

§36. Weak Two Openers. Part 1.

By the end of this chapter you should understand the following term:

A Weak two opener: An opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ to show a good six-card suit and a hand in the 5 to 9 point range. The bid is a pre-empt, designed to make the opposition's life difficult. Current EBU regulations oblige the partner of the opener to say "weak" when such a bid is made.

The meaning of an opening bid at the two-level has long been a bone of contention. In old-fashioned ACOL style it showed a "hand of power and quality"; in the words of one eminent author such a bid "hinted at a slam without guaranteeing a game". Although a useful tool to have in the box when such hands arose, strong twos are now a rarity and the world has turned these days to weak twos.

A weak two opener is a pre-empt, designed to make partner's life easy and the opponents' life difficult. Briefly put, an opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ (not 2♣, note, which is a very different beast) shows a six-card suit and 5 to 9 points. Example hands 1 to 4 all demonstrate weak two opening bids:

Ex 1. ♠ K Q 9 8 6 5 ♥ J 7 6 ♦ K 9 6 ♣ 5	Ex 2. ♠ 10 ♥ A K 9 5 4 2 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ 10 9 3	Ex 3. ♠ J 4 2 ♥ 10 8 ♦ A J 10 5 4 3 ♣ 7 4	Ex 4. ♠ K Q J 10 8 7 ♥ 7 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ 10 6 4
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Example 1 and Example 4 would open 2♠, Example 2 would open 2♥ and Example 3 would open 2♦.

There are a couple of key features that need emphasising here. Firstly, the suit quality needs to be good, the Americans referring to it as a Big Suit. A holding of, say, ♠Q 9 6 5 3 2 has too many holes in it to be suitable for a weak two opening. Also, it would be unwise to open a weak two-bid with a side four-card major opposite a partner who has not yet Passed. The rationale is that the partnership may play well in the four-card suit if partner is well-upholstered there. So, here are four examples of hands that would **not** open a weak two, at least in first or second seat:

Ex 5. ♠ K Q J 10 8 7 ♥ A ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ 10 6 4	Ex 6. ♠ A 9 4 2 ♥ K Q 10 9 6 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ 7	Ex 7. ♠ 3 ♥ J 8 7 5 4 2 ♦ Q ♣ K J 9 5 3	Ex 8. ♠ Q 9 6 5 3 2 ♥ K 10 8 ♦ Q 9 7 ♣ 4
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Example 5 is too strong to open a weak two – it is best opened with 1♠. Example 6 has a side four-card major. Opening 2♥ risks missing 4♠ should partner have a suitable hand for that strain. Best to Pass in the first two seats. Example 7 is a horror in that the suit quality is far too weak to open 2♥; the shape (6-5-1-1) is unsuitable as the hand may well play well in Clubs. Example 8 has a main suit that is far too weak to contemplate opening 2♠. Examples 7 and 8 should be Passed rather than opened.

Now, it is worth noting that both Example 5 and Example 6 should be opened 2♠ and 2♥ respectively in third seat (that is, after partner has Passed as dealer). In this position you are no longer worried about what your side might be missing, you are only interested in messing the opposition about.

Having established the guidelines for an opening weak two-bid it is necessary to consider the responses. Remember that an opening two-bid is a **limit bid** – the opener has stated what he has within a fairly restricted range, so it is largely up to responder to place the final contract.

Generally speaking, it is wrong to bid your own suit – why bother? It's often a case of assessing the right level to play the hand in partner's suit. Yes, there are exceptions but they are rare.

In the four examples below imagine partner had opened 2♠. What would your response be, assuming your right-hand opponent kept shtum? What if partner opened 2♥ instead? (Answers overleaf).

