

## The Benji 2 Club Opening Bid

### Details of the 2♣ Bid

The 2♣ opening bid is used to show any hand worthy of an ACOL Strong Two opening in any suit or a strong No Trump hand.

A Strong Two opening is defined as:

'A strong hand is one that can make eight/nine tricks by itself in a particular suit'.

Thus, what does a Benji 2♣ opening bid tell you altogether:

It is either a hand that:

1. Can make 8/9 playing tricks in an, as yet, unspecified suit or
2. Is balanced with 23-24 points

**NB.** If the strong suit is a minor, it should be a trick stronger, because, as you will see, you have to show it at the three level.

### How do you count your playing tricks?

- Aces and Kings with Aces in suits outside the trump suit are easily counted.
- With a long, strong trump suit you count as follows:  
Work out how many cards are held in the trump suit by the other three players.  
Divide these cards equally into the three hands. If there is an odd card or a missing honour in your suit give it to one of your opponents. Now imagine you lead trumps **from the top**, how many tricks will you make.

Example You hold A K Q 8 6 3. How many tricks do you **expect** to make.

**Answer:** There are seven cards of this suit in the other three hands.  
Divided equally, this gives each of the other three hands two cards in the suit with one of your opponents given a third card.  
Thus, if you lead this suit from the top you can expect to draw all outstanding cards in three rounds.

**It means for bidding purposes you expect to make 6 tricks in the suit.**

### Full Example:

### Counting Tricks in this hand

♠	A K J 10 8 4
♥	A 9 2
♦	A K 6
♣	2

Spades:	5 tricks (Assuming the Q♠ is offside with opponents)
Hearts:	1 tricks
Diamonds:	2 tricks
Clubs:	0 tricks

**Total Tricks: 8 tricks**

In response to the 2♣ opening, your partner **MUST** bid 2♦ (a relay regardless of strength), and then you can show your suit or No Trump strength:

- 2♥ means 8 playing tricks in hearts and at least 18 points.
- 2♠ means 8 playing tricks in spades and at least 18 points.
- 3♣ means 9 playing tricks in clubs and at least 18 points.
- 3♦ means 9 playing tricks in diamonds and at least 18 points.
- 2NT means 23-24 points balanced

Yes, it really is worth closing your eyes as responder and simply bidding 2♦, because this allows the system to work smoothly. The 2♦ response is **not a negative bid**, it is just a relay which allows partner to show his hand.

After opener has shown his hand, then responder can bid as he would if partner had opened a Strong Two. For instance, if the auction has gone 2♣ - 2♦ - 2♥ (i.e. opener has a strong two in hearts), now responder can pretend that his partner simply opened '2♥ strong', which means that the **negative** (0-7 points) for responder is still 2NT.

This is a very flexible system, for it allows you to show your Strong Twos in the majors at the same level as in standard Acol. The only disadvantage is that you have to bid to 3♣/3♦ to show strong clubs or diamonds.

**Caution:** It is worth repeating, however, that on many strongish hands with long **minors** it is preferable to open at the one level; only if you **have nine tricks in your own hand**, should you open with the 2♣ bid.

If opener has opened the bidding with 2♣ and, over partner's 2♦ relay bid, has rebid 2NT he is showing a balanced hand of 23-24 points. **It means that opener's partner can use any of the usual gadgets over a No trump opener. Thus, Stayman, asking about a four card major or Red Suit Transfers showing a 5+ card Heart or Spade suit are available.**

Examples when opener makes a 2♣ opening bid :

1.

♠	A K Q J 10 4
♥	Q 9 2
♦	A K 6
♣	2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠	8 6 3
♥	4 3
♦	4 3
♣	A 10 9 7 6 3

West

2♣

2♠

East

2♦ (relay)

4♠ (end)

Eight playing-tricks in spades, so West shows a strong two by opening 2♣. East responds 2♦, as he must. Now West shows his spades, and East simply raises this to game: he has no ambitions to go further, but he does have enough for two tricks (Ace of Clubs and a hoped for red suit ruff), to add to partner's eight.

2.

♠ 9
♥ A 9
♦ A 8 6
♣ A K Q J 7 4 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q 7 6 3
♥ K 3
♦ 9 4 3 2
♣ 6 2

West

2♣

3♣

3NT

East

2♦ (relay)

3♠ (natural showing Spades)

End

Nine playing tricks in clubs, so West uses the 2♣ opening and rebids 3♣ over the relay.

Now East rebids 3♠ naturally to show where his strength lies.

West can now bid the obvious 3NT.

3.

♠ A J 9
♥ A 9
♦ A K 8 6
♣ A K 7 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 8 7 5 2
♥ 8 7 4
♦ J 8 6
♣ 6 3

West

2♣

2NT (23-24 pts balanced)

3♠

4♣

East

2♦ (relay)

3♥ (Transfer to Spades)

3NT (Showing EXACTLY 5 Spades)

End

West shows his 23-24 points balanced with his 2NT rebid after a 2♣ opening bid.

East shows his 5-card Spade suit with the 3♥ transfer.

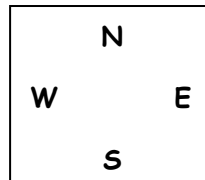
His 3NT bid after the completion of the transfer shows EXACTLY 5 Spades.

West converts to 4♣.

This makes 10 tricks as long as Spades do not divide badly.

4.

♠	A K 3
♥	A K Q 8 7 3 2
♦	9 2
♣	8



♠	8 6 5 2
♥	10 4
♦	J 8 7 3
♣	10 7 4

West

2♣

3♥

East

2♦ (relay)

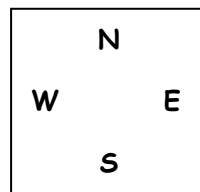
Pass

The jump to 3♥ shows **Nine** playing tricks in Hearts.

East, with his tram tickets, is happy to pass.

5.

♠	A K 8
♥	Q 9 4
♦	A K 8
♣	A K J 6



♠	Q 9 4
♥	K J 8
♦	Q 8 6
♣	Q 9 7 4

West

2♣

2NT (23/24 points balanced)

East

2♦ (relay)

6NT (based on points)

West's rebid of 2NT shows 23/24 points balanced.

East has 10 points which gives the partnership 33/34 points between them.

This is enough for 6 NT so just bid it!