

11a v2: Opening 2♣ with a strong unbalanced Hand

If you do not have a 23+ HCP balanced hand then to justify opening 2♣ you need to have:

- 9 tricks in your own hand if your long suit is a major, or...
- 10 tricks if your long suit is a minor.

The reasonable assumption is that your partner can deliver one trick for you. The best way of evaluating your trick potential is to count your losers:

- You should have no more than **four losers** if your trump suit is a **major**
- You should have no more than **three losers** if your trump suit is a **minor**.

Counting losers:

- Only the first three cards in any suit can be losers.
- Only the ace, king and queen are winners.
- “Droppable Honours” count as losers (i.e. a singleton king or a doubleton queen)
- The queen counts as half a loser except when combination with ace, king or jack.

Examples of Strong Unbalanced Opening Bids

♠ AKQ976

♥ 2

♦ AK3

♣ A73

4 losers.

Open 2♣

♠ A65

♥ 3

♦ AKQ

♣ AK9854

4 losers in a minor.

Open 1♣

♠ -

♥ AQ

♦ KQJ98754

♣ AK3

2 losers in a minor.

(Just 19 HCP!!!!)

Open 2♣

(Losers underlined)

Responses to 2♣

2♦ is an artificial bid (alertable). It has nothing to do with diamonds. It is a ‘waiting’ bid, 0-9 HCP with no good 5 card suit (2+ good honours)

Any other response promises 8+ and a hand that might be good enough to make opener reconsider his planned rebid. **Bids of a suit promise 5+ good cards (two good honours)** and the partnership is committed to game.

2♦	0-7	no good 5-card suit
2♥/2♠	8+	Good 5+ card suit*
3♣/3♦	8+	Good 6+ card suit*
2NT		Not used, to avoid playing in No Trumps with the strong hand in dummy.

* A GOOD 5+ card suit has two of the top three honours

Opener's Rebids after 2♣ Opening

After 2♣ – 2♦

2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦	20+	Unbalanced hand
2NT	23-24	balanced hand
3NT	25+	balanced hand

After 2♣ – 2♥/♠

3♥/3♠	20+	Raise with 3+ card fit in hearts or spades
2NT	23+	no fit
New suit	20+	5+ card suit , no fit

After 2♣ – 3♣/♦

3♥/3♠	20+	5+ card suit
3NT	23+	balanced

What if responder has a REALLY BAD hand (0-2 HCP)?

If you have two points or less, start by responding 2♦ as usual. But when partner bids his real suit, you now bid the cheaper minor (usually 3♣) to show a horrible hand—this is called a 'second negative'.

Partner	You
2♣	2♦ (waiting)
2♠	3♣ (cheaper minor)

Partner	You
2♣	2♦ (waiting)
3♣	3♦ (cheaper minor)

The only time you can't do this is when partner's real suit is diamonds:

Partner	You
2♣	2♦ (waiting)
3♦	?

Unfortunately, there is no way to show a really bad hand now. Partner should bear this in mind before deciding to open 2♣ on a hand where he's going to rebid diamonds.