

**Bendigo Bridge Club**  
**Tutorial Topic 9**  
**2C Opening and Responses**

**Context: Opening Bids**

Points*	Hand shape	Bid	Covered in
6-12HCP	Distributional	?	Tutorial 10
12-14HCP	Any shape	1 of a suit	Basic lessons
15-17HCP	Balanced	1NT	
	Unbalanced	1 of a suit	
18-19HCP	Any shape	1 of a suit	
20-21HCP	Balanced	2NT	Tutorial 11
	Unbalanced	2C	<b><i>This tutorial</i></b>
22+HCP	Any shape	2C	

The point ranges are based on Paul Marston's (Marston, P. *The language of bidding: strong no trump edition*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Grand Slam Books, Double Bay, 2011), but the principles are pretty universal. What matters is that you and your partner use the same values and have a common understanding of the inferences to be drawn from a given bid.

Today we're dealing with the 2C opening, for most hands with 20+HCP, or a "loser count" of 4 or less.

These are strong hands: opener holds at least half the honour cards in the pack, so this opening is **forcing**: partner **MUST** respond.

**First response to the 2C opening**

Opener		Responder	
Bid	Meaning	Bid	Meaning
2C	20+ HCP	2D	0-7HCP
		2H, 2S, 3C, 3D	8+HCP, 5+ cards in suit
		2NT	8-10HCP, balanced
		3NT	11-13HCP, balanced

And how does the conversation proceed?

**(1) Over a negative response (2C-2D)**

Opener rebids	Opener has ...	Comment
2H/2S/3C/3D	5+ cards in suit	<i>Forcing – responder MUST bid again</i>
2NT	22-23HCP	<i>Pass with 0-4HCP, or bid on as if over an opening 2NT (that's Tutorial 11's topic).</i>
(any game call)	Enough points to take a punt on game, even with your negative response	<i>If opener wanted you to bid, they'd have taken the first option in this table. Don't mess things up by putting in an extra bid now!</i>

Sample bidding sequences after a negative response:

West	East	East's hand	
2C	2D	S: Q 6 5 3	Bid 2NT. You MUST bid after a change of suit – but you've nothing to offer.
2H	?	H: 7 4	
		D: J 9 7 5	
		C: 9 5 3	

2C 2H	2D ?	S: 7 4 H: Q 6 5 3 D: J 9 7 5 C: 9 5 3	Bid 4H. You have good trump support, but too weak a hand to encourage partner by going more slowly with a 3H bid.
2C 2H	2D ?	S: Q 9 6 5 3 H: 7 4 D: J 9 7 5 C: 5 3	Bid 2S showing your 5-card suit
2C 2H	2D ?	S: Q 9 6 5 3 H: A 9 7 3 D: 7 5 C: 5 3	Bid 3H to show good trump support AND a point count near the top of the range

**(2) Over a positive suit response (2C-2H; 2C-2S; 2C-3C; 2C-3D)**

Opener rebids	Meaning	Comment
Single raise in your suit	Agrees the suit, and asks you to describe your hand further	<i>This is an encouraging bid, indicating interest in slam. You should <b>cue bid</b> from now. If no controls, just go to game in your suit.</i>
Game in your suit	Agrees the suit, and indicates no interest in slam	<i>You have only shown 8+HCP. If you have 12+TP (now the suit is agreed), you can start slam bidding (Tutorial 16)</i>
Change of suit	5+cards in suit	<i>Continue normal bidding until you get to game.</i>

In this scenario, neither partner has shown a limit to their hand. You should definitely be in game (20+8HCP as a minimum), but maybe you should go higher (slam bidding, Tutorial 16). Because you know you won't stop until you get to game, there is no need to jump or change suits to keep your partner bidding, so go slowly and pack in as much hand description as you can up to game.

**(3) Over a 2NT response (2C-2NT)**

Opener rebids	Meaning	Comment
3C	Stayman: bid your lowest 4-card major, or 3D if no 4-card major	<i>Tutorial 13 covers Stayman</i>
3D, 3H, 3S	5+ cards in suit	<i>Continue normal bidding until you get to game.</i>
3NT	Partner, stop here!	

Some more advanced topics to discuss with your partner:

- Marston says the 2C opening is forcing to game except only the sequence 2C-2D-2NT. Why? Is there any other sequence where you and your partner might agree to stop short of game? What could that be, and should you do it, or follow Marston's advice?
- Over 3NT, Paul Marston says 4C should be Stayman (as the 3C bid is over 2NT). Partnerships need to agree in advance whether they're going to do this, or treat 4C as Gerber (that's Tutorial 16).
- What if the opposition interfere over the 2C opening? Do the responder's calls take on a different meaning? If so, what are your preferred responses for the various scenarios?