

Strong 2 Club Opening

Mini-lesson February 2026

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2♣ Opening Bid

- Artificial Bid
- Must be alerted
- Shows a very strong hand (not necessarily ♣'s) - almost game values in your own hand
- Partner must not pass (even with zero points)
- So, how many points do you need to open 2♣?
- It depends!

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Sad Story!

- East held the following hand:
 - ♠ A K 8
 - ♥ A K Q J T 5 4
 - ♦ T 7
 - ♣ 3
- She counted 17 HCP and 3 length points for the ♥ suit = 20
- So opened the bidding with 1 ♥
- Partner (holding fewer than 6 pts passed)

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Sad Story (cont.)

- Here are both hands:

♠ A K 8	♠ 10 4
♥ A K Q J T 5 4	♥ 7 3
♦ T 7	♦ A 8 3 2
♣ 3	♣ T 9 8 4 2
- Making 11 tricks!!

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A Slave to Points

- Declarer was a slave to points and only counted hand as worth 20 points
- Hence hand not rated as strong enough for a 2♣ opening
- However, the hand has 9 tricks – almost enough for game in her own hand and thus should be opened 2♣
- Total points are not really relevant for Unbalanced hands

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Two Types of 2♣ Openings

- There are two types of hands to be considered when opening with a strong 2♣ bid
- Balanced Hands
- Unbalanced hands
- The example given at beginning of lesson was clearly unbalanced

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Balanced 2♣ Openings

- Balanced hands do indeed require 22+ points to be opened 2♣

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Balanced Hand Point Ranges

- With a **balanced** hand, now the point count minimum is important
- 12-14 hcp: Open 1 of a suit, rebid 1NT
- 15-17 hcp: Open 1NT
- 18-19 hcp: Open 1 of a suit, rebid 2NT
- 20-21 hcp: Open 2NT
- 22-24 hcp: Open 2♣, rebid 2NT
- 25-26 hcp: Open 2♣, rebid 3NT
- 27 or more: Call me, I want to be your partner!

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Notes on Balanced Hand Table

- Not all balanced 12-point hands should be opened
- Take something like QJxx QJx QJx QJx
- Yuck! 12 hcp yes, but I wouldn't open bidding with that hand if you paid me!
- What about Axx Axx Axx xxxx?
- Also 12 hcp – but absolutely open with this hand
- If your agreed range for opening 1NT is 16-18 instead of 15-17, adjust table as necessary
- Ditto if your 2NT opening is 21-22
- Don't have any range cover more than 3 possibilities, e.g., opening 1NT with 15-18p not recommended

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Unbalanced 2♣ Openings

- To open 2♣ with an Unbalanced hand, forget about points!
- Here are the two requirements:
- 8 and ½ playing tricks or more
- Plus 4 or more Quick Tricks

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Playing Tricks

- Playing tricks are all the tricks you can add up counting your top aces and kings and the number of cards in a running suit
- The hand described at start of this lesson has 9 obvious playing tricks, assuming ♥'s are trumps

♠ A K 8 ♥ A K Q J T 5 4 ♦ T 7 ♣ 3

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Quick Tricks

- What are quick tricks (QT)? These are what we consider to be likely *defensive* tricks. The standard way of counting them is as follows:
 - A = 1 QT
 - AK = 2 QT
 - AQ = 1½ QT
 - KQ = 1 QT
 - Kx = ½ QT
- We only count QT in the top two tricks in a suit. Thus AKQ doesn't rate as 3 QT, since on defense one is less likely to be able to cash the 3rd trick in a suit that isn't trumps.

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2♣ Opening or Not?

- What about the hand we've seen above?
♠ A K 8 ♥ A K Q J T 5 4 ♦ T 7 ♣ 3
- Yes. 9 Playing Tricks AND 4 Quick Tricks
- Compare this with something like:
♠ 8 ♥ A K Q J 10 6 5 4 3 ♦ 10 7 ♣ K
- No! True it has 9 Playing Tricks, but it has only 2 Quick Tricks
- Open this hand 4♥
- Jam up the auction quickly and hope the opponents don't find the fit they surely have in another suit

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Summary

- Open 2♣ if either of the following is true:
- Hand is balanced with 22+ points
- Hand is unbalanced with 9+ Playing Tricks AND 4+ Quick Tricks

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