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2C opening bid and Responses

A 2C opening is the big bid in most systems. It shows 23+pts OR any hand that has 9 or more tricks. It's almost game forcing with one exception. (Note: O = Opener R = Responder)

Some examples:

♠Kx ♥AKJxxx ♦A10 ♣AKJ

♠AKQxxx ♥- ♦AK10x ♣AKQ

♠AKxx ♥AJx ♦AK10x ♣Ax

♠AKxx ♥A ♦AKQJ10x ♣Kx

♠AK ♥AKQJ10xxx ♦Kx ♣x

♠AKJ10x ♥AKQJ10 ♦Ax ♣x

♠AKx ♥Ax ♦Ax ♣AKQ109x

So on all these hands we would begin with 2C and develop things from there.

BALANCED AND UNBALANCED HANDS

All hands in bridge can be categorised as balanced or unbalanced. After a 2C opening it's the same. The balanced hands always rebid some number of no trumps, while the unbalanced hands always begin with a suit. Balanced hands are 4333 or 4432 or 5332.

The balanced hands

Opening 2NT is a balanced 20-22, so 2C followed by 2NT must be more.

♠AKJx ♥KJx ♦AK10x ♣Ax Open 2C and rebid 2NT, showing 23-24. This is the **ONLY** situation where R can pass after a 2C opening (correct with 0-1 pts).

♠AKJ ♥KJx ♦AK10x ♣AQx Now 2C followed by a jump to 3NT shows 25-28. This is quite a wide range, the reason being that we do not want to go higher, even with 28pts, if partner has nothing. Remember that in the play, it's much more difficult to play the hand with all the points on the one side. One cannot get to dummy to take finesses and play up to honours, making it tough to develop suits and tricks.

♠AKJ ♥KQJ ♦AK10x ♣AKQ You may never see a hand like this, but if you do, open 2C and rebid 4NT, showing 29-31 (may as well be prepared!). This is not Blackwood though. If you do have a hand where you want to just ask about aces, bid a suit **FIRST** and **THEN** go 4NT.

The unbalanced hands

Open 2C and then bid your long suit first. All bidding is natural now, and your first suit will **ALWAYS** be a 5 card suit or longer.

♠AKQxx ♥x ♦AK10x ♣AKQ Open 2C and then begin describing your hand by bidding spades first. If partner supports you that's fine – if not, your next bid will be diamonds.

♠AKQxxxx ♥x ♦AKQ ♣KQ This time bid spades and then repeat them.

♠AKxx ♥A ♦AK ♣KQJ10xx After 2C, your first bid is 3C, showing clubs – remember, 2C did not show anything in clubs initially, just some UNDEFINED very strong hand. After that, depending on what happens, you will introduce your spades. (One's 2nd suit can be a 4 card suit)

♠AQJxx ♥A ♦AKxxx ♣KQ 2C, then spades and then diamonds

RESPONSES TO 2C

There are a number of ways to respond, but I'd suggest the following, mainstream method.

2D - this is essentially the NEGATIVE response, showing 0-6pts. With 7+pts we make a POSITIVE response by bidding a suit. BUT, in the world of 2C, **ALL INITIAL SUITS** are 5 cards or longer, so with enough points for a positive, but no 5 card suit, we have to start with 2D.

♠Jxx ♥Axx ♦xxx ♣xxxx	2D
♠xxxx ♥x ♦xxxx ♣Qxxx	2D
♠xx ♥x ♦AJxxxx ♣xxxx	2D first, and show the suit next time
♠xxx ♥xxx ♦AQJx ♣Axx	2D first, without a 5 card suit. You will catch up later and make sure you reach slam

POSITIVE SUIT RESPONSES

We need 7+pts, AND a 5 card suit, BUT the suit should be of reasonable quality – 2 of the top 4 honours is a good guideline.

♠Jxx ♥AQxxx ♦xx ♣xxx	2H
♠KQJxx ♥AQxxx ♦xx ♣x	2S (the higher always with 2 five card suits)
♠Kxx ♥xxx ♦xx ♣AKxxx	3C
♠xx ♥xx ♦AQJxxx ♣Kxx	3D now, remember 2D would be the negative

AGREEING SUITS AND FINDING FITS

The BEST advice here is this – when partner shows a suit, support immediately with 3 or more, because the quicker the fit is found, the easier it is to make decisions about games and slams.

♠K10x ♥xx ♦Jxxxx ♣xxx	2C-2D; 2S-? Raise to 3S
♠J10x ♥xx ♦AJxxxx ♣xx	2C-2D; 2S-? Same thing. Don't bother to introduce the diamonds – you have a spade fit so tell partner right away.
♠Q10xxx ♥xx ♦Jxx ♣xxx	2C-2D; 3D-? Don't overdo it though. With only 3 pts don't be in a hurry to raise to the 4 level in a minor. Spades may be a playable spot, or perhaps 3NT. Bid 3S and await developments. If partner bids 3NT you will pass.

