



## Strong 2C Opening Convention

### Review

Previous lessons have covered how to open hands up to 21 total points:

Opening 1♣, 1♦, 1♥, 1♠

- Small Opening = 12-14 pts
- Medium Opening = 15-17 pts
- Large Opening = 18-21

1NT Opening = 15-17 HCP Balanced

2NT Opening = 20-21 HCP Balance

This lesson will cover what we do when we have an extra large opening hand of 22 or more total points. These hands are so powerful that we need to communicate our strength to partner in one bid so they know that we almost surely belong in game.

### 2♣ - A strong artificial bid

When we open 2♣ this says nothing about clubs, this is a conventional opening bid that simply tells partner that we have an extra large opening bid. Opener will have:

- a. 22+ HCP with any distribution or
- b. 9 sure winners (1 trick short of game)

**RESPONDER MAY NOT PASS!** Responder is forced to bid, and with as little as 3 HCP our side belongs in game with a fit.

## Examples

The following are all examples of hands that should open 2♣:

♠Q J 10 ♥A K 6 3 ♦A Q 6 ♣A Q 2      22 HCP  
♠A K Q 8 5 2 ♥A K 3 ♦A ♣K 10 9      23 HCP  
♠A 2 ♥K Q ♦A 6 ♣A K Q 9 8 5 2      22 HCP  
♠A K 2 ♥Q J 10 6 3 ♦A Q ♣A Q 2      22 HCP  
♠A K Q J 10 5 2 ♥A K 3 ♦8 ♣9 2      17 HCP but 9 sure tricks  
♠A K Q 8 ♥A K 7 3 ♦A ♣K 10 9 8      23 HCP

## How do you show Strong Hand with a 5+ card major

When you have a strong hand with a 5 card or longer major, you first show partner the strength of your hand, and then you bid your major suit at the cheapest level possible. Since you have shown partner your strength, they will not pass this bid. So you will open 2♣ and then after partner's response you will bid your major suit. For example holding:

♠A K 2 ♥Q J 10 6 3 ♦A Q ♣A Q 2

The auction could start:

You	West	Partner	East
2♣	pass	2♦	pass
2♥			

## How do you show Strong Balanced Hands

In a previous lesson notrump bidding ranges were shown, but balanced hands with 22+ HCP were left to a later lesson, these hands should open 2♣. The full notrump bidding ranges:

HCP	Opening Bid
12-14	Open 1 of a suit, then rebid 1NT
15-17	Open 1NT
18-19	Open 1 of a minor, then jump to 2NT or Open a 5 card major, then raise 1NT to 2NT
20-21	Open 2NT
22-24	Open 2♣, then rebid 2NT
25-27	Open 2♣, then rebid 3NT

## How do you show Strong Unbalanced Hand without a 5 card major

When you have an unbalanced hand and you don't have a 5 card major, then you will open 2♣, and then bid your longest minor at the 3 level. Your minor may only be a 4 card minor when you have 1-4-4-4 distribution. For example holding:

♠A K Q 8   ♥A K 7 3   ♦A   ♣K 10 9 8

The auction could start:

You	West	Partner	East
2♣	pass	2♦	pass
3♣			

## Responding to an Opening 2♣ Bid – 2♦ Waiting

So what does responder do when partner opens 2♣? Well the primary rule is **RESPONDER MAY NOT PASS!** Since opener is so strong, game is almost a sure thing, and slam is likely. For this reason we want most of responder's bids to show good values. So we have a new conventional bid, 2♦. This says nothing about diamonds, but instead is telling partner that you don't have anything to say about your hand, you are simply waiting to hear how opener will describe their hand. Any other bid by responder is describing a particular type of hand to partner. Responder should count their total points, (HCP plus length points):

RESPONSES TO 2♣ OPENING BID	
8+ total points	Bid 2♥, 2♠, 3♣, 3♦ with a <b>good</b> 5 card suit or any 6-card suit.
8+ total points	Bid 2NT with a balanced hand and no good 5-card suit.
	Bid 2♦ (waiting) with a hand not fitting any of the above.

## Examples Responses to a 2♣ opening

♠852   ♥863   ♦764   ♣8642   bid 2♦ waiting  
♠852   ♥KQJ63   ♦986   ♣72   7 total points, bid 2♦ waiting  
♠Q852   ♥K63   ♦A86   ♣952   9 total points balanced, bid 2NT  
♠J92   ♥AQ763   ♦976   ♣62   8 total points, good suit, bid 2♥  
♠AKJ2   ♥98743   ♦--   ♣6542   9 total points, bid 2♦ waiting lacking a good suit.  
♠Q85   ♥763   ♦AQJ86   ♣92   10 total points, good diamond suit, bid 3♦

Note that in the last example you couldn't bid 2♦ that would be waiting, instead you needed to jump to 3♦ to show a good hand with a good diamond suit.

## Cheaper minor negative convention

Responder's hand can have a wide range of points after responding 2♦ waiting. Since opener has such a strong hand, it is likely that responder has a very weak hand. For this reason another convention was invented, called "cheaper minor negative". When responder rebids the lowest minor suit available, it says nothing about the minor suit, but instead warns opener that responder has 0-2 HCP and will pass opener if they simply rebid their suit. You are warning opener, that if they see game in their suit opposite such a weak hand they better bid it themselves with their next bid! If opener bids a new suit it is forcing, but opener knows that responder is very weak.

### Responder rebid after bidding 2♦ waiting

When responder starts with 2♦ waiting, their next bid will depend on what opener bids:

Opener rebid	Responder's second bid
2♥, 2♠	0-2 HCP bid 3♣, cheaper minor negative.
3♣	0-2 HCP bid 3♦, cheaper minor negative.
2♥, 2♠, 3♣, 3♦	3+ HCP bid naturally: Support opener's suit with 3 cards Bid your own 5+ card suit Bid NT with a balanced hand
2NT	0-2 HCP, pass
2NT	3+ HCP "Systems are on" 3♣ is Stayman asking for a 4 card major 3♦ is a transfer to hearts 3♥ is a transfer to spades

### After 2♣ and a Positive Response

When responder makes a positive response, they have shown 8+ total points, and so the partnership is committed to game, and should start exploring for slam. The first priority is to find an 8 card fit. Opener will bid naturally, with 3 or more cards in responder's suit, they can support responder, or they can bid their own suit. Since both partners know that they are committed to game, there is no reason to jump. Simply make natural bids and find your best game.