

DEFENCE TO WEAK TWOS

The original weak-2 concept was developed as part of Benjaminised Acol, whereby a 2♥ or 2♠ opening bid showed ~5-10 points with a 6-card major, and little defensive strength – a pre-emptive bid. More recently players have also included a 2♦ bid to show a weak 6-card diamond suit (not now strictly Benji).

The aim of these bids is to both describe the hand to partner, and to disrupt the opponents' bidding. This latter aim can cause problems for the defenders (particularly the 'second' hand), so it is important for defenders to describe their hands as accurately as possible, bearing in mind that they are starting at the 2-level. A general aim should be to be as sensibly aggressive as possible, but recognising that the third hand has not yet had chance to describe their hand.

After opponent's weak opening (2♦,♥,♠), the second hand basically has nine bid-options (initially players should only be concerned with six of these – the other three can come later):

SUIT OVERCALL

In concept the strategy is similar to that used over 1-level suit openings, but recognising that opener has shown a more precise hand, which makes it easier for the third hand to make a possible penalty double (unlike third hand negative doubles following a 1-level opener, a third hand double after a weak 2-level opening is for penalty). More discipline is required when considering a suit overcall.

For example, consider the following hands (with West in the overcall position):

	♠ KQ92
	♥ 7
	♦ A103
	♣ AK652
♠ AJ1075	
♥ 86	
♦ KJ65	
♣ Q3	

If South opens 1♥, and West overcalls (correctly) 1♠, North cannot double for penalty, and eventually North/South will declare in 3NT (or possibly 6♣).

However if South opens 2♥, and West overcalls 2♠, North has no problems in extracting a considerable penalty double – so this hand would not be suitable for a 2♠ overcall.

I would suggest that a minimum overcalling hand should be something like:

♠ KQ10xx		♠ KQ10xxx
♥ xx		♥ x
♦ AJ10	or	♦ A10x
♣ Qxx		♣ Qxx

(Note the significance of the '10s')

In general, the over-caller should be reasonably sure that the hand belongs to their side – there is no room for any delicate manoeuvring.

Suit overcalls following a weak-2 opening need a better suit than if overcalling over a 1-level opening. Over-caller should strain to bid on a good 5-card or 6-card suit, with 12-15 points (maybe a good 11 points with a good 6-card suit).

The over-caller can make a jump overcall (e.g. 2♥ - 3♠) on a 15+ point hand with a good 6/7-card suit. Note this is not pre-emptive (never pre-empt over opponent's pre-empt).

After a 2♥ opening:

a)	♠ KQ1075	b)	♠ J9653	c)	♠ KQ9643	d)	♠ AJ1075	e)	♠ AQJ1052
	♥ 82		♥ J5		♥ 8		♥ Q3		♥ 73
	♦ K73		♦ AJ84		♦ QJ6		♦ A764		♦ K9
	♣ A2		♣ AQ		♣ K86		♣ Q9		♣ AK4

- a) 2♠ - good spade suit, minimum values for the bid,
- b) pass - 13 points, but spade suit is so bad.
- c) 2♠ - just about worth 2♠ with the reasonable 6-card suit.
- d) Pass - a poor 13 points – the two Queens may be worthless
- e) 3♠ - accurate bidding – nothing fancy.

After a 2♠ opening (remember you are now overcalling at the 3-level):

f)	♠ 7	g)	♠ A2	h)	♠ -	i)	♠ 74
	♥ AQJ654		♥ AKJ1074		♥ KQJ10632		♥ KJ108542
	♦ J65		♦ 984		♦ AJ6		♦ 76
	♣ A108		♣ 107		♣ QJ6		♣ K3

- f) 3♥ - poor outside hand, but good 6-card suit,
- g) 3♥ - 12 points, but excellent heart suit.
- h) 4♥ - not guaranteed, but aggressive approach. Partner probably only needs one significant card.
- i) Pass - never pre-empt over a pre-empt

DOUBLE by OVER-CALLER

The modern approach is to treat a 'double' for take-out (originally players did use this for penalty, but this is no longer accepted good practice).

- shortage in the opening suit
- 12+ points (11 with 4-4-4-1).
 - o with minimum values (12-14 points) at least two 4-card suits, and 3-card support for the third suit
 - o with 15+ points, only 2 suits required (typically 5-4-2-2 hands)
- 20-21 points - too good for a possible 2NT (see below).

After a 2♠ opening:

j)	♠ 52 ♥ QJ102 ♦ AK3 ♣ AQ52	k)	♠ 9 ♥ Q965 ♦ A1084 ♣ AJ64	l)	♠ 96 ♥ KQ7 ♦ QJ62 ♣ AJ86	m)	♠ A2 ♥ AJ652 ♦ KJ4 ♣ Q93	n)	♠ 8 ♥ KQ97 ♦ AJ6 ♣ AJ1083
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- j) dbl - 16 points – all suits covered
k) dbl - only 11 points – but suitable 1444 shape
l) dbl - just worth a double with the good 3-card major.
m) dbl - the poor 5-card heart suit is not suitable for a 3♥ overcall. Not quite good enough for 2NT.
n) dbl - rather than a 3♣ overcall, focus on the 4-card heart suit (also cover in the third suit).