Ex 9. ♠ 7 ♥ A Q 8 6 ♦ K 10 9 3 ♣ K Q J 5	Ex 10. ♠ A 10 8 5 ♥ None ♦ A 8 7 4 2 ♣ A 9 3 2	Ex 11. ♠ K Q 9 3 ♥ K J 10 9 5 4 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ None	Ex 12. ♠ 7 ♥ A J 10 3 ♦ A K 3 ♣ A K 9 7 5
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Ex 9. ♠ 7 ♥ A Q 8 6 ♦ K 10 9 3 ♣ K Q J 5	<i>If partner opened 2♠ then...</i> Pass 2♠. There is little future in this hand as it has all the appearances of a <i>misfit</i> and you should aim to play misfits at a low level.	<i>If partner opened 2♥ then...</i> Raise to 4♥. With an excellent trump fit, a side-suit singleton and good trumps this is an easy raise to game. Partner should have no trouble with this one.
Ex 10. ♠ A 10 8 5 ♥ None ♦ A 8 7 4 2 ♣ A 9 3 2	Raise to 4♠. This is a <i>fit-hand</i> . With such deals you can usually make a lot of tricks; 4♠ should prove a cakewalk with your Aces and your void Heart.	Pass. This is a dismal hand opposite a 2♥ opening bid, but you have nowhere to go. Play misfits at a low level. (Or: when in a hole, stop digging).
Ex 11. ♠ K Q 9 3 ♥ K J 10 9 5 4 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ None	Raise to 4♠. There are three apparent losers (just two Diamonds and a Heart) and partner may well be able to cover one of those. Game should be easy.	Raise to 4♥. What else, with six-card trump support? Even if it were to fail (unlikely) surely the opponents could make something, maybe 5♣?
Ex 12. ♠ 7 ♥ A J 10 3 ♦ A K 3 ♣ A K 9 7 5	Raise to 4♠. Partner's long Spades are likely to be useless in No-trumps. You have five tricks, partner may well be able to scramble five tricks from his Big Suit.	Raise to 6♥. Spectacular, but where are your losers? Yes, there's the ♠A, but that's it. You may well make six trumps, four quick tricks and two Spade ruffs.

The occasional times you play in anything other than partner's Big Suit are when you have an excellent suit of your own. Also, there are rare times you might want to play in 3NT. Note that you should attempt 3NT only when you think you may be able to access tricks in partner's suit. So, counterintuitive as it may be, if partner opened 2♥ you might try 3NT on:

Ex 13. ♠ A K 5 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ J 10 8 3 ♣ A 4 2
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You'd expect to make six Heart tricks and three black winners in 3NT.

Further Examples.

Here are four further examples of responses to weak two opening bids.

Ex 14. <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> </td> <td style="margin-left: 20px;"> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 150px; height: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: center;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♠ A 10 8 6 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">?</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table> ♠ A 10 8 6 2 ♥ 9 2 ♦ Q J 10 8 6 2 ♣ None 4♠. It might make, it might not – but you have to bid game on the two-way principle. That is: if North fails in 4♠ then surely East-West could have made a high-level contract of their own (5♣, maybe or 4♥). It's a heads-you-win-tails-you-don't-lose bid. With eleven trumps, your side must declare the hand.	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 150px; height: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: center;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♠ A 10 8 6 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">?</td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	♠ A 10 8 6 2	2♠	Pass	?	Ex 15. <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> </td> <td style="margin-left: 20px;"> <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 150px; height: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: center;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♠ K J 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">?</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table> ♠ K J 2 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A 5 ♣ A K Q 10 6 3 4♥. Clubs? What Clubs? You must support partner's six-card major, and you have plenty of values to bid game opposite 5-9 points and a Big Heart Suit. 3NT (if that crossed your mind) may fail on a Diamond lead if the Hearts are not solid. Time to arrange your glorious hand as dummy.	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 150px; height: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">West</td> <td style="text-align: center;">North</td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td style="text-align: center;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♠ K J 2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">?</td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	♠ K J 2	2♥	Pass	?
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§36. Example hands 1 to 4.

Hand 1 Love all, dealer North

♠ 7 4
♥ A K J 10 7 4
♦ 9 5 3
♣ J 6

♠ A 10 5 3
♥ 6 3
♦ J 8 7
♣ Q 7 4 2

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ K J 8
♥ Q 9 8 5
♦ A 10 6
♣ 10 9 8

♠ Q 9 6 2
♥ 2
♦ K Q 4 2
♣ A K 5 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
2♥ by North		Opening lead: ♠10	

A straightforward deal. North has a classic weak two with a Big Suit and a limited hand. In fact, he is maximum for his 2♥ call as he has 9 points and an excellent Heart suit. What about the response? Well, South can deduce that the hand is a *misfit* and misfit hands should be played at the lowest level possible. Here, despite holding 14 points, South should Pass his partner's opening pre-empt – and quickly. 2♥ might make an overtrick as there are only four obvious losers – two Spades, one trump and one Diamond. The hand does need some careful timing, though, and declarer has to draw trumps and lead up to the ♦K Q x x on the table twice. Still, making eight tricks would be a satisfactory result.

