

Strong Two Club Opening – Game Forcing

Most of the time, when we open the bidding we will have a hand with somewhere between eleven and twenty High Card Points. We open the bidding at the one-level and our partner will always respond with six or more points. Should our partner pass (showing zero to five HCPs) then we will be left playing at the one level in our longest suit – something that is usually neither here nor there as our chances of making game opposite potentially zero points are negligible.

Sometimes, however, we will have a hand **too good** for this approach. It is possible that we will hold an extremely powerful hand where we are pretty sure we will make game opposite anything and where we are hopeful of making slam if our partner has even a moderately good hand. In this situation, we open a conventional Two Clubs, which means nothing about clubs but just means “I have a very good hand. We must keep bidding until we reach game”.

Sample Two Club Openings

Although it notionally shows Twenty One or more High Card Points, choosing when to open Two Clubs is less about High Card Points and more about trick taking potential. Consider the following very, very strong hands:

♠ AKQT96

♠ AKQ4

♠ A3

♠ KQ94

♥ AK4

♥ KT9

♥ void

♥ AKJT9

♦ 9

♦ AQ5

♦ AKQ98765

♦ A93

♣ KQJ

♣ AQJ

♣ AQ2

♣ K

Open Two Clubs

Open Two Clubs

Open Two Clubs

Open One Heart

As you can see, a Two Club opening bid shows a very, very strong hand. You should only use it if you are sure you want to be in game – even if your partner has hardly any points!

Responding to Two Clubs – Two Diamonds (nearly always)

Remember that once our partner has opened Two Clubs, our side is committed to game. As responder, we cannot pass, no matter how poor our hand, until we are in Three No Trumps, Four of a Major or Five of a Minor. Usually, it is best to respond to our partner's Two Club opening bid with an artificial Two Diamond response. This is known as a waiting bid and allows our partner to begin to describe their very strong hand.

Remember that it shows zero points. If we later on bid a suit or raise our partner's suit we are not showing anything special. We are forced to keep bidding until we get to game.

Responding Two of a Major or Three of a Minor

The one time you shouldn't respond Two Diamonds is where you have a good hand (say Nine or more HCP) and a good, five card suit. In that instance, you can bid your suit at the cheapest level. It is likely your side is going to go looking for a slam now, and it is important to describe *both* hands, rather than sitting back placidly and hearing about just your partner's strong hand. Imagine we hold the following hand and our partner opens Two Clubs. What should we bid?

♠ 9

♠ KQ9832

♠ QT973

♠ 3

♥ AKT83

♥ A4

♥ A4

♥ 9762

♦ 93

♦ 74

♦ KJ2

♦ KQJ983

♣ KJ932

♣ 432

♣ K72

♣ AJ

Bid Two Hearts

Bid Two Spades

Bid Two Diamonds

Bid Three Diamonds

After this, we should continue to describe our hand, remembering **we cannot pass until we reach game**.