



LESSON 18 - STUDENT NOTES

STRONG 2 OPENING BIDS

OPENING 2♣ CONVENTIONAL BID AND THE ROMAN KEY CARD BLACKWOOD CONVENTION TO EXPLORE FOR A POSSIBLE SLAM

RULES UP UNTIL NOW

1NT opening	12 – 14 HCP (balanced hand) – a special case
1 of a suit opening	12 - 19 HCP (any shape of hand)
2 of a suit opening	6 - 10 HCP + 6 card suit
3 of a suit opening	6 - 10 HCP + 7 card suit
4 of a suit opening	6 - 10 HCP + 8 Card suit

BUT SOMETIMES WE HAVE A 20+ POINT HAND THAT DOESN'T FIT IN ANY OF THE ABOVE!

This is when we can use the **conventional 2♣ opening bid**.

The 2♣ opening bid your strongest opening bid
It shows either:

1. **20+ HCP and an Unbalanced hand with game forcing hand** (*holding a good 5+ card suit*)

OR

2. **23+ HCP and a Balanced hand**



An opening 2♣ bid is an artificial bid - it has nothing to do with clubs!

It just describes a very strong hand.

Therefore, it **MUST** be **Alerted** by partner.

If partner opens 2♣ Responder **MUST BID** even with zero points!

Both partners must keep bidding until a **game contract** is reached.

(There is only one exception which you will come to below)

REVIEW OF OPENERS REBIDS HOLDING A BALANCED HAND

15 - 17 HCP	open 1 of a suit then rebid 1NT
18 - 19 HCP	open 1 of a suit then rebid 2NT
23 - 24 HCP	open 2♣ then rebid 2NT
25+ HCP	open 2♣ then rebid 3NT

EXAMPLES OF 2♣ OPENING BIDS

♠ K Q
♥ A K T 9
♦ A K 9 8
♣ A T 3
23 HCP

balanced hand

Open 2♣

Plan to rebid 2NT

♠ A J
♥ A K 9 8
♦ A K Q 3
♣ K Q 3
26 HCP

balanced hand

Open 2♣

Plan to rebid 3NT

♠ AJ2
♥ AK95
♦ AKQT3
♣ 8
21 HCP

unbalanced hand

Open 2♣

Plan to rebid 3♦

♠ AKQ
♥ AKQJ92
♦ 53
♣ A2
23 HCP

unbalanced hand

Open 2♣

Plan to rebid 2♥
(or 3♥ if you can't bid 2♥)

RESPONSES TO 2♣ OPENING BID

Remember responder cannot Pass 2♣ even with 0 HCP

1. With 0-7 HCP responder bids 2♦

2♦ is also a **Conventional** bid - it has **nothing** to do with diamonds. The message is that responder is not interested in bidding slam (i.e. bidding to the 6 or 7 level). Opener, **alerts** the 2♦ response.

2. With 8+ HCP responder bids as follows

Remember, the partnership is committed to bidding to game!

2♦	0 - 7 HCP	any shape, nothing to do with diamonds
2♥	8+ HCP	and 5+ cards in hearts
2♠	8+ HCP	and 5+ cards in spades
2NT	8+ HCP	balanced hand, no 5 card suit
3♣	8+ HCP	and 5+ cards in clubs
3♦	8+ HCP	and 5+ cards in diamonds

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES TO 2♣ OPENING

♠ 9 6 5
♥ 3
♦ 7 5 3
♣ J 9 7 5 4 2

0 - 7 HCP
bid 2♦

♠ 9 7 5
♥ A J 8 7 2
♦ A J 6
♣ 4 2

8+ HCP
bid 2♥, shows 5+
cards in hearts

♠ K 9 6 4
♥ Q J T
♦ 9 7
♣ K T 8 7

8+ HCP
bid 2NT, no 5 card
suit

OPENER'S REBID OPTIONS AFTER OPENING 2♣

1. After a 2♦ bid by Responder (showing 0-7 HCP - any shape)
'Slam' unlikely when Responder is weak.

If opener rebids:

2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦	=	20+ HCP an unbalanced hand with 5+ cards in bid suit
2NT	=	23 - 24 HCP a balanced hand
3NT	=	25+ HCP a balanced hand

Examples of Opener's Rebids after a 2♦ response by partner

♠ A K T
♥ A K Q J 9 2
♦ 8 3
♣ A 2

21 HCP
Opens 2♣
Rebid 4♥

♠ A J
♥ A K 9 8
♦ A K 4 3
♣ A 7 3

23 HCP
Opens 2♣
Rebid 2NT

♠ A 2
♥ A K 9
♦ A Q J T 9 3
♣ A K

25 HCP
Opens 2♣
Rebid 3NT

2. After 2♥/2♠ bid by Responder (showing 8+ HCP + 5+ cards in the bid suit)



Opener must count the minimum partnership points and decide if more than game is possible. However, there is no rush, as the partnership cannot stop bidding till a game contract is reached. Therefore, use the bidding space available to tell each other more about your hands.

