

## Opening a Weak 2

For 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> seat openings there are various styles regarding the requirements (i.e. suit quality, outside 4 card major, shape etc.) for a weak two opening. These range from very strict to very 'loose'! We are going to recommend a fairly middle of the road approach. Make sure you discuss your Weak 2 opening style with your partner.

### IN FIRST OR SECOND SEAT

It is important to stick closely to these requirements as partner hasn't yet bid:

- 1) A six card suit. Occasionally a 7 card suit if the vulnerability makes a 3-level pre-empt too dangerous.
- 2) 6-10 points (but with a 10 point hand that passes the Rule of 20, open at the one level. There is no hand that is too strong for a weak 2 and too weak to open at the one level.)
- 3) Must have minimum suit quality of QJxxxx, Q109xxx, K10xxxx or Axxxxx. When vulnerable our minimum suit quality should be somewhat higher, e.g. two of the top three honours or three of the top five honours, such as KQ10xxx, QJ10xxx, AJ10xxx or AK9xxx. It helps partner both in the auction (and if we up defending) if he can rely on our honour holding.
- 4) No outside 4 card major when opening 2♦. Usually no outside 4 card major when opening 2♥ or 2♠ (but acceptable if the Weak Two major is strong and very poor 4 card major).

These hands should not open a Weak 2 in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> seat at any vulnerability, but for a third seat Weak 2 they are OK.

♠ Q 9 8 7 6 5 ♥ 8 2 ♦ Q 9 8 ♣ A J	♠ K Q J 9 5 ♥ 8 6 2 ♦ J 9 8 ♣ 8 5	♠ A 10 9 8 7 5 ♥ Q J 6 2 ♦ 8 ♣ 8 5	♠ K J 9 8 7 5 ♥ 2 ♦ 9 8 7 2 ♣ 6 5
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### IN THIRD SEAT

After two passes, clearly the 4<sup>th</sup> player is the strongest hand at the table and we want to obstruct his bidding if at all possible! We also know that partner doesn't have an opening hand so we don't risk 'pre-empting' partner.

The requirement for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> seat opening can be relaxed to include also:

- 1) Hands with a good 5 card suit.
- 2) Hands with slightly less or more than the normal 6-10 range
- 3) 6 card suits with poor suit quality.
- 4) Hands with an outside 4 card major.

### IN FOURTH SEAT

After three passes there is no one left to pre-empt! Typically both side will have roughly equal points so the Weak 2 should be constructive not pre-emptive. If 4<sup>th</sup> hand bids it must be with the aim of preventing the opponents from finding their makeable part score.

It should be a hand with about 10-13 points and a **good** six card suit, i.e. a good chance of making the part score but NO interest in game opposite partner's passed hand. With this hand, a 2♥ opening will prevent the opponent's overcalling cheaply with spades.

♠ 2 ♥ A K J 8 7 5 ♦ A 9 5 2 ♣ 6 5
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## Responding to a Weak 2 (i)

### (not including the 'Features' 2NT response)

**PASS** With no 3 card support for partner and no interest in game, responder should pass.

#### RAISE PARTNER'S SUIT

With 2 card support (3 if diamonds is partner's suit) and game points opposite a minimum Weak 2, bid game.

Other raises of opener's suit are pre-emptive NOT invitational. Opener is expected to pass.

Responder will normally 'Raise to the Level of the Fit' with weak hand, with the following exceptions:

- a) When vulnerable without a singleton or void, raise to one less than the level of the fit.
- b) With 4333 hands at any vulnerability, raise to one less than the level of the fit.

Responder will raise the Weak 2 suit to game level on any hand where game is certain opposite a minimum weak 2.

W	N	E	S
2♥	Pass	4♥	

East  
 ♠ 8 5 2  
 ♥ A 9 6 3  
 ♦ 10 9 7 6 5  
 ♣ 7

East's bid is essentially pre-emptive, raising to the level of the fit. This makes life very difficult for South who will not know what kind of hand East holds. It could be anything from a very weak hand like this to a genuine game going hand.

**Note:** After a 3<sup>rd</sup> hand Weak Two opening and a **pass** from the next opponent, responder shouldn't normally raise pre-emptively since both opponents have previously passed. If there is further bidding from the opponents, responder can still compete 'to the level of the fit'.