Hand 2 North-South game, dealer East

♠ 8 5 3
♥ A K Q J
♦ A 10 8
♣ Q 10 9

♠ Q 9 6 2
♥ 2
♦ K Q 4 2
♣ A K 5 3

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ A K J 10 7 4
♥ 9 5 3
♦ J 6
♣ 7 4

♠ None
♥ 10 8 7 6 4
♦ 9 7 5 3
♣ J 8 6 2

West	North	East	South
4♠	Pass?	2♣	Pass
4♠ by East		Opening lead: ♥6	

You may note the similarity between the West hand here and the South collection of the previous deal (!) You may also notice that the East hand here bears a strong resemblance to the North cards of Hand 1, with simple suit transpositions. On this one East opens 2♣, South Passes mournfully and West bids? Well, this time the hand is a *fit* hand (in contrast to a *misfit*). With a known 6-4 trump fit and a side-suit singleton West has every reason to jump to 4♠, expecting that his hand will prove very useful to East. Should North bid over 4♠ with 16 points? Clearly not here, as South has muck. Contrast this with Hand 8, though. 4♠ is an easy contract to play – East loses only to the red Aces and makes an overtrick.

Hand 3 East-West game, dealer South

♠ A 10 7 2
♥ J 8
♦ J 9 6
♣ Q J 10 7

♠ K Q J 9 8 3
♥ 7 4 2
♦ 10
♣ 8 5 2

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ 6
♥ A K 5 3
♦ A K 4 2
♣ A K 6 3

♠ 5 4
♥ Q 10 9 6
♦ Q 8 7 5 3
♣ 9 4

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
4♠ by West		Opening lead: ♣Q	

South Passes as dealer and West has a textbook weak two opener in Spades. What now, East? Well, 3NT would be showboating – just where are your tricks coming from? The problem with hands where there is a long suit and nothing else is that they provide no entry to the long suit. Here, 3NT would fail by three tricks; East could make his three Ace-King combinations and nothing else. The right call on the East cards is 4♠, expecting West to be able to scrape together four Spade tricks from his Big Suit and six top tricks from that dummy. In practice, that is precisely what should happen; West should attempt to draw trumps, losing two tricks to North's ♠A 10 x x. However, that's still four Spades and six "toppers".

Hand 4 Game all, dealer West

♠ 9 8
♥ 10 3
♦ A Q 10 9 7 3
♣ 9 5 4

♠ K J 6 4 3
♥ Q 8 2
♦ 8
♣ Q 10 7 2

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 7 2
♥ K J 6 4
♦ J 5
♣ K 8 6 3

♠ A 10 5
♥ A 9 7 5
♦ K 6 4 2
♣ A J

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
3NT by South		Opening lead: ♠4	

West Passes as dealer and North has a classic weak 2♦ opener. After East Passes what can South say? 5♦, maybe? Well, that is likely to die of natural causes as declarer cannot avoid losing a Spade, a Heart and a Club. Five of a minor is a rare contract at bridge as it's just one trick away from a slam – and slam ventures are not that frequent. The answer (as usual when Clubs and Diamonds are involved) is to look closely at 3NT first. Are nine tricks likely in No-trumps? Surely they are! North has a Big Suit in Diamonds, so South can count three Aces and six Diamonds – all that's needed for nine tricks in No-trumps. True, North may have ♦Q J 10 x x but then he'd have an outside honour to compensate.

§36. Example hands 5 to 8.

Hand 5 North-South game, dealer North

<p>♠ K J 7 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A J 9 8 2 ♣ J 9 3</p> <p>♠ Q 10 8 6 5 ♥ A 8 5 ♦ Q ♣ A K 10 8</p> <p>♠ A 9 4 2 ♥ K Q 10 9 6 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ 7</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N			W	E				S	<p>♠ 3 ♥ J 2 ♦ K 10 7 5 4 ♣ Q 6 5 4 2</p>	
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W	E											
		S										

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	Pass	2♥
2♠ by West	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Opening lead: ♥7	

The last four hands illustrate the tactical effects of weak twos. Here, the South cards are not suitable for opening 2♥ as dealer or in second seat as the hand may belong in Spades. However, once partner has Passed as dealer such considerations fly out of the window. In third seat the primary objective is to upset left-hand opponent's applear, and 2♥ does that job nicely. Here, West has little option but to overcall 2♠, and that gets him right into the dark and smelly. North has nothing to say, East has nowhere sensible to go and 2♠ plays like a dog. If South had Passed in third seat East-West might have bid 1♠ – 1NT – 2♣ and found their Club fit. Certainly, they would not have played in a ghastly 2♠ down plenty.