After a 2♦ opening:

o)	♠ AJ1083 ♥ KQ97 ♦ 8 ♣ KJ4
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- o) 2♠ - with 5/4 in the majors, always prefer the suit overcall to a double. (The same applies over a 1-level opening)

2NT OVERCALL

16-19 points **with a stop** in opener's suit. The stop should be the ability to hold-up for two rounds (so Kx would be debateable).

In response to 2NT partner will bid as if an opening 2NT but adjusted for the ~4 point difference. i.e. Stayman (4 or 5), transfers etc.

3NT OVERCALL

This bid can be made on two types of hand:

- unbalanced with a long strong solid minor **with a stop** in opener's suit.
- a strong 22+ balanced hand – “When you put down dummy I'll probably claim my 9 tricks”

Until more experienced, any response from partner should be natural (no Stayman, no Transfers).

After a 2♠ opening:

p)	♠ AJ8 ♥ AQ ♦ KQ986 ♣ Q107	q)	♠ AJ ♥ K ♦ AKQ10863 ♣ QJ6	r)	♠ A72 ♥ 7 ♦ AKQ6 ♣ AKQJ7	s)	♠ AJ ♥ AK7 ♦ AKQJ2 ♣ J74
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- p) 2NT - 18 points – 1½ stops in the spade suit
q) 3NT - 20 points – doesn't need much from partner
r) 3NT - almost certainly nine tricks.
s) dbl - same number of points as (r), but lacking suit solidity. Less certainty of 9-tricks.

3-LEVEL CUE BID

Usually based on a solid minor **without** a stop in the opening suit – preferable to inviting game in the minor. Asking partner to bid 3NT with a stop in the opener's suit.

After a 2♠ opening:

t)	♠ 5	♠ K653	u)	♠ 5	♠ 972	(v)	♠ 5	♠ 972
	♥ K4	♥ Q92		♥ K4	♥ J932		♥ K4	♥ Q932
	♦ AKQJ863	♦ 107		♦ AKQJ863	♦ 107		♦ AKQJ863	♦ 107
	♣ AQ6	♣ 7432		♣ AQ6	♣ 7432		♣ AQ6	♣ K432

- t) 3♠ - 3NT West doesn't have a spade stop, so 'asks' East for a stop.
u) 3♠ - 4♣ - 4♦ East doesn't have a spade stop, but 'knows' that West is probably bidding on a long minor. He makes the 'pass' or 'correct' bid of 4♣.
v) 3♠ - 5♣ - 5♦ As (u) but with extra values, probably just worth forcing to game.

JUMP BID IN MINOR (over major) - 4♣ or 4♦ - 'LEAPING MICHAELS'

- 15+ points
- 5/5 in that minor and the other major (most of the points should be in these suits). (~ 5½ losers).

Responses from partner:

- sign-off in 4Major or 5Minor
- lower unknown suit for slam interest in the major
higher unknown suit or 4NT, for slam interest in the minor

After a 2♠ opening:

w)	♠ 8	♠ 9532	x)	♠ 8	♠ 9532
	♥ KQ986	♥ A		♥ KQ986	♥ A
	♦ A4	♦ 1072		♦ A4	♦ K72
	♣ AKJ97	♣ Q8632		♣ AKJ97	♣ Q8632

- w) (2♠) - 4♣ - 5♣ West must not commit to the 5-card major with the good 5-card minor.
x) (2♠) - 4♣ - 4♣ Slam interest clubs (higher unknown suit). Over-caller can now use Blackwood (in clubs), to reach the slam.

After a 2♥ opening:

y)	♠ KQ986	♠ A	z)	♠ KQ986	♠ AJ6	(aa)	♠ KQ986	♠ A8
	♥ 8	♥ 9532		♥ 8	♥ 9532		♥ 8	♥ 9532
	♦ AKJ97	♦ Q8632		♦ AQJ97	♦ K8		♦ AQJ97	♦ K104
	♣ A4	♣ 1072		♣ A4	♣ KJ62		♣ A4	♣ K432

- y) (2♥) - 4♦ - 5♦ No slam interest.

- z) (2♥) - 4♦ - 4♥ Slam interest spades (lower unknown suit). Over-caller can now use Blackwood (in spades), to reach the slam
- aa) (2♥) - 4♦ - 4NT 4NT is the higher of hearts and clubs (in diamonds) - slam interest in diamonds. This is now also Blackwood .

