



Strong Twos

In a "pure" (old fashioned) ACOL bidding system an opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ shows a strong hand, capable of taking 8 tricks in the major suit without help.

This bid shows a hand whose strength is "sandwiched" between:

- the 1 of a suit opening showing 12-19; and
- the 2♣ opening showing 23+ or the capability of taking 9 tricks in a suit.

It does not come up very often.



Weak Twos

A popular variation on standard or basic Acol is to agree with partner to use an opening 2 to show a weak hand (6-9HCP) with six cards exactly in a quality (two honours or more) suit.

Weak seven card suits of a similar strength are opened at the three level.

Weak hands with five card suits, not meeting the Rule of Twenty, should be passed.

The suit should contain two of the four honours.

Example Weak Two Opening Hand

♠ K Q 8 7 4 2
♥ 2
♦ Q J 10 5
♣ 3 2

Outside aces are not usually expected.

These hands are much more common, and the bid is pre-emptive, making it difficult for the opposition to enter the auction and find their best contract.

The weak two hand should produce a good result doubled and two down, or three down, depending on vulnerability.

If there is a second four card major suit in the hand, holder is advised to pass in case there is a fit in that major.



Which suits?

Benjaminised ACOL, or “Benji”, is an agreement to open 2♥ or 2♠ on weak hands (6-9HCP) with six cards in the suit.

A further development is “Weak Two’s in Three Suits”, where the partners agree that an opening bid of 2♦ also shows a similar hand but with 6 diamonds.

Announcing Weak Twos

Any opening 2 of a suit, where the suit bid is the long suit in the hand, requires an announcement by partner. Where the opening hand is weak, partner must say “Weak”. Where the opening shows a strong hand, partner must say “Strong”.

Other pre-emptive opening bids

Note that a similar strength hand with 7 in the suit is opened at the 3 level, and with 8 in a major, the suit is opened at the 4 level. These are neither announced nor alerted.

Remember the STOP card

Opening weak two’s are skip bids and require the use of the STOP card at the table.



Weak Opening Tactics

The weak opening makes it harder for opponents to find their contract. The opening bid is not expected to succeed as a contract, but is intended to give away less, even doubled, than the opponents can make.

This means that the vulnerability should be checked, and adverse vulnerability treated with caution.

It's all about partnership agreement

You need to be quite sure which version of ACOL you and your partner are playing.

Misunderstandings could be disastrous.

You also need to understand weak twos so that you and your partner can compete against them when opponents use them.



Responder's Role

Responder must promptly make the "Weak" Announcement at the table and Alert or Announce in the chat line playing online.

If Right-Hand Opponent doubles or bids, responder should try to keep the interference level up. With three cards in partner's suit and even minimum values, he should raise the suit.

With a strong hand (16+ HCP; or 6 or fewer losers), responder may choose to raise to game. Most weak two opening hands have eight losers, and you make game calculations accordingly.

Sometimes responder is in a "grey" area, 14 or 15 HCP or perhaps seven losers...





Responder needs more detail

The Ogust convention starts with a response of 2NT (alerted) to the weak two opening bid. The replies are as follows:

<u>Opening HCPs</u>	<u>Quality of Suit Bid</u>	<u>Response</u>
6-7	Poor (Max two honours)	3♣
6-7	Good (Three+ honours or a good sequence of cards)	3♦
8-9	Poor (Max two honours)	3♥
8-9	Good (Three+ honours or a good sequence of cards)	3♠

All the responses are also alerted. The reply to Ogust tells responder enough to pick the correct contract.

Ogust Example

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>	West has a strongish hand and uses Ogust to ask for further detail about East's hand. Receiving a disappointing answer, West abandons hope of game and opts for 3♠. All pass.
	(STOP) 2♠	P	2NT	
				
P	3♣			
		P	3♠	