#### BID A NEW SUIT

Since opener is known to have a 6 card suit, he is likely to be short in any suit that he bid so we need a good reason to change the suit. We should have a) good suit quality and b) a hand where game is possible opposite a suitable hand from partner,

A change of suit bid after a Weak 2 opening is constructive but not forcing. Responder should have at least opening points (but not more than 16 points) and a good 5+ card suit. If the change of suit is at the three level it should be a **good** 6+ card suit as we are raising the level.

When responder changes the suit at the **two level**, opener should make every effort to raise responder's suit if possible. This includes raising with a good doubleton .e.g. Qx.

W	N	E	S
2♥	Pass	2♠	

East  
 ♠ A Q J 8 6 2  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ J 2  
 ♣ A Q 6 4

Here East has no interest in the Weak Two suit, hearts, but has a very good suit of his own. Even with moderate spade support, West could conceivably have a hand suitable for game in spades opposite East's good suit.

## Responding to a Weak 2 (ii)

### (The 'Features' 2NT response)

On hands where game is possible but the best contract and level is not clear we need to ask partner for more information. This is done with the conventional 2NT response (forcing). The 2NT response tells partner we are interested in game and asks for more information.

Note: Since it has a special meaning the 2NT bid needs to be alerted.

There are two popular schemes of replies to the 2NT enquiry.

'Features'. Showing a maximum or minimum hand and a 'feature' (an outside high card).

'Ogust'. Showing a maximum or minimum hand and the quality of the Weak 2 suit.

In this handout we will use the 'Features' replies, which are of a more 'natural' nature (whereas the Ogust replies are artificial and require more memory work).

### What is a 'Feature'?

An Ace.

A protected King (minimum Kx).

A well protected Queen (e.g Qxxx, QJx).

### After the 2NT enquiry opener replies as follows:

3 of the weak two suit	Minimum hand (5-7 points)
3 of any other suit	Maximum hand (8-10 points) and a 'Feature'
3NT	Maximum hand (8-10 points) and 2 of the top 3 honours in the weak 2 suit.

### How much does responder need to make the 2NT enquiry?

It depends on the level of support (or lack of!) for partner's suit.

**The Rule of 17** is a rather crude device but is an effective starting point for beginners. Simply add your total HCP to the number of cards you hold in partner's suit. If the total comes to 17 or more, then your hand is generally good enough to make the 2NT enquiry.

What follows is a rather more sophisticated method of evaluation:

### Cards in weak 2 suit    HCP needed

Singleton or void	16+	With no strong suit of our own, we MUST have 16+ high card point (HCP). There may be no entry to partner's hand if partner has a minimum hand so partner's values will be useless.
Small doubleton	15+	
Three cards or Doubleton honour and no wasted Js or Qs	14+	
Four cards	13+	With 4 card support we will normally raise to the level of the fit, but with 4333 shape (or vulnerable and no singleton or void) we might use 2NT to find out more from partner.

## Examples:

West	East	West	East
2♥	2NT	♠ 8 4	♠ 10 9 5
3♦	4♥	♥ K J 10 8 4 2	♥ A 6 5
		♦ A 9	♦ K Q J 4
		♣ 6 5 3	♣ A J 2

Although East has a good hand, game is not certain if West is minimum. East bids 2NT to find out more about West's hand. West shows a maximum hand (8-10) and a diamond feature.

West	East	West	East
2♠	2NT	♠ A J 8 7 4 3	♠ K 10
3♥	4♠	♥ K 10 5	♥ A Q 8 3
		♦ 9 6 2	♦ 8 4
		♣ 3	♣ A Q 10 7 4

West's hand is above minimum for his weak 2♠, so he shows his heart feature over East's 2NT enquiry. West is then able to jump to 4♠ with a fair degree of confidence.

West	East	West	East
2♦	2NT	♠ K 6	♠ J 7 5
3♠	3NT	♥ J 3	♥ A K 9 4 2
		♦ A J 9 5 3 2	♦ K Q 8
		♣ 8 6 4	♣ A 9

After West's weak 2♦, East has 17 HCP, enough for game, but playing in 5♦ is unappealing. He therefore uses the 2NT enquiry and follows with 3NT when West shows a maximum hand and a spade feature (and therefore a stopper).