Hand 6 East-West game, dealer East

<p>♠ Q J 5 ♥ A 9 ♦ K 8 ♣ K J 8 7 6 2</p> <p>♠ K 7 6 4 3 ♥ K J 4 ♦ 5 4 ♣ A Q 3</p> <p>♠ A 10 2 ♥ Q 8 7 6 5 2 ♦ J 6 2 ♣ 10</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N			W	E				S	<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ 10 3 ♦ A Q 10 9 7 3 ♣ 9 5 4</p>	
N												
W	E											
		S										

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♣	2♦	Pass
3♣ by North	Pass	All Pass	Pass
		Opening lead: ♠9	

A deal in similar vein to Hand 5. East opens 2♦ (with an identical hand, you may note, to the North cards of Hand 4) and that gets Passed by South. West has nothing to say despite his 13 points; his Spades aren't going to be as good as his partner's Diamonds and the hand clearly has no future. Now what, North? Passing looks wrong, with 14 decent points and a six-card suit. It does look right to enter the fray with 3♣. Well, North will wish he hadn't. After that gets Passed out North has to toil away in an unpromising contract after a Spade lead. In the fullness of time he should lose at least one Spade, one Heart, two Diamonds and two Clubs, and it might even be worse. Nasty, but unavoidable.

Hand 7 Game all, dealer South

<p>♠ J 10 9 6 3 ♥ 8 ♦ 10 8 ♣ K Q 7 5 2</p> <p>♠ A K 5 ♥ 7 5 3 2 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A 9 4</p> <p>♠ 7 4 ♥ A Q J 10 6 4 ♦ 9 5 3 ♣ J 6</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N			W	E				S	<p>♠ Q 8 2 ♥ K 9 ♦ A J 6 4 2 ♣ 10 8 3</p>	
N												
W	E											
		S										

West	North	East	South
Pass?	Pass	Pass	2♥
2♥ by South	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Opening lead: ♠A	

Hands 7 and 8 are nightmare deals. Here, South opens 2♥ and West has a problem that cannot easily be solved. What might he bid? Double would be a take-out Double, not for penalties – besides, are you confident of defeating 2♥? 2NT is wrong with no Heart stop (a Heart lead from North destroys a No-trump contract by West) and West has no suit to bid. The right contract is 3NT played by **East**, something that cannot be beaten on any lead. How you might *right-side* 3NT (as we say) is anybody's guess. The hand is here to illustrate just how awkward pre-empts can be and what difficulties they present. Here, 2♥ should go down, probably just one off, but South can bear that loss with East-West able to make game.

Hand 8 Love all, dealer West

<p>♠ None ♥ 10 8 7 6 4 ♦ 5 3 2 ♣ A K 6 3 2</p> <p>♠ A K J 10 7 4 ♥ 9 5 3 ♦ J 6 ♣ 7 4</p> <p>♠ 8 5 3 ♥ A K Q J ♦ A 10 8 ♣ Q 10 9</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N			W	E				S	<p>♠ Q 9 6 2 ♥ 2 ♦ K Q 9 7 4 ♣ J 8 5</p>	
N												
W	E											
		S										

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	4♣	Pass?
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
		Opening lead: ♣A	

The South cards here are the same as the North cards of Hand 2. The bidding is the same as well, West opens 2♠ and East, knowing of a ten-card Spade fit, must not miss the opportunity to raise the pre-emptive barrage by bidding 4♣. On Hand 2 it was right for North to Pass. Here, it's right for South to bid as both 6♣ and 6♥ (yes, slams!) are available to his side. East bids 4♣ knowing that it is almost certain to fail; however, he also knows that North-South can't know that – effectively he is bluffing that he has a good hand. When you have a massive trump fit, it usually pays to declare the hand. Should 4♣ fail (as it will here) then you are often still in profit as the enemy are usually able to make a high-level contract

§36. Quiz A on Weak Two Openers

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz A you have the opportunity to open the bidding.
What is your best opening bid?

1.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ 2
♥ K J 10 9 6 5
♦ K 7 6
♣ Q 8 5

2.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ K
♥ J 9 6 5 3 2
♦ K 7 6
♣ Q 8 5

3.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ 8 4
♥ 3
♦ K Q J 8 7 4
♣ K 9 6 2

4.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ K Q J 8 7 4
♥ 3
♦ A 9 6 2
♣ 8 4

5.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	?

