

Opening Bid of 2♣ and Responses

(with 2♦ ‘negative/waiting’)

Hands that qualify for a 2♣ opening

The 2♣ opening is a conventional bid that shows a very strong hand. We use the 2♣ opening with hands where it is highly likely we could miss game if we open at the one level and partner can't respond. The 2♣ opening hand typically has 23+ points and it says nothing about clubs.

Type of Hand

- Usually: a very strong hand with 23+ points (balanced or unbalanced);
- Sometimes: a strong unbalanced hand with 21 or 22 points, especially with a 5+ card major suit;
- Occasionally: fewer than 21 points but with a strong playing hand that can take **9 or more** tricks with no help from partner.

♠ 5 ♥ A K Q J 8 7 ♦ A K Q 4 ♣ 8 6	With this exceptional hand open 2♣ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The suit quality is excellent.• We expect to win 9 tricks from our own hand.
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Playing opening bids of 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ as weak, there is no gap between the maximum for a 1 level opening bid and the minimum for a 2♣ opening. Some hands with 21 or 22 points should be opened at the 1 level, whereas some are better suited to a 2♣ opening:

♠ A Q 10 8 5 ♥ A K J 8 ♦ A K 4 ♣ 8	This hand has only 21 points, but the strong major suits mean that there's a serious danger of missing game after a 1♠ opening. We therefore open 2♣.
♠ 8 ♥ A K J 8 ♦ A K 4 ♣ A Q 10 8 5	Same honour strength (21 points) but swap the black suits around and the hand is a clearcut 1♣ opening. First, we're much less likely to miss game when our longest suit is a minor. Second, opponents are more likely to bid after a 1♣ opening, so we'll probably get another chance to show our strength.

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 winners, assuming reasonable distribution:

- You should have at least **nine winners** if your trump suit is a **major**
- You should have at least **ten winners** if your trump suit is a **minor**.

Examples of Strong Unbalanced Opening Bids

♠ AKQ976	♠ KQ5	♠ -
♥ 2	♥ 3	♥ A7
♦ AK3	♦ AKQ	♦ KQJ98754
♣ A73	♣ AK9854	♣ AK3
9 winners.	9 winners.	10 winners.
Open 2♣	Open 1♣	(Just 17 HCP!) Open 2♣

Responses to a 2♣ Opening:

There are various methods that can be employed when responding to a strong 2♣ opening. In the past the artificial 2♦ was reserved as a negative response, and all hands with 8+ points had to respond with a higher bid. One problem with this approach is that opener may find it difficult to describe his hand, especially after a 3♣ or 3♦ response. Another is that the 2NT response may cause a NT contract to be played by the wrong hand.

Nowadays the 2♦ response is regarded as a negative/waiting bid that could sometimes conceal a reasonable hand without a good suit. If opener has an unbalanced hand with a long major he can show it at the 2 level, rather than at the 3 level which would have been necessary after a 2NT response.

POINTS	BID	COMMENTS
8+ points and good 5+ card suit	2♥, 2♠	Positive response. Should have 2 of top 3 honours if only a 5 card suit. With 8+ points and a poorer suit make the waiting bid of 2♦.
8+ points and good 6+ card suit	3♣, 3♦	Positive response. Should have 2 of top 3 honours if only a 6 card suit. With 8+ points and a poorer suit make the waiting bid of 2♦.
0-7 points or 8+ points and no good 5 card major or 6 card minor	2♦	Waiting bid. Denies the requirements for one of the above responses. Does not promise length in diamonds.

The 2NT response is not used because it uses up bidding space and can also make the wrong hand declarer in a NT contract. (Some partnerships use it to show specific kinds of balanced hand.)

2♣ Opener's Rebid

The 2♣ opening bid just shows the point count. It is the **opener's rebid** that describes the hand:

After a positive response (anything other than 2♦ waiting):

- A suit bid promises a good 5+ card suit
- A raise of partner's suit shows 3+ cards.
- A No Trump bid shows a balanced hand.

After the 2♦ negative /waiting bid:

A 2♥ or 2♠ rebid by opener is forcing for at least one round. It usually shows a 5+ card suit, but might sometimes be 4-4-4-1 shape. Over this, 2NT by responder is a clear (second) negative, showing 0-3 points.

- A 3♣ or 3♦ rebid by opener shows a 6+ card suit and forcing to game.
- 2NT shows a balanced hand and 23-24 points. Bidding proceeds in the same manner as after a 2NT (20-22) opening bid, with a 3 point adjustment.
- 3NT shows a balanced hand and 25-27 points. Bidding proceeds as above.
- A jump rebid in a suit shows a long and solid suit (AKQJxx minimum). Game forcing. Partner can raise to game with just a singleton, expecting no losers in the suit.

After a 2♦ Negative/Waiting Bid:

The only rebid that responder can pass is 2NT. All other opener's rebids are forcing for at least one round.

1. **Opener Rebids 2NT:** A 2NT rebid by opener is not forcing.

West	East	With fewer than 2 points East may pass but otherwise East should bid on. If so, the auction becomes forcing to game.
2♣	2♦	
2NT	?	

2. **Opener Rebids a Suit:** If opener rebids 2♥ or 2♠, responder gives the "second negative" of 2NT and opener rebids his suit at the 3 level, responder may pass.

Stayman and Transfers after a 2NT rebid

After 2♣ – 2♦ – 2NT the approach is just the same as after a 2NT opening:

- 3♣ is Stayman.
- 3♦ and 3♥ are transfers.*
- A jump to 4NT is a quantitative invitation to 6NT.

*These allow responder to stop in 3♥ or 3♠, but remember that responder needs only 3 points to proceed to game.

After a Positive Response:

If responder has made a positive bid then the auction is **100% game forcing**, so both partners can describe their hands slowly without the risk of either passing below game.

Summary

We have described a modern method for responding to a 2♣ opening:

1. 2♥ and 2♠ show 8+ points and a good 5 card or longer suit.
2. 3♣ and 3♦ show 8+ points and a good 6 card or longer suit.
3. 2♦ is an artificial waiting bid and includes weak hands of 0-7 points and stronger hands that are not suitable for a natural suit response.

Some Example Hands

Examples of responses to 2♣.

Opener	Responder
2♣	?

♠ 9762
♥ 1084
♦ 5
♣ Q7532

2♦

♠ KQ1085
♥ A6
♦ 10863
♣ 94

2♠

♠ 7
♥ KJ84
♦ 764
♣ AK873

2♦

♠ Q976
♥ none
♦ KQJ865
♣ 753

3♦

♠ K85
♥ AJ9874
♦ Q86
♣ 4

2♥

♠ Q97
♥ KJ84
♦ A97
♣ J52

2♦

Examples of opener's rebids:

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
?	

♠ AQJ62
♥ AKJ87
♦ A
♣ KJ

2♠

♠ KJ763
♥ AQ3
♦ AQ2
♣ AK

2NT

♠ AKJ3
♥ KQ87
♦ A2
♣ AKQ

3NT