

WEAK 2 BIDS

An opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ is called a Weak 2 Bid. Weak 2s are preemptive in nature. They send the message that you have lots of tricks in your suit, but few values anywhere else. A typical hand should have:

- **A strong 6 card suit, with your values concentrated in your suit.** A good guideline for suit quality is to have 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 honors, but it's important to pay attention to your spot cards as well.
- **About 5-10 HCP** ... not enough strength to open at the 1-level.

Opening a Weak 2 accomplishes two key things:

- **It takes up bidding room.** You hope that this causes the opponents more problems than it causes your partner.
- **It gives partner a clear picture of your hand.** This puts him in a good position to make intelligent decisions during the rest of the auction (whether it be to keep quiet, further preempt the opponents, or possibly investigate for game).

An important factor to take into account when you are considering a preemptive opening is your **position at the table**.

Position

First seat: It is anybody's guess whose hand this is. When you preempt, you are hoping to get in the way of one (or both) of your two opponents rather than partner. Keep in mind that partner is not a passed hand, and should be able to rely on you when he has a good hand. *Moderately disciplined.*

Second Seat: One of your opponents has already passed, so there are only two people at the table left to preempt: LHO and partner! Since you're equally likely to get in your own partner's way, this is the time to be the *most disciplined* of all. Partner will often have some strength and be interested in bidding.

Third Seat: The only one to make uncomfortable by preempting is your LHO, who could have a very good hand (you are weak, and neither RHO nor partner had enough points to open). If you're ever going to experiment with your preempts, this is the position to do it in, since you don't have to worry about partner having points and getting you into trouble.

Fourth Seat: Since you have the option of passing and getting no score, it would be counterproductive to open the bidding with a weak hand and give the opponents a big chance to collect a plus score. Therefore the rules change: in fourth position a 2♦/2♥/2♠ opening shows a very good six card suit and about 11-13 HCP. Your aim is to buy the contract and make it, without getting too high.

Examples:

♠ A 10 8	♠ A 5 4	♠ A K J 9 4 3
♥ 6	♥ K Q J 10 7 3	♥ 9 6 3
♦ A Q J 10 6 5	♦ Q 4	♦ K J 9
♣ Q 8 7	♣ 8 3	♣ 5
p - p - p - 2♦	p - p - p - 2♥	p - p - p - 2♠

Myths about Weak 2 Bids

- **Thou shalt not bid again: *False***
Partner sometimes forces you to bid again, and might also invite you to make a decision (usually after a 2NT inquiry).
- **Thou shalt not have a side four card major: *True, with exceptions***
♠KQJxxx ♥xxxx ♦xx ♣x **2♠.** This hand is all about the spade suit.
♠Kxxxxx ♥QJ9x ♦xx ♣x **Pass.** The spades are bad and the hearts are good.
- **Thou shalt not hold a void: *Mostly true.***
Having a void adds considerable value and controls to your hand: playing strength which partner won't be expecting. It will be difficult (if not impossible) for him to accurately evaluate your game chances when he has a marginal hand. (Keep in mind that any game exploration starts at the 3-level.)

Bidding after partner's Weak 2

Remember that partner's bid tells you that he has a good suit and very little else in his hand. To even think about game you need either a good fit for partner or a *lot* of points. Responder's options are:

- **Pass.** Any hand without support or the strength to invite game simply passes. *Responder can easily have more than an opening bid.*
- **A single raise is competitive.** This bid should be thought of as a continuation of opener's preempt, and opener is absolutely **not** invited to bid again. Responder can be very weak.
- **A jump to game is to play.** Responder might have a weak hand that is just trying to preempt the opponents as much as possible, or a hand with enough distribution that he thinks the contract might make. Or both.
- **2NT is an artificial asking bid** that shows game interest and requests more information from opener. The default is to play that 2NT is a "Feature Ask".

Opener's responses to a 2NT inquiry (Feature Ask):

- Bid a new suit to show the Ace or King of that suit
 - Bid 3NT to show a solid suit (AKQxxx)
 - Rebid own suit to deny a feature (side suit ace or king)
- **A new suit** shows a 5+ card suit and is forcing for one round. Responder needs at least a full opening bid, and interest in game if partner has support. **13 HCP is not automatically enough.** Opener raises with 3 card support: most hands will make a single raise; a jump to game shows a good maximum. Without support, opener usually goes back to his own suit. He may not pass.
 - **3NT is to play.** Opener does not bid again: responder heard the Weak 2 bid.

Remember **RONE**: a **R**aise is the **O**nly **N**on-**F**orcing bid.

Your holding in opener's suit is a critical factor when thinking about game. Without a fit, you need considerable strength to compensate.

- **With 2 cards in opener's suit** it takes the equivalent of a strong notrump (a hand worth a solid 16+ points) to try for game.¹ An honor in opener's suit is worth its weight in gold. Try for game by bidding 2NT.
- **With 3 cards in opener's suit** but with a balanced hand, you still need about 16 points to try for game². Again, use a 2NT inquiry.
- **With 3 cards in opener's suit** and an unbalanced hand, you can invite game (via 2NT) with about 13-15 points. With less strength, you should usually make a single raise to take more bidding room away from the opponents.
- **With 4 cards in opener's suit**, depending on your overall strength you can raise to 3 (competitive), raise to game (preemptive and/or hoping to make), or bid 2NT to ask for more information.
- **Bidding a new suit** denies 3 card support for opener's major and shows a hand that sees game potential opposite 7 points from partner. An average opening hand is not sufficient... why look for game when you'll only have 20-22 HCP between you on average, and haven't found a good fit?

¹ This is especially true when trying for 3NT after a 2♦ opening.

² The range for a Weak 2 is about 5-10 HCP. We expect opener to have 7-8 on average.

Bidding after partner's Weak 2 - Examples

Responder:	Auction:	Bid:
1. ♠ A K J 3 ♥ 4 ♦ K 10 8 7 ♣ A Q 3 2	2♥ : [?]	Pass. It's highly unlikely we can make 4♥, and our singleton ♥ leaves us with poor chances of establishing partner's suit in 3NT.
2. ♠ A J 3 ♥ K 10 9 4 ♦ J 9 ♣ A Q 10 4	2♦ : [?]	2NT Feature Ask. 3NT has chances if partner can show a feature outside of ♦. If partner rebids 3♦ we will pass.
3. ♠ K 7 6 ♥ A J 9 5 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ A J 4	2♠ : [?]	2NT Feature Ask. Here we have all kinds of game potential. We need a little bit of cooperation from partner to see if he has a useful side card.
4. ♠ A 10 3 ♥ K J 8 6 ♦ A Q 7 6 5 ♣ 4	2♥ : [?]	4♥. To play. This looks good for game. Big trump fit, a strong side suit, and lots of controls.
5. ♠ A K J 8 2 ♥ 9 ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ K J 9 5	2♦ : [?]	2♠. Forcing for one round. ♦Qxx is a valuable holding in partner's six card suit. If opener can support spades, 4♠ should have excellent prospects.
6. ♠ 7 6 ♥ Q 8 2 ♦ A 9 7 2 ♣ 10 6 5 3	2♥ : [?]	3♥. Preemptive. Opener is weak and so are we: the opponents can surely make something their way. This raise does not invite opener to bid again.