(The following three options are not readily used by ‘club players’, but are included for completeness)

4NT (over major)

- 15+ points
- 5/5 in minors
- **game** limit
- (~5½ losers)

4-LEVEL CUE BID of MAJOR

- 15+ points
- 5/5 in minors
- **slam try** in minors
- (~4½ losers)

JUMP BID IN MINOR (Over 2♦ Opening)

- 4♦ – both majors
- 4♣ – major/clubs

‘PASS’

- this can be on < 12 points
or
- a 12+ point hand unsuitable for any of the above actions. The hand may contain opener’s suit, and is unable to double (for take-out). It is imperative that partner re-opens with a ‘double’ on any 9+ point hand with shortage in opener’s suit. This can then be ‘passed’ by the original over-caller (i.e. replacing his own penalty double).

LEBENSOHL RESPONSES TO OVER-CALLER’S DOUBLE

The traditional response to the over-caller’s double is to bid your best suit at an appropriate level. However this is somewhat lacking in definition, with limited bids available.

The more modern approach is to use the ‘Lebensohl’ concept, which enables a wider-range of hands to be described (this is derived from the same principles when responding to partner’s 1NT opening bid, followed by an intervening bid).

Lebensohl revolves around a 2NT response being used as a ‘relay bid’ – asking partner to bid 3♣, after which responder will describe his hand further (over-caller is allowed to break the relay with 17+ points).

Importantly, since the ‘double’ can be wide-ranging, Lebensohl enables responder to describe four point-bands (in some instances not all four ranges can be defined, but it is an improvement on the traditional methods).

- Weak - 0-7 points (but recognise that unlikely to be lower end if the third hand passes)
- Intermediate (1) - 8-9 points
- Intermediate (2) - 10-11 points
- Strong - 12+ points

a) Four Bids Possibly Available (e.g. (2♦/♥) – dbl – (pass) - ?

- Suit at 2-level - 0-7 points (but recognise that unlikely to be the lower end if the third hand passes)
- 2NT (Lebensohl) - 8-9 points After opener's 3♣ bid, responder can bid his suit
- Suit at 3-level - 10-11 points (usually a 5-card suit)
- Cue bid of opener's suit - 12+ (forcing to game). Will guarantee a 4-card major

b) Three Bids Available (e.g. (2♠) – dbl – (pass) - ?

In this situation since a 2-level suit bid is no longer available, the two intermediate ranges have to be combined, giving:

- 2NT (Lebensohl) - 0-7 points
- Suit at 3-level - 8-11 points After opener's 3♣ bid, responder can bid his suit
- Cue bid of opener's suit - 12+ points (forcing to game). Will guarantee a 4-card major.

After (2♦/♥) – dbl – (pass) - ? (where usually four bids are available to responder)

bb)	♠ Q8742 ♥ 65 ♦ 74 ♣ Q862	cc)	♠ Q874 ♥ 652 ♦ 74 ♣ Q862	dd)	♠ KQ874 ♥ 65 ♦ 74 ♣ K963	ee)	♠ AK874 ♥ 65 ♦ 74 ♣ A863	ff)	♠ AK874 ♥ 65 ♦ 74 ♣ AQ63
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- bb) 2♠ - 5-card suit. Opener will usually 'pass'
- cc) 2♠ - ...also on a 4-card suit. Opener will usually 'pass'
- dd) 2NT - following partner's enforced 3♣ bid, responder will bid 3♠ (8-9 points).
- ee) 3♠ - jump bid to 3-level showing 10-11 points. This should show 5-spades
- ff) 3♦/♥ - cue bid showing 12+points and 4+spades

After (2♠) – dbl – (pass) - ? (where only three bids are available to responder)

gg)	♠ Q87 ♥ 96542 ♦ 76 ♣ Q86	hh)	♠ Q87 ♥ 6542 ♦ 764 ♣ Q86	ii)	♠ Q87 ♥ K9542 ♦ A6 ♣ Q86	jj)	♠ Q87 ♥ K954 ♦ A62 ♣ Q863	kk)	♠ Q87 ♥ A542 ♦ A64 ♣ Q86
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- gg) 2NT - 5-card suit. Opener will bid 3♣, which responder will convert to 3♥ – 'pass'
- hh) 2NT -also on a 4-card suit. Again, he will bid 3♥ over partner's 3♣
- ii) 3♥ - 11 points – invitational.
- jj) 3♥ - ...also on a 4-card suit
- kk) 3♠ - cue bid showing 12+points and 4+hearts

ll)	♠ 8	♠ Q532	mm)	♠ 8	♠ 532
	♥ AKJ86	♥ 73		♥ AKJ86	♥ Q73
	♦ AQ4	♦ 10752		♦ AQ4	♦ 10752
	♣ KQ52	♣ Q86		♣ KQ52	♣ A86

ll) (2♠) – dbl – 2NT – 3♥ – pass. East bids 2NT intending to bid 3♦ over partner’s 3♣, However West is strong enough (17+ points) to break the relay, and bids 3♥. East passes.

mm) (2♠) – dbl – 2NT – 3♥ – 4♥. As (ll), but now East is strong enough to bid 4♥

AFH