

WEAK TWO OPENINGS

These are pretty easy to get right, and can make life pretty tough for the opposition. They apply in three suits (2♣ is used as our only strong bid).

Requirements:

- 6 cards in your suit (try not to do it on total rubbish!)
- 6 – 9 points
- No outside four card major

So for example these are weak twos:

♠ AJT742	♠ T7	♠ QJ3	♠ KT5432
♥ 876	♥ AQ8752	♥ 87	♥ 752
♦ AT4	♦ JT2	♦ AJT842	♦ K43
♣ 9	♣ Q9	♣ T2	♣ 8

And these aren't!

♠ KJT74	♠ T643	♠ QJ3	♠ Q75432
♥ J87	♥ AQ8752	♥ A7	♥ 75
♦ AT6	♦ 7	♦ AJT862	♦ J4
♣ 93	♣ Q9	♣ T2	♣ Q32

If partner opens a weak two, what should we do? If we have 15 or more points (making game a decent shot opposite a maximum) then we can ask partner for more information – see Ogust, below.

If we have fewer than that, then all we can do is to raise partner to the appropriate level. Deciding what the appropriate level is should be based on two key factors:

- How many trumps you have
- How shapely your hand is

Points don't matter so much – you're trying to get in the way and make the opponents guess wrong. The general rule is to bid what you have. Assume partner has opened a weak two in hearts. In a hand that isn't total flat rubbish, bid four hearts with four card support and three with three card support.

Some examples - let's assume (for ease) partner has opened 2♥:

♠ AJ	♠ T7	♠ QT3	♠ KT
♥ 876	♥ AQ52	♥ 85	♥ 7543
♦ AT42	♦ JT	♦ AJ9432	♦ A9862
♣ 9876	♣ Q9432	♣ 92	♣ 86
3♥	4♥	Pass	4♥

Those are the bids I would make. Although partner may go off, if you have a nice fit you *must* try to play in it and especially if the partnership is weak – you'll make many more tricks declaring in hearts than you will defending 4♠ and if both contracts are making then you're getting an even better score!

Ogust – How good is your weak two?

So what about those situations when instead of pre-empting the opposition, we end up pre-empting partner through ill fortune? In these cases, partner needs the information to find the best level to play at and also the best game. Take the first weak two on the previous page. It's pretty nice – a nice suit, and as many points as we're allowed, as well as a singleton club. But the fourth hand is much less good – a poor suit and a flatter hand, with a minimum.

Luckily, partner can ask us to explain more about our hand using a conventional 2NT bid, called Ogust. This shows he has 15 or more points and wants information. The five pieces of information you can give are by responding:

- 3♣: I have a bad hand (6/7) and a bad suit (1 of the top 3 cards)
- 3♦: I have a bad hand (6/7) and a good suit (2 of the top 3 cards)
- 3♥: I have a good hand (8/9) and a bad suit (1 of the top 3 cards)
- 3♠: I have a good hand (8/9) and a good suit (2 of the top 3 cards)
- 3NT: Partner, I rock. I have a maximum 9 points and it's all in my suit: I have AKQxxx.

After this, your partner should be well-placed to judge the best place to play. Let's have a look at some examples:

West	East	West opens a weak 2♠ and East has a useful fit – but doesn't know whether the partnership have enough for game. He bids 2NT to check, planning to bid 3♠ over a weak response and 4♠ over a strong one. West's 3♠ (good hand, good suit) tells East everything he needs to go to game.
♠ AJT954	♠ K54	
♥ K4	♥ AT76	
♦ JT9	♦ AQ98	
♣ 6	♣ K4	
West	East	This time, West tries a weak 2♦ and East has a ponder. He has all the Aces and an interest in game if partner has a maximum. But 5♦ seems unlikely – what about 3NT? East enquires, planning to play in 3♦ if partner is weak, and try 3NT if partner is strong. West bids 3♠ and East's 3NT contract will be unlucky to fail.
♠ KJ4	♠ A54	
♥ 4	♥ AT76	
♦ KQT952	♦ A87	
♣ T63	♣ A5	
West	East	After 2♥ is opened, East might have a decent shot at 4♥ if partner is maximum. A 2NT enquiry draws a 3♣ response (West could call his suit “good” thanks to its solid honours) and East is content with 3♥.
♠ K76	♠ Q84	
♥ QJT942	♥ A5	
♦ 73	♦ AJ52	
♣ T63	♣ AT95	

You might like to think about how to defend against the weak two – normally in Durham we have a double to show the other suits and an overcall shows a decent six card suit in a strongish hand; 2NT can be used as a natural bid (probably something like 15-18 points) with a balanced hand and a stop. But it's not easy – especially if the pre-emptor's partner has already raised by the time you get to bid!