

## **ARTIFICIAL STRONG TWO CLUB OPENING (Part 1)**

In nineties lot of people who played duplicate bridge in Delhi were playing either Precision system or Strong Club with semi strong Diamond. But today the scenario is totally different. Most of the people have switched over to Standard American and very few pairs are playing Precision. For the benefit of all Standard system lovers we would discuss artificial strong 2C opening bid in this bulletin.

In early days of bridge, opening suit bids at the two level used to show very strong unbalanced hand almost forcing to game. These bids occurred infrequently and also occupied four bids. Therefore today most of the bridge players use only one bid for all these i.e. 2C opening bid.

The Artificial Strong Two Club Opening was devised and introduced by Mr. David Bruce, who was known as Mr. David Burnstine, of Los Angeles. The forcing 2C opening bid is an artificial bid used to show a very strong hand which normally assures game although the bidding may stop in a partscore. Now a days forcing 2C is widely used as it frees the other two level bids for more frequent conventional bids (e.g. weak two, multi 2D, Ekrens, Flannery etc.) and also can accurately describe strong balanced hands. 2C bid can be made on any of the following types of hand:

- 22+ HCP balanced hand.
- Nearly game forcing unbalanced hand in any suit with minimum 8-9 tricks.

### **A) Responses after 2C Opening:**

There are various systems of responding to 2C Opening. These are:

- Natural responses – In these responses, 2D response is negative less than 7 HCP and all other responses are positive. 2NT and 3NT shows balanced hands of 7-9/10-12 HCP.
- Two diamonds as the only positive response – In this the two diamond response is artificial forcing to game where as any other response shows less than 7 HCP.
- Step responses – In step responses controls are shown in steps (2C=0-1, 2H=2, 2S=3 etc.)
- Point Count responses – Responder shows strength in steps (2D=0-3, 2H=4-6, 2S=7-9 etc.)
- Ace showing responses – Responder shows Ace of the suit and strength when he holds no Ace. 2D response is negative showing no Ace and upto 7 HCP whereas 2NT is positive without an Ace. 2H/2S/3C/3D responses shows the Ace of the suit.
- Martelsby responses – These are devised by Chip Martel and Lew Stansby. Here 2S bid shows an unspecified 5+ card suit with min 2 top honours and 2D=0-1 control, 2H=2, 2NT=3 etc.
- **Miles responses**
- **Roth responses**

and many more. Out of all the above the best in our opinion are Miles and Roth responses. Although both these schemes are playable, our recommendation is a mix of both these with kokish relay with a difference:

### **Miles Responses after 2C Opening**

Miles responses were devised by the American expert Marshall Miles of California. The major change from other system in these responses is use of 2NT response to show 5+ card good heart suit and 7+ HCP. The main purpose of using two notrump response to show positive hand with heart suit is that it frees up the two heart response for the better purpose. Also if opener has heart fit, he can bid three hearts to show that and strong hand can become declarer. However if the hand is played in notrump (after 2NT response) then weak hand will become declarer. The complete set of responses are:

- **2D**, artificial negative, generally less than 7 HCP or less than 2 controls
- **2H**, artificial positive GF, generally at least 2 controls, no good suit of 5-cards.
- **2S/2NT/3C/3D**, Shows 5-card suits (NT shows hearts) and game force. Suit quality should be good.
- **4C/D/H/S**, Transfer to D/H/S/C showing a semi solid suit that can normally play for one loser.

We will discuss Roth responses and our suggested structure along with further developments next month.

*(to be continued...)*

*(Contributed by Sudhir Aggarwal)*

## ARTIFICIAL STRONG TWO CLUB OPENING (Part 2)

Last month we discussed the various types of response structures which are available to responder after 2C opening bid. We continue our discussion further:

### **A) Responses after 2C Opening:**

We had discussed the response structure which has been suggested by Mr. Marshall Miles. The other popular response structures are Roth Responses and Modern Standard Responses:

### **(2) Roth Responses after 2C Opening**

Roth responses has been devised by the well known Bridge Theorist Alvin Roth. The main difference from other structures is that the only positive bid is 2D. The complete set of responses are:

- **2D**, artificial positive GF, generally at least 3 controls or 1Ace + 2Queens. The hand may be balanced or may contain 5+ card longer suit.
- **2H**, artificial negative,
- **2S/3C/3D/3H**, Shows 5-card suits and limited high cards or less than 3 controls.
- **2N**, shows balanced hand 8-10 HCP (mostly Queen & Jacks), less than 3 controls.
- **3N**, shows balanced hand 11-13 HCP (mostly Queen & Jacks), less than 3 controls.

Although both Miles and Roth responses can be played our suggestion for casual partnerships is to use Modern responses given below.

### **(3) Modern Standard Responses after 2C Opening**

This is the most popular response structure being followed by many Bridge players. The important difference is 2D bid which is a waiting bid (neither positive nor negative) and therefore requires second negative concept. The complete responses are:

- **2D**, waiting bid, denies ability to make any of the following bids.
- **2H/2S/3C/3D**, shows 5+ card suit and 8+ HCP. Many players prefer that suit should have atleast 2 of the top 3 honours.
- **2N**, Positive response, balanced hand of 8+ HCP.
- **3H/S**, shows one suited hand, 6+ card semi solid suit.

