

## 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

## Two No Trump Opening (20-22 Balanced)

The 2NT opening shows a balanced hand (4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2) with between 20 and 22 HCP. Responder's bids are similar to those in response to a 1NT opening – Stayman and transfers apply. There is no space for an invitational bid, but responder should generally bid a game contract with 4+ HCP.

Each of the following hands is a 2NT opening bid.

♠AQ98  
♥AJ75  
♦AK7  
♣K8

♠AJ732  
♥QJ10  
♦AKQ  
♣A9

♠AQ8  
♥AJ9  
♦AJ82  
♣KQ6

## What to respond

Opener can bid Stayman or transfer to a major

- 3♣: Stayman - shows at least one four card major suit, asks partner for a 4 card major suit.
- 3♦: Transfer - 5+ ♥.
- 3♥: Transfer - 5+ ♠

A bid of 3NT shows a hand with no interest in slam.

A bid of 4NT invites opener to pass with a minimum or head towards slam with a non-minimum.

With balanced hands, 33+ HCP are required to bid 6NT.

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 NT	Pass	6 NT	All pass

West's 2 NT opening shows 20-22 HCP. East, with 13 HCP, knows that the partnership has between 33 and 35 HCP, enough for a small slam.

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

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

West's 2 NT opening shows 20-22 HCP and a balanced hand. East's hand is strong enough to bid game, so they transfer to hearts and then bid 3 NT, showing a 5-card heart suit and a balanced hand. West knows that there is an 8-card heart fit so they bid 4 ♥.

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 NT	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
3 ♠	All pass		

East has no interest in bidding game in response to West's 2 NT opening. Since the East hand figures to produce no tricks at all in a no-trump contract they transfer to 3 ♠ and then pass.