

Responses to Strong 2 Club Opening

Mini-lesson March 2026

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2♣ Opening Bid

- Last time we talked about the requirements for a strong 2♣ opening bid where the opener is showing a very strong hand
- As you all know, partner must not pass (even with zero points)
- Today, we'll talk more specifically about the responses

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Types of Opening 2♣ Bid

- A quick refresher on the two types of opening 2♣ bid that we discussed:
 - A) Balanced Hands with 22+ hcp
 - B) Unbalanced Hands with 8½ playing tricks or more AND 4 or more quick tricks

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Types of Response to 2♣ Bid

- Waiting 2♦ bid
- A Positive Bid of 2NT
- A Positive Suit Bid of 2♥ / 2♠ / 3♣ / 3♦
- Even with no points, responder must keep the auction going by using the waiting response
- The 2♦ bid doesn't say anything about strength or distribution, other than the fact that they do not have a hand that falls under the second type of response – the positive response

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Positive Response Types

- A balanced hand without a particular suit to show
- An unbalanced hand with a **good** suit
- Both types show 8+ points

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The 2NT Response

- The 2NT response shows:
 - 1) A balanced 8+ HCP, **plus**
 - 2) At least **one honour** in **all** four suits
- Then responder can give a positive response of 2NT

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The Suit Response

- The Suit response – either 2♥, 2♠, 3♣, or 3♦, which shows:
 1. 8+ HCP, **plus**
 2. A suit containing at least 5 or more cards, and *at least 2 of the top 3 honours*
- Then responder can give a positive response in a suit

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Some Examples

- A) ♠ 8 7 5 2 ♥ 9 7 4 ♦ 8 3 ♣ 10 6 5
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- Response: 2♦
- B) ♠ J 7 5 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ Q 4 3 ♣ J 6
5 4
- Response: 2♦
- C) ♠ J 7 5 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ Q 4 3 ♣ A 6
5 4

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Some More Examples

- D) ♠ J 10 7 5 2 ♥ K Q 4 ♦ 9 3 ♣ K 6 5
- Response: 2♦
- E) ♠ A Q 7 5 2 ♥ 10 7 4 ♦ Q 3 ♣ J 6 5
- Response: 2♠
- F) ♠ 2 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ K Q J 6 5 4 ♣ A 3 2

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Game Forcing Or Not?

- We must consider what bidding sequences that start with 2♣ are game-forcing and what are not
- 2♣ – 2♦ – 2NT: After the 2NT rebid by opener, showing 22-24 HCP, responder with a bust can pass. No game-force exists now
- However, if responder after adding the points together thinks game is likely, then they can bid 3NT, if appropriate, or whatever other conventional bids that the partnership plays over an opening 2NT bid, i.e., transfers, Stayman, etc.

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Game Forcing Or Not?

- $2\clubsuit - 2\diamond - 2\heartsuit$: After a rebid in a suit by opener, the partnership is still in a game-forcing auction, and responder cannot pass, even with a complete bust
- However, one can play a second negative bid
- Responder can bid 2NT (artificial and alertable) saying "I have an absolute bust hand, go on at your own risk!"
- Now if opener simply rebids their suit, then responder can (and should) pass
- But if opener rebids anything else, the auction is game-forcing throughout

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Summary

- Responses to $2\clubsuit$ are one of 3 types:
- A positive 2NT bid
 - showing 8+ HCP and no particular strong suit to show,
 - And at least one honour in all four suits
- A positive Suit bid, either $2\heartsuit$, $2\spadesuit$, $3\clubsuit$, or $3\diamond$, which shows:
 - 8+ HCP, **plus**
 - A suit containing at least 5 or more cards, and at least 2 of the top 3 honours
- A waiting bid of $2\diamond$ (neither of the above)

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Summary (cont.)

- Most sequences that start with 2 ♣ are game forcing
- Certainly game forcing after any positive bid
- Sequences that go 2 ♣ - 2 ♦ - 2NT are not forcing
- A rare second negative of 2NT by responder is available by partner agreement, e.g. 2 ♣ - 2 ♦ - 2 ♥ - 2NT