 HCP. Semi Balanced. 6 card minor okay.  
 I would add 2 length points for the club suit and another point for all the Aces and Kings (which are undervalued in HCP) giving total value of 25 HCP and balanced  
 Open 3NT

Two or three suited hands need to be very strong to start with 2C (at least game force). This is because a lot of bidding room will be used by the time you show your suits. Also if your hand is two suited that normally means the opponents are likely to be distributional as well and they will often bid so there is less need to make a forcing bid. Even with a reasonably strong hand, just bid your suits naturally starting with a 1-level bid.

That leaves most of the rest of your 2C bids as being single suited hands. Long suits can take lots of tricks without having many HCP. You start with 2C when you need partner to only have one trick to make game in your suit. Start with 2C with the intention of bidding your suit next time. Jumping in your suit shows a game forcing hand and sets the suit. Note you should have some defence when opening 2C and not just a very long suit. With just a long powerful suit you should preempt or start with 1-level in the suit.

Examples:

♠ AKQJ987  
 ♥ AKT  
 ♦ 653  
 ♣ —

Only 17HCP but this has 9 tricks (4 losers) when played in spades.  
 If partner can provide one trick you can make game in spades.  
 Open 2C planning to rebid 2S.

♠ 5  
 ♥ KQJT  
 ♦ AK  
 ♣ AKT987

20 HCP but a powerful hand with 10 tricks (3 losers) when played in clubs. We would not describe as balanced with a small singleton.  
 Open 2C planning to rebid 3C

♠ K J 9 6 3  
 ♥ A 3 2  
 ♦ A J 7  
 ♣ A Q

19 HCP. Not even close to 2C and bidding spades - **don't do it**.  
 I would add one length point and describe as 20 HCP and balanced.  
 Open 2NT 20-22 HCP balanced.

Responses to 2C from partner I recommend are below. I recommend using the waiting bid when you do not have a good suit to show even if you have a positive hand.

2D = **waiting bid**. All 0-7 HCP hands but can be 8HCP+ with no good 5 card suit.

2H = positive (8 HCP+) and 5+ hearts

2S = positive (8 HCP+) and 5+ spades

2NT = positive (10 HCP+) and balanced - should be stronger very slam suggestive

3C = positive (8 HCP+) and 5+ clubs

3D = positive (8 HCP+) and 5+ diamonds

All positive bids are 100% GAME FORCING so there is no need to jump to show extra strength after this bid. Advanced players should know once in a game force, jumping (to game) actually shows a weaker hand. This is the "principle of fast arrival". After interference from the opposition then pass becomes your waiting bid. All other bids are positive and natural. Doubles are whatever you prefer in your partnership, takeout or penalty. Opener will bid their suit or with a balanced hand bid 2NT with a stopper or double without a stopper.

Opener will typically bid 2NT or their suit as their second bid. However after a positive reply they may choose to raise responders suit instead. After 2NT use stayman and major transfers. You can pass openers bid if you are very weak (unless they jump bid). If you continue bidding after their suit bid then everything is natural and GAME FORCING. So jumping to game in partners suit is actually weaker than a single raise. You should follow principles of trying to find a major fit first. If missing a major fit you should try to bid toward 3NT and finally a minor. If bidding toward slam then find your best suit whether it is major or minor or NT.

Examples:

Opener

♠KQ5

♥AKQ87

♦AJ

♣KJ6

Responder

♠T642

♥T952

♦Q543

♣5

Opening is balanced 23 HCP worth 24 HCP.

Bidding goes 2C-2D-2NT-3C-3H-4H.

2C showed strong hand

2D was a negative/waiting bid

2NT showed 23-24 HCP balanced

3C was stayman

3H showed a 4 card heart suit

4H was to play

Opener

♠AQ9

♥AK5

♦AJT9

♣KQ4

Responder

♠KJT74

♥Q986

♦72

♣A5

Opener is 23 HCP balanced.

Bidding goes 2C-2S-4S-4NT-5C-6S

2C showed strong hand

2S showed positive with good spades

4S jump showed spade support but minimum (for 2C) by jumping to game

4NT asks for keycards (you should use RKCB)

5C showed 0 or 3 (partnership agreement)

6S we have all the key cards, not interested in grand slam

Opener

♠KQ5

♥AKQ87

♦AJ

♣KJ6

Responder

♠AT642

♥T3

♦Q53

♣542

Opener is 23 HCP balanced worth 24 HCP.

Bidding goes 2C-2D-2NT-3H-4S

2C showed strong hand

2D is negative/waiting

2NT is 23-24 HCP balanced

3H is a transfer to spades

4S is a super accept (top of range and at least 3 card support)

Dlr: South  
Vul: None

♠ A K Q J  
♥ A K 10 9 7 3  
♦ 4  
♣ Q J

♠ 9 7 5 3 2  
♥ J 5  
♦ A 8  
♣ K 8 6 5

W
NORTH
E

27

S
SOUTH
T

♠ 10 4  
♥ Q 6  
♦ K J 10 7 5  
♣ A 7 4 3

20

8

10

2

♠ 8 6  
♥ 8 4 2  
♦ Q 9 6 3 2  
♣ 10 9 2

♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N

N

N	-	1	4	1	2
S	-	1	4	1	3
E	2	-	-	-	-
W	2	-	-	-	-

Opener has 4 losers in hearts. Worth opening 2C.

Bidding goes 2C-(2D)-P-2H-4H

2C showed strong hand

2D was interference by opposition

Pass showed a negative/waiting bid

2H showed 4 losers in hearts

4H was fast arrival agreeing hearts but no slam interest

Notice 3 cards in opener's suit and some shape (doubleton) is enough to go game opposite a 2C opener. This is possible because we make our 2C openers very powerful hands only.

**Dlr: South**  
**Vul: None**

♠ 9 6 3 2

♥ 8 6

♦ J 10 8 7

♣ K 10 9

♠ 8 5

♥ A J 7 5

♦ A 6 5 3 2

♣ 6 2

WEST
NORTH
EAST

11

WEST
SOUTH
EAST

♠ A K 10 7 4

♥ K Q 10 4

♦ K Q

♣ A 8

4

21

9

6

♠ Q J

♥ 9 3 2

♦ 9 4

♣ Q J 7 5 4 3

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	6	7	6	6
W	1	6	7	6	6

Opener has 21 HCP semi balanced. However with both majors it is preferable to try show both majors. Two suited hands start with 1-level bid.

Bidding goes 1S-2D-3H-4H-4NT-5H-5NT-6H

1S do not be scared to open 1-level even with 21 HCP if you are showing 2 suits

2D showed 10pts+ natural (added one length point)

3H jump to show powerful 2 suited hand

4H agreeing hearts

4NT is keycard ask (should play RKCB)

5H shows 2 keycards no Queen

5NT asks about kings

6H showed no outside kings (partnership agreement)