After 2D, waiting bid, the opener's responses are natural:

- **2N**, balanced hand of 22-24 HCP.
- **3N**, balanced hand of 25-27 HCP
- **4N**, balanced hand of 28-30 HCP and so on.
- **2H/2S/3C/3D**, shows 5+ card suit and is forcing for one more round. However responder has an awkward problem if his hand is worthless. To solve this difficulty many experts recommend "**second negative**" bid

**Second Negative** – This bid shows 0 – 4 HCP (generally without an Ace). This is made after opener shows his suit in response to waiting bid by responder. To show opener his worthless hand, responder bids the cheaper minor at three level or 3H over 3D. Responder may also make a second negative with a hand containing an Ace or more than 4HCP if he doesn't have a convenient rebid. Further bidding after second negative is natural. Only non-forcing bid by opener is rebid of his previously shown suit.

Any bid other than second negative shows useful values and therefore game forcing.

For serious partnerships we recommend a response structure which is based on ideas from Miles and Roth responses with Kokish relay. We would discuss this next month.

*(to be continued...)*

*(Contributed by Sudhir Aggarwal)*

## ARTIFICIAL STRONG TWO CLUB OPENING (Part 3)

So far we have discussed the popular response structures which are available to responder after 2C opening bid. In this bulletin we would discuss response structure recommend for serious partnerships:

### **B) Suggested Responses after 2C Opening:**

The popular responses used by most of the partnerships include Roth responses, Miles responses and Modern Standard responses. Our recommendation is a mixture of all these responses.

We prefer to use 2H as artificial negative bid called Super Negative (from Roth responses) and 2NT as positive response with heart suit (from Miles responses). The complete set of responses are as below:

- **2D**, artificial positive GF, generally at least 1 control. The hand may be balanced or may contain 5+ card longer suit if it doesn't meet the suit quality requirement.
- **2H**, artificial negative, denies any control but may contain Queens and Jacks.
- **2S/2NT/3C/3D**, Shows 5-card suits (NT shows hearts) and game force. Suit quality should be good.
- **3H/S**, shows GF 4-4-4-1 hands with singleton in the bid suit.
- **3N**, shows any solid suit of 6-cards (AKQJxx) and no outside A or K.
- **4C/D/H/S**, are transfers and show minimum 8 card suit in a hand containing no Ace or King but some values in the form of queens.

### **C) Further Developments**

Since the 2D bid promises GF, opener need not jump to show balanced hands of more than 24 HCP. Also we like to use transfers by opener in minor suits which help in bidding many difficult hands.

#### **2C – 2D (artificial GF) – ?**

**2H** – Kokish Relay (responder to bid 2S)  
**2S** – Natural 5 cards in Spades  
**2N** – Natural, 22+ HCP  
**3C** – Transfer, 5+ Diamonds  
**3D** – Both Minors, Ds Longer or Equal to Clubs  
**3H/S** – 4-4-4-1 hands with 4-cards in the bid suit  
**3N** – 22-24 HCP, 4-4-4-1 hands, minor singleton  
**4C/D** – 4-4-4-1, 25+ HCP, other minor singleton

#### **2C – 2D – 2H – 2S (waiting bid) – ?**

**2N** – Shows Club suit 5+ cards  
**3C/D** – 5+ Hearts and 4+ Clubs/Diamonds  
**3H** – 6+ Hearts  
**3S** – 5+ Hearts and 4+ Spades  
**3N** – 6+ Hearts, solid suit  
**4C/D** – 6 Hearts and 5 Clubs/Diamonds

#### **2C – 2D – 2H – 2S – 2N (Club suit) – ?**

**3C** – Relay asking for 4-card suit  
**3D/H/S** – 5+ cards in the bid suit  
**3N** – to play  
**4C** – Good club support  
**4D/H/S** – Splinter in support of clubs  
**5C** – Weak raise

#### **2C – 2H (super negative) – ?**

**2S** – Puppet to 2N  
**2N** – 22-24 HCP Balanced hand, Non forcing  
**3C/D/H/S** – Natural, 5+ cards, Non forcing  
**3N** – 25-27 HCP, Balanced hand  
**4C** – Both Minors, Clubs Longer  
**4D** – Both Minors, Diamonds Longer  
**4H/S** – Natural, to play  
**4N** – 28-30 HCP, Balanced hand

#### **2C – 2H – 2S – 2N (waiting bid) – ?**

**3C/D/H/S** – Natural, 5+ cards, Forcing  
**3N** – Both minors, equal length  
**4C/D** – 5 cards in the bid minor and 4-4 in majors  
**4H/S** – Natural, Slammish

#### **2C – 2D – 3C (Diamond suit) – ?**

**3D** – Relay asking for 4-card suit  
**3H/S** – 5+ cards in the bid suit  
**3N** – 5-cards in Clubs  
**4D** – Good raise  
**4C/H/ S** – Splinter in support of diamonds

#### **2C – 2D – 3D (Both minors) – ?**

**4H/S** – RKCB in Clubs/Diamonds  
**4N** – Double Key Card Blackwood

The above response structure can be easily adopted by any serious partnership. You can also simplify the above structure to suit your partnership.

*(Contributed by Sudhir Aggarwal)*