♠ K Q J 8 7 4
♥ 3
♦ A 9 6 2
♣ 8 4

6.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ Q J 7 6 5 2
♥ 4
♦ 3
♣ A 10 9 8 5

7.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ A K J 10 7 5
♥ 9 6 5 2
♦ 4 3
♣ 8

8.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
		Pass	?

♠ K J 10 7 5 4
♥ A 9 6 5
♦ 4 3
♣ 8

9.

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	?

♠ K J 10 7 5 4
♥ A 9 6 5
♦ 4 3
♣ 8

10.*

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
			?

♠ 2
♥ K J 10 9 6 5
♦ K 7 6
♣ Q 8 5

§36. Quiz A on Weak Two Openers Answers

1.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ 2
♥ K J 10 9 6 5
♦ K 7 6
♣ Q 8 5

2♥. This is a classic weak two opener – with 9 points and a Big Suit in the form of that robust six-card major. This is a maximum for the bid as a weak two shows 5-9 points, but there's nothing wrong with being top of the range, especially in these straightened times.

2.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ K
♥ J 9 6 5 3 2
♦ K 7 6
♣ Q 8 5

Pass. Although this hand may appear to possess the same criteria as Q1 (a six-card suit and 9 points) it is entirely unsuitable for a weak two. The main suit is too moth-eaten and the scattered values outside make it a hand far more useful in defence than as declarer.

3.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ 8 4
♥ 3
♦ K Q J 8 7 4
♣ K 9 6 2

2♦. Another maximum weak two (cf Q1), this time in Diamonds. With feeble holdings in the majors you must make it as difficult as you can for your LHO to enter the auction. Indeed, there are some aggressive bidders who would open this hand 3♦. We'll leave that there...

4.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ K Q J 8 7 4
♥ 3
♦ A 9 6 2
♣ 8 4

1♠. You are a tad too strong to open with 2♠ on this model and should open with a thin but respectable one-level opener. 10 points is a minimum to open at the one-level and requires a good six-card suit and something outside. Here you satisfy those criteria.

5.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	?

♠ K Q J 8 7 4
♥ 3
♦ A 9 6 2
♣ 8 4

2♠. So what's the difference between this and Q4? Here, you are in third seat, so partner doesn't have an opening bid. Now, the objective is to *steal the deal* while making life awkward for West. Third-in-hand pre-empts can vary greatly; partner is unlikely to care now.

6.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ Q J 7 6 5 2
♥ 4
♦ 3
♣ A 10 9 8 5

Pass. Although this hand may appear at first sight to fit the criteria to open 2♠ it is wrong to do so when 6-1-1-5. Pass now, bid later; for all you know partner may have long Clubs and no Spades. If the hand is a *misfit* it is better to let East-West play the hand.

7.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
			?

♠ A K J 10 7 5
♥ 9 6 5 2
♦ 4 3
♣ 8

2♠. This is marginal when holding four Hearts. In general, it is unwise to pre-empt when holding a four-card major on the side, but here your Spades are so good and your Hearts are so feeble that it is acceptable to overlook the principle and open 2♠.

8.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
		Pass	?

♠ K J 10 7 5 4
♥ A 9 6 5
♦ 4 3
♣ 8

Pass. Now, in contrast to Q7, your Hearts are decent support for partner, should he have the suit, and your Spades are not that strong. For that reason you should take the low road and Pass, intending to compete later. If North bids Hearts you'll raise enthusiastically.

9.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	?

♠ K J 10 7 5 4
♥ A 9 6 5
♦ 4 3
♣ 8

2♠. So what's the difference between this and Q8? Once again (cf Q5) you are in third seat, so partner doesn't have an opening bid. As in that example, the objective is to *steal the deal* while making life difficult for West. Third-in-hand anything goes (well, nearly).

10.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	?

♠ 2
♥ K J 10 9 6 5
♦ K 7 6
♣ Q 8 5

Pass. You are in fourth seat, so the rationale for pre-empting has evaporated. In fact, there's no such thing as a weak two in fourth seat. Many pairs play an opening two-bid as a strong call after three Passes. That, though, is a discussion for another day.

§36. Quiz B on Weak Two Openers

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz B your partner has opened the bidding with a weak two bid.
What is your best response on these hands?

1.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♣	Pass	?

