

## Strong Opening Bids

Most hands of 12 or more HCP are opened at the 1-level. Partner will respond if they have 6 or more HCP and pass if they have 5 or fewer. Sometimes we have a hand that is so strong that we want partner to keep the bidding open even if they have fewer than six points. Two opening bids are used to show these strong hands: 2♣ and 2NT

### 2♣ opening (usually 20+ unbalanced or 23+ balanced)

The artificial 2♣ opening is used to show any hand too strong to open at the 1-level (except 20-22 balanced) and forces a response from partner. *When opener bids 2♣ responder should not pass until game has been bid, regardless of the strength of their hand.*

The 2♣ opening could be made on a range of hands.

♠AKQ98642	♠3	♠AQ8
♥A	♥AQJ108	♥AKJ9
♦AK7	♦AKQ107	♦AJ82
♣108	♣AQ	♣KQ
<b>STRONG SINGLE-SUITER</b> <i>(Opener will rebid ♠ at the cheapest level)</i>	<b>STRONG TWO-SUITER</b> <i>(Opener will rebid ♥ at the cheapest level)</i>	<b>STRONG BALANCED</b> <i>(Too strong to open 2NT. Opener will rebid 2NT. Stayman and transfers could then apply)</i>

## What to respond

When partner opens 2♣, responder should use as little bidding space as possible in order to allow opener to describe the nature of their strong hand. Therefore, the most common response to a 2♣ opening bid is:

2♦: This is a *waiting* bid as the responder is waiting to hear about the nature of their partner's strong hand. This is the typical response with any hand of 0-5 HCP or ANY balanced hand.

2♥, 2♠, 3♦, 3♣: These are *positive* responses and show 6+ HCP and a good 5-card suit. The best definition of a good 5-card suit in this context is two of the three top cards (A, K, Q) in the suit shown.

**NOTE: 2NT is NEVER used as a response to a 2♣ opening bid. All balanced hands respond 2♦.**

♠ J 5 3		♠ 6	
♥ 9 6 4		♥ AKQ10 7 5	
♦ Q 7 6 4 2		♦ AKJ	
♣ J 5		♣ KQ10	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	All pass		

If East opens 1 ♥ West will pass. East is prepared to play in game opposite a hand that would pass a one of a suit opening, so they bid 2 ♣. West bids 2 ♦, waiting, and East bids 2 ♥. West raises to game.

♠ Q 9 7 3		♠ A J 10	
♥ 10 9 8 7		♥ AKQ 6	
♦ 10 6 2		♦ QJ	
♣ 10 3		♣ AK 8 4	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	All pass		

East's 2 NT rebid after opening 2 ♣ shows a hand too strong to open 2 NT (so 23+). West's 2 HCP are enough for game, and Stayman identifies the 4-4 heart fit.

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 ♠			

West opens 2 ♣ with their game-forcing hand. East's bid of 2 ♠ shows a 5+ card suit with two of the top three cards in that suit. West should support their partner's spade suit. East and West should reach a final contract of 6 ♠.