

WHEN IS A HAND STRONG ENOUGH TO OPEN A STRONG, ARTIFICIAL, AND FORCING “2C”?

Many means of assessment have been offered in an attempt to set forth a minimum criterion that would ordinarily signal enough of a holding to warrant an opening “2C”, strong, artificial, and forcing bid by a would-be-Opening Bidder.

- a. Originally, a threshold of HCP’s coupled with a suit length requirement for unbalanced hands was used as the standard method of evaluation towards this question, originally suggested by Charles Goren.
 - 25 HCP’s with a 5-card suit
 - 23 HCP’s with a 6-card suit
 - 21 HCP’s with a 7-card suit
- b. Some suggested setting a minimum threshold of at least 21+ HCP’s or more ***without*** consideration as to the distribution of the hand and the number of cards within a given suit.
- c. Still others, using the “**Losing-Trick Count**” criteria, suggested opening “2C” with any hand holding four (4) losers, or fewer.
- d. Some suggest that Opener ***not*** bid “2C” as an opening call, even *if* an arbitrary point count or losing-trick count is satisfied, if, the hand contains two or more biddable suits.

Recently, a more exacting and aggressive method of assessment has been set forth to deal with this issue. It embraces the suggestion that ***any*** hand, regardless as to its distribution and point count, and whether or not it contains even two biddable suits, should be considered as a candidate for a strong, artificial, and forcing “2C” opening, if it satisfies the following two (2) requirements:

1. **It contains at least Nine (9) Playing Tricks**; i.e., not more than four (4) losing tricks, and
2. **The number of “Quick Tricks”** (defined as a high-card holding that under usual circumstance will win a trick by virtue of its rank in either offensive or defensive play) **is equal or greater than the “Losing Trick Count” (LTC).**

AK = 2 Quick Tricks **(No suit may have more two (2) quick tricks)**
AQ = 1½ Quick Tricks
A = 1 Quick Trick
KQ = 1 Quick Trick
KX = ½ Quick Trick **(Jacks are never “quick”)**

Example Hand: **AKQJXX** **(2 Quick Tricks - No Losers)**
 AX **(1 Quick Trick - 1 Loser)**
 X **(No Quick Tricks - 1 Loser)**
 KQXX **(1 Quick Trick - 1 Loser)**

This hand contains four (4) Quick Tricks and only three (3) Losers. This one qualifies. **Open “2C”.** (Note: Hand holds only 19 HCP’s)

3. **Always open “2C” with any hand with six (6) or more quick tricks.**