

Responding To Partner's Opening "2C" Bid

With most Partnerships, today, a "2C" opening bid is the **only** strong opening 2-bid other than 2-NT. All other opening 2-Bids (2D, 2H, or 2S) are weak and preemptive. These preemptive calls usually show 5-11 HCP's and a 6-card or longer suit. The qualifications for a strong, "2C" opening bid are that one must hold a very strong hand, exemplified by 21 or more HCP's (or its equivalent), no more than 4-Losing tricks (the equivalent of near-Game in one's own hand), and/or the number of quick tricks equal to, or greater than, the number of losing tricks held. The "2C" opening bid is strong, artificially conventional, and is forcing to any one of three levels: 2-NT, 3- of either Major suit, or 4- of either Minor suit; i.e., one trick short of Game in each instance. **Responder is obligated to keep the bidding open, at least until one of these three, previously-mentioned levels has been reached, and may *not* "pass" until then.** The most common methods of responding to Partner's opening strong, artificial and forcing "2C" bid are as follows:

A. Standard Responses: Responder's responses here are based upon high-card points and shape.

a. With **0-7 HCP's** - Bid "2D" - (**RESPONDER'S FIRST NEGATIVE RESPONSE**) – This bid is artificial; i.e., it says nothing about the Diamond suit. Under these conditions, with Responder having so few HCP's, a Game-level may not necessarily be feasible.

Then with:

- 1. 0-4 HCP's** – Responder re-bids "2-NT" over Opener's 2H or 2S re-bid (**RESPONDER'S SECOND NEGATIVE RESPONSE**) or "pass" if Opener re-bids 2-NT. (Remember, Opening "2C" forces at least to "2-NT".)
- 2. 5-7 HCP's** – Responder **re-bids anything other than "2-NT"**, the previously-mentioned "DOUBLE NEGATIVE," in order to show this particular top of his/her "First Negative" point count. Responder may either support Partner's suit or bid his/her own best suit. The opening "2C" bidder then usually takes control. Under these circumstances, Game is, here, likely.
- 3. With 8-9 HCP's** – Responder bids either: 2H, 2S, or 3C which evidences a 5-Card or longer suit, else 2-NT - A default bid in the absence of 5-Card or longer Heart, Spade or Club holding. Game is assured under either circumstance, with Slam a distinct possibility.
- 4. With 9 or more HCP's** – Responder jumps the bidding into his/her 5-card or longer suit, else into No-Trump, both revealing the likelihood of a Slam-level final contract.

B. "2D"–Waiting: - An automatic, non-descriptive, artificial response, giving the bidding room for Opener to first describe his/her hand. This method has the distinct advantage that Opener will almost assuredly become the Declarer, rather than Responder.

C. Jacoby Step Responses: A series of artificial step responses giving Opener an exact HCP (High-Card Point) count evidencing the exact strength of Responder's hand. With Aces = 4, Kings = 3, Queens = 2, and Jacks = 1, as always, the responses using this system are as follows:

- "2D" = 0-3 HCP's
- "2H" = 4-6 HCP's
- "2S" = 7-9 HCP's
- "2-NT" = 10-12 HCP's
- "3C" = 13-15 HCP's; etc., etc.

D. “Roth” Responses: An artificial system of responses using the “2D” response as an artificial, Game-forcing bid showing at least one Ace and/or one King.

- a. “2D” = **Artificial and “Waiting”** = A good hand, but one that does not qualify for one of the positive bids shown below. This “2D” waiting bid is Game-forcing whereas “2H” is the negative.
- b. “2H”: **An artificial and “Negative”** hand with 4, or fewer, HCP’s with no Ace or King.
- c. **A positive response** requires eight or more HCP’s and a 5-card or longer suit with at least two honours.
 - 1. “2S”: A positive, 5-card or longer Spade suit with at least two honours in the Spade suit.
 - 2. “2-NT”: An artificial, positive, 5-card or longer Heart suit with at least two honours in the Heart suit.
 - 3. “3C”: A positive, 5-card or longer Club suit with at least two honours in the Club suit.
 - 4. “3D”: A positive, 5-card or longer Diamond suit with at least two honours in the Diamond suit.

E. “Control” Step Responses: A series of artificial step responses which give Opener an exact description as to the number of “Controls” (Aces and/or Kings) that Responder holds. In this System, an **Ace** accounts for **two (2) “Controls,”** and a **King** for **one (1) “Control.”**

- a. “2D” = None or One Control (No Aces and none or one King)
- b. “2H” = Two Controls (One Ace **or** two Kings)
- c. “2S” = Three Controls (One Ace **and** one King)
- d. “2NT” = Three Controls (Three Kings)
- e. “3C” = Four Controls (Two Aces, four Kings, or one Ace and two Kings)
- f. “3D” = Five Controls (Two Aces and one King, or one Ace and three Kings)
- g. “3H” = Six Controls, etc., etc.

Step Responses Following Interference from the Opponents

Subsequent to Partner’s Opening of “2C”, it is possible, although infrequent, that Responder’s Right-Hand Opponent (RHO) will put in an interference bid **before** Responder can act, independent of whichever of the above-referenced step systems the Partnership utilizes. Under these circumstances, Partnerships must utilize an artificial bidding system which allows for a measured response that still imparts the information that Opener desperately needs in order to have a reasonable chance of finding the optimum contract.

F. The “DOP1” Convention: (Pronounced “*Dopey*”) This Convention signifies a “**double**” representing **Zero or None**, and a “**pass**” representing **One**. It is customarily designed to be used when showing the number of Aces following interference to either of Partner’s “4-NT” or “4C” Ace-asking bids. In this instance, for example, when employing “**Jacoby Step**” Responses after the Opponent’s interference to Partner’s opening “2C” bid, a “**double**” shows the first step (0-3 HCP’s), a “**pass**” shows the second step (4-6 HCP’s), the next higher bid over the Opponent’s call shows the third step (7-9 HCP’s), with each “**Up-the-Ladder**” higher bid over the Opponent’s interference bid equivalent to one further step (10-12), (13-15) HCP’s, etc

Here, with 0-3 HCP’s, South would “**double**,” with 4-6 HCP’s, South would “**pass**,” with 7-9 HCP’s, South would bid “2S” (the next higher bid over the interference call, with 10-12 HCP’s, South would bid “2-NT,” etc., etc., one step up for each 3-point spread thereafter.

<u>North.</u>	
“2C”	
	<u>East</u>
	2H
	<u>South</u>
	???