CATCHING UP AFTER A 2D RESPONSE

Players tend to worry that with enough points for a positive response, but no 5 card suit – how will partner know later they actually have a good hand if they start with 2D ?

♠K10x ♥AKxx ♦Jxxx ♣xx	2C-2D; 2S-? Raise to 3S and see what partner does. If they sign off in 4S, continue with 4NT and take partner to slam yourself
♠KQ10x ♥Ax ♦Jxxx ♣xxx	2C-2D; 2H-? Bid 2S now and wait for partner's next bid. Remember, you can ALWAYS go on later to show you have the extra values.

Bits and pieces

After 2C-2D; 2NT (23-24) 3C is still Stayman, and transfers are still ON as per usual.

Over interference – if opponents intervene, then R can pass with a negative (0-6), bid suits as a positive, and double for penalties. If intervention comes from opener's right hand opponent, he bids normally, and can make a FORCING PASS if stuck (R must bid)

Always go slowly with 2C auctions – don't jump around all over the place. Remember, they are forcing to game unless it goes 2C-2D; 2NT.

BIDDING HANDS

BALANCED HANDS

Hand 1

	WEST		EAST
♠	AKx		Jxxx
♥	KQJx		Axxx
♦	KQJx		Xx
♣	Ax		xxx

West	East
2C	2D
2NT	3C
3H	4H

After 2C and a 2NT rebid, R (Responder) can still use Stayman.
System is ON (Stayman and transfers after opener rebids 2NT)

Hand 2

♠	Axx		Qxxxxx
♥	AQxx		Xx
♦	KQJ		xx
♣	AK		Axx

West	East
2C	2D
2NT	3H
3S	4S

Over 2NT, east transfers to spades, and continues to 4S (with 6 of them).

Hand 3

♠	AJx		KQx
♥	KQJ		Ax
♦	KQxxx		J10x
♣	AK		Xxxxx

West	East
2C	2D
2NT	6NT

East knows there are at least 33 points, so goes straight to slam.

Hand 4

♠	AKQ		Xxx
♥	KQxx		Jx
♦	KQJ10		Xx
♣	Ax		KQJxxx

West	East
2C	3C
3NT	Pass

Here, west's rebid of 3NT shows 23-24 (not 25-28 as it's not a jump)

Hand 5

♠	AQxx		♠	Kxx
♥	KQJx		♥	xx
♦	AKQ		♦	Xx
♣	Kx		♣	AQJxxx

West	East
2C	3C
3NT	6NT

3NT shows 23-24, so east can see there are enough points for slam. 6C or 6NT should be comfortable, but east goes for the safer (and higher scoring) contract.

Hand 6

♠	AQxx		♠	xxx
♥	KQJx		♥	Jxx
♦	AKJ		♦	Xxx
♣	Kx		♣	xxxx

West	East
2C	2D
2NT	Pass!

This is the ONLY time where responder can pass and stay out of game; where they have 0 or 1pts opposite 23-24.

UNBALANCED HANDS

Hand 7

♠	X		♠	Qxx
♥	AKQ10xx		♥	Xx
♦	AKQ		♦	Xxx
♣	KQJ		♣	Axxxx

East	West
2C	2D
2H	3C
3H	4H
4NT	5C*
6H	

*5C = 1 or 4 key cards

When east supports hearts after the rebid, west tries for slam, needing 1 key card.

Hand 8

♠	AKQxx		♠	X
♥	AJx		♥	Kxx
♦	AKQx		♦	Xxx
♣	x		♣	QJxxxx

West	East
2C	2D
2S	3C
3NT	

Here, opener has a close decision; whether to show the diamonds or bid 3NT. Either is okay but I prefer 3NT, because if west doesn't bid it, east may not be able to.

Hand 9

♠	AQxx		♠	KJxxx
♥	AK		♥	Xx
♦	KQJ10x		♦	Axx
♣	KQ		♣	xxx

West	East
2C	2S
4NT	5H
6S	

After the positive 2S response, west should go straight to KeyCard and take over. (Big fit and lots of stuff outside).

Hand 10

♠	AKJxxx		♠	Q10xx
♥	Kx		♥	Axx
♦	KJ		♦	AQxx
♣	KQJ		♣	xx

West	East
2C	2D*
2S	4NT
5H**	6S

* negative OR waiting bid

**2 key cards without the queen

Hand 11

♠	AKQJxxx		♠	Xx
♥	Qx		♥	xxxx
♦	AKx		♦	Qxxxx
♣	x		♣	xx

West	East
2C	2D
2S	3D
4S	

West has 19pts, but 9 SURE tricks, so opens 2C. Over 3D, he has a pot at 4S, needing very little for game (either any ace, or HK or DQ)