♠ K 4
♥ A J 9 5
♦ K Q 8 3
♣ J 10 2

2.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ A 4
♥ A J 9 5
♦ A Q 8 3
♣ J 10 2

3.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

♠ A Q 9 7 2
♥ A Q 8 6
♦ 5
♣ J 9 7

4.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ K 4
♥ A Q 9 5
♦ A J 8 3
♣ A J 2

5.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ 8
♥ K 9 5 2
♦ A K 10 7 5
♣ A 4 2

6.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ 8
♥ K 9 5 2
♦ A K 10 7 5
♣ A 4 2

7.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ K Q J 5
♥ J
♦ K Q J 8
♣ Q J 9 6

8.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ 7 3
♥ A 8 7 5
♦ A K 7 6 3 2
♣ 9

9.*

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

♠ A K 4
♥ Q J 8
♦ A 7 6 2
♣ A 5 3

10.*

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ J 9 8 5
♥ 4
♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ K Q J 6

§36. Quiz B on Weak Two Openers Answers

1.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ K 4
♥ A J 9 5
♦ K Q 8 3
♣ J 10 2

Pass. Facing a decent six-card suit and 5-9 points this hand has no future beyond the two-level. It is possible that 2♠ fails to make; bidding on would be to invite a minus score. It is akin to having opened a 12-14 1NT and heard partner sign-off in 2♠; you'd Pass, obviously.

2.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ A 4
♥ A J 9 5
♦ A Q 8 3
♣ J 10 2

4♥. You have 16 points, four-card trump support, a *ruffing value* (the doubleton Spade) and, critically, you have *hard values* in the form of Aces. This is sufficient to take a pot at game, which you expect to have a good chance even opposite a minimum weak two.

3.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

♠ A Q 9 7 2
♥ A Q 8 6
♦ 5
♣ J 9 7

Pass. Facing a six-card Diamond suit and 5-9 points this is a *misfit*. There is little point in bidding, hoping for a better fit – why should Spades (for instance) prove to be a better spot than Diamonds? If you Pass quickly, West may bid, and that would be good for you.

4.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ K 4
♥ A Q 9 5
♦ A J 8 3
♣ A J 2

4♠. With 19 points including Aces and Kings, you must play this hand in game. With a known eight-card trump fit the spot should be 4♠ rather than 3NT. There may be no access to partner's long suit in 3NT, but there should be ample tricks if the hand is played in Spades.

5.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ 8
♥ K 9 5 2
♦ A K 10 7 5
♣ A 4 2

Pass. Facing a decent six-card Spade suit and 5-9 points this hand has no prospects. You should Pass and hope partner can scrape eight tricks with the aid of his Big Suit. Bidding on with *misfit* hands is one of the commonest source of penalties at this game.

6.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ 8
♥ K 9 5 2
♦ A K 10 7 5
♣ A 4 2

4♥. Now, by contrast to Q5, the hand is a *fit hand*. You know of a ten-card trump fit and can provide a *ruffing value* (the singleton Spade) and a handy side-suit (those lovely Diamonds). If 4♥ doesn't make opposite this dummy there will be a stewards' enquiry.

7.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ K Q J 5
♥ J
♦ K Q J 8
♣ Q J 9 6

Pass. You have too many *soft values* (that is: Queens and Jacks) and you lack Aces. 4♥ will surely be off at least four top tricks and 3NT will founder on a lack of access to North's hand. Don't count points; you must try to see how your hand fits opposite partner's.

8.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ 7 3
♥ A 8 7 5
♦ A K 7 6 3 2
♣ 9

4♥. Now, (cf Q5), the hand is a *fit hand*. 11 points only, but the fit is terrific – and where are your losers? Your singleton Club and doubleton Spade may be pearls beyond price. Further, it is possible East-West could make 4♠. You must make it hard for them to bid it.

9.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

♠ A K 4
♥ Q J 8
♦ A 7 6 2
♣ A 5 3

3NT. Maybe not an obvious answer at first glance but this is the old, old story. It is easier to make nine tricks than eleven, meaning that 3NT is often a preferable contract to 5♦. Here, if North held ♦K Q x x x and nothing else, 3NT would be easy with 5♦ miles away.

10.

N			
W	E		
S			

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ J 9 8 5
♥ 4
♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ K Q J 6

4♠. Might this make? No, of course not! However, that isn't the point. The deal surely belongs to East-West (in 4♥?), and you must try to steal it from them. 4♠ raises the pre-emptive barrage with the enemy unsure whether you have a good hand (cf Q4) or shapely tripe.