



Ron Klinger

# Benji Two Bids: the 2♣ opening

SOME players misuse 2♣ and open 2♣ on any 19-21 point hand. This is unwise and unsound. The Benjamin 2♣ was designed to cater for single-suited hands which are too strong for sequences like 1♦ – 1♠ – 3♦.

When playing Weak Two openings, Acol does not have a suitable rebid for the single-suiter in the 18-21 HCP range. The Benjamin 2♣ fills this gap and so provides a useful addition.

The 2♣ opener can also be used for other powerful hands too strong for a normal one-level opening. Open 2♣ if you are worried that partner might pass a one-level opening and you could then miss game. You need more than an eight-trick hand. With just eight tricks, you need two tricks from partner to make 4♥ or 4♠ and with two tricks or even 1½ tricks, partner has enough to respond to a one-level opening. It is when one ace or one useful king in partner's hand is all that you need for game that the 2♣ opening should be used, i.e. when you are about one trick short of game in your own hand.

## When to open with 2♣

Open 2♣ with an unbalanced hand and about 8½-9½ playing tricks. The HCP range should be 16-22. With 23+ HCP, open 2♦ and if below 16 HCP, open with a one-level bid or pre-empt if below 10 HCP.

As a rough guide, open 2♣ with:  
23-24 points balanced.

21-22 points and a hand that is not balanced.

19-20 points and a six-card (or longer) suit.

16-18 points and a seven-card (or longer) suit.

Each of these hands is suitable for a 2♣ opening:

<b>Hand 1</b> ♠ K Q J 10 8 7 2 ♥ A 3 ♦ K Q J ♣ 3 9 playing tricks	<b>Hand 2</b> ♠ A 7 2 ♥ A K 9 ♦ A K Q 8 7 6 ♣ 2 20 HCP
<b>Hand 3</b> ♠ Q J 9 3 ♥ K Q J ♦ A K J ♣ A Q 5 23 HCP	<b>Hand 4</b> ♠ J 8 2 ♥ A 3 ♦ A ♣ A K Q J 5 4 2 9 playing tricks

With (1), bid 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♠ = 16 HCP and 9 playing tricks. A 2♠ rebid would show about 8½ tricks.

With (2), bid 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♦ = too strong for a 1♦ opening and a jump-rebid of 3♦.

With (3), bid 2♣ – 2♦ – 2NT to show 23-24 balanced.

With (4), bid 2♣ – 2♦ – 3NT to show nine playing tricks with a solid minor. You can take the risk on the spades.

## When should you avoid opening with 2♣

Avoid opening 2♣ with a two-suiter unless you have 21-22 HCP. Two-suiters in the 18-20 HCP range are shown by opening with a one-level bid and a jump-shift rebid (e.g. 1♥ – 1NT – 3♣).

Avoid opening 2♣ with a balanced 19. Opposite this you need 6+ points for game and with that partner will respond to a one-level opening. Better to play in one-of-a-suit than 2NT with 19, or even

20, opposite 0-4.

These hands are *not* suitable for a 2♣ opening:

<b>Hand 5</b> ♠ A Q J 8 7 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ K Q J 4 ♣ 3	<b>Hand 6</b> ♠ A J 7 2 ♥ A J 9 ♦ Void ♣ A K Q 8 7 3
<b>Hand 7</b> ♠ 9 8 7 ♥ A J ♦ A K J 3 ♣ A Q 7 5	<b>Hand 8</b> ♠ 2 ♥ A Q J 7 ♦ A Q 5 3 ♣ A K 9 8

With (5), open 1♠, intending to rebid 3♦, jump-shift, if partner responds 1NT.

With (6), open 1♣ and plan to rebid 2♠, a jump-shift, if partner bids 1♦ or 1♥

With (7), open 1♣ and rebid with a jump in no-trumps

On (8), open 1♦ and rebid 2♥ (a reverse, forcing) over 1♠ or 1NT. A 2♣ opening does not appeal when you have a three-suiter.

## Responses to an opening bid of 2♣

**Negative Response:** 2♦, 0-7 HCP or fewer than 1½ quick tricks. Just as for the 2♦ opening, the requirements for a positive reply are the same.

**Positive Response:** any reply other than 2♦. A positive response is forcing to game and has 8+ HCP or 1½ quick tricks, or more.

## Choice of positive responses

Just as after a 2♦ opening, a suit bid should be a five-card (or longer) suit and 2NT is a balanced hand. With a 4-4-4-1

positive, either bid 2♦ and aim to catch up later, or bid your cheapest four-card suit and hope for the best. Otherwise, bid your longest suit first or the higher suit if 5-5 or 6-6.

### Opener's rebid after a 2♦ negative

Any rebid can be passed. Opener should choose:

- 2♥ / 2♠ five-card (or longer) suit, 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tricks (or 21-22 HCP)
- 3♥ / 3♠ six-card (or longer) suit and exactly 9 playing tricks
- 4♥ / 4♠ six-card (or longer) suit and 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> playing tricks
- 3♣ / 3♦ 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tricks, usually a six-card (or longer) suit
- 3NT long, solid minor and at least two outside suits stopped and 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> running tricks
- 2NT 23-24 points, balanced. Further bidding as after a 2NT opening.

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

<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
2♣	2♦
3♠	4♠
Pass	

East has no high card values, but support for opener plus a singleton is enough to raise to game. West has a strong chance for eleven tricks if the opening lead is not a trump. If the bidding started 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♥, East would pass.

Note how difficult it is to bid such hands in standard methods without a Benjamin 2♣. If West opens 1♠, East would pass, while if West starts with a game-force, East's majors might be reversed and game could be hopeless. Allowing West to show exactly 9 playing tricks expresses the West hand perfectly.

### Opener's rebid after a positive response

The auction is forcing to game. Opener's rebid is natural (longest suit first, higher if 5-5 or 6-6). You may support responder's suit with at least three trumps, but it will often work out better to bid your own long suit first and support responder on the next round. This may help responder assess chances for slam.

As the opening hand is reasonably limited (about 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tricks), opener should normally leave all slam decisions to responder. A minimum positive, about 8-10 HCP, is usually not enough to produce the 3+ tricks needed to make slam a good prospect (in addition to the problem of control in all suits). A maximum opener with a good fit for responder's suit might initiate slam asks.

After 2♣ – 2♥/2♠, 2NT by opener is showing a balanced 23-24. Further bidding is natural. □

## The Two-minute Interview

### Rune Hauge



Photo: KRon Tacchi

Rune Hauge is a current European Open Mixed Teams Champion and he can be seen at most major Open bridge championships together with his team of fellow Norwegians. Rune is based in London and Guernsey, and is a well known football agent. He has been involved in major deals such as the transfer of Rio Ferdinand from West Ham Utd to Leeds Utd.

#### How did you start playing bridge?

I first got interested when studying economics in Germany.

#### How often do you play?

My business life is very full, so I can only manage ten major tournaments a year. In between, I squeeze in training sessions and the occasional duplicate at Young Chelsea Bridge Club. Unfortunately I am too busy now to continue playing rubber bridge, which I used to enjoy.

#### What does bridge mean to you?

A lot. I love it especially because it takes me away from business.

#### If you could change one thing about bridge, what would it be?

I like it as it is, and enjoy the different approaches to the game in different parts of the world. For instance, in my native Norway bridge organisers are very technically minded, so you know your exact score board by board. That is fun, but I also like English tournaments where you only discover at the end of a match or session how you have done. That's when it counts, anyway!

#### Name up to four people you would invite to your Dream Dinner Party.

Norwegian bridge champion Tor Helness (you never know what he's going to do next), Martin O'Neill (the Aston Villa Manager), and Bill Gates. That makes us four at the table and we can play bridge after our meal . . .

## 50th ANNIVERSARY KENT CONGRESS

THE 50th Kent Congress was held on 31 October – 1 November, once again at the Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club. Sunday's Swiss Teams event was awarded a green-point licence for the first time and the charming Edwardian building was bursting at the seams with 46 teams taking part. The winning team of Nick Irens, Zia Mahmood, Andrew Robson and David Bakhshi (see picture) was presented with the Lukey Cup. In second place were David and Janet Barnes, Vida Bingham and Nigel Osmer. David and Janet also won the Gentry Cup for the highest placed married pairs in Saturday's Swiss Pairs.



Saturday's Pairs was a close run affair, finally won by Nicole Cook and Gad Chadha with Jeremy Willans and Ian Draper 1 VP behind. Diane Rogers and Eddie Lucioni were awarded the Allnut Cup for the highest placed mixed pair. Highest non-experts in the teams were Cyril Parker, Chris Brian, Sophie Scott, Janet Batson and in the pairs Tessa Musgrave and Lance Craner (Puddleduck Plate).

The congress was once again extremely well organised by Monica Aitken, and it was very pleasing to see Rachael King back as Chief TD after a two-year break from directing. All competitors were given a souvenir pen to mark the occasion.