If opener rebids:

3♥/3♠	=	20+ HCP	- a fit with responder's bid major = 3+ cards
2NT	=	23 - 24 HCP	- a balanced hand no fit with responder's major
3NT	=	25+ HCP	- a balanced hand no fit with responder's major
A New suit	=	20+ HCP	- an unbalanced hand with 5+ cards in the bid suit, and no fit with responder's major

3. After 2NT bid by Responder (showing 8+ HCP and no 5+ card suit)

Again, opener counts the minimum partnership HCP – might a slam be possible? Take your time to explore. Remember, the partnership cannot stop bidding until a game contract is reached. Use the bidding space available to tell each other more about your hands.



If opener rebids:

3♥/3♠	=	20+ HCP	- an unbalanced hand & 5+ cards in the bid suit
4♥/4♠	=	20+ HCP	- an unbalanced hand & 6+ cards in the bid suit
3NT	=	23 HCP	- a balanced hand - not interested in slam

Only bid a Minor if desperate – most of the time you will prefer to play in 3NT

4. After 3♣ or 3♦ bid by Responder (showing 8+ HCP and a 5+ card suit)



As with 2 and 3 above, opener must count the minimum partnership HCP. Is more than game possible? The partnership cannot stop bidding till a game contract is reached. Therefore, use the bidding space available to explore if a 'Slam' is possible.

If opener rebids:

3NT	=	23+ HCP	shows a balanced hand - looking to play in NT rather than in responder's minor
3♥/3♠	=	20+ HCP	shows an unbalanced hand with 5+ cards in the bid suit. Responder to keep bidding
4♣/4♦	=	20+ HCP	shows an unbalanced hand with 3+ cards in the bid suit. Responder to keep bidding.

Raise a Minor only if no other game option likely, or if minor suit slam a possibility!

REMEMBER.... Responder HAS to keep bidding until GAME is reached

WHEN A 2♣ OPENER REBIDS 2NT (BALANCED 23 - 24 HCP)

This 2NT rebid is the first natural bid by Opener so Responder can use Stayman and Transfer Conventions.

Responder's Rebid options:

PASS	0 - 1 HCP	balanced, NO GAME (<i>the exception mentioned above</i>)
3♣	2+ HCP	is Stayman : 4 card Major suit....forcing
3♦	2+ HCP	is a Transfer : 5 card Heart suit....forcing
3♥	2+ HCP	is a Transfer : 5 card Spade suit....forcing
3NT	2+ HCP	Balanced, no 5 card Major, to play
4♥/4♠	2+ HCP	6 card suit (may Transfer first, then rebid suit)

BIDDING TO SLAM

A Small SLAM needs 12 tricks

With a **long, strong**, suit fit and around **30+ HCP** between the partnership one of you can explore for a **SUIT SLAM**

- But, unless you have a void in a suit, you can't afford to be missing more than one key card!
- Also, it would be good to know that you have the top 3 honours in your trump suit!

The **4NT Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB) Bid** is a **Conventional Bid**

- It is used when the **partnership has agreed a trump suit** and is interested in looking for a slam

or

- if no suit has been agreed, RKCB **assumes the last bid suit is trumps**

In Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB) there are **FIVE** 'key cards'

- A key card is **any Ace and the Trump suit King**

There are different versions of responses to 4NT RKCB.

1430 (the score for a major suit slam) is the version for responses you are going to learn.

Responses to 4NT Roman Key Card Blackwood 1430 (Key Card Asking) enquiry bid by partner:

5♣ = 1 or 4 key cards (1430)

5♦ = 0 or 3 key cards (1430)

5♥ = 2 (or 5) key cards without the Queen of Trumps

5♠ = 2 (or 5) key cards with the Queen of Trumps

The 4NT bidder now knows how many key cards responder has but sadly, not which ones - unless he has all the other ones!

The 4NT Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB) Convention may be used by Opener or Responder

If partnership finds it is missing **one key card**, a slam may be bid and made.

But, if **two key cards** are found to be missing, the partnership 'bails out' by returning to its agreed suit at the lowest level!

e.g. 1. Using **4NT Roman Key Card Blackwood** (RKCB) 1430 to ask for key cards when opener knows there is a heart fit

e.g.1	N	S
	2♣	2♥
	4NT	5♣
	5♥	

Opener, North bids 2♣

Responder South bids 2♥ which shows 8+ HCP and a 5-card heart suit

Opener holds 4 cards in hearts and 23 HCP but is missing 2 key cards. Having a suit fit North bids 4NT (RKCB) to explore for slam in hearts.

4NT by North is RKCB asking responder *'How many keycards do you have?'*

The 5♣ response by South shows 1 or 4 key cards.

Opener holding 2 key cards knows responder cannot have 4 (there are only 5 in total!) Responder has only 1 key card. So, with 2 key cards missing Opener bails out by bidding 5♥

Note, that opener by bidding 4NT RKCB has inferred a heart suit fit. Responder should work this out.

SUMMARY OF STRONG 2♣ OPENERS

- The 2♣ Opener is your strongest bid! *It says nothing about clubs!*
- It is a **Conventional** bid so must be **Alerted** by Responder.
- It shows a **very strong unbalanced hand** 20+ HCP which is **game forcing**

OR

- a **balanced hand** with 23+ HCP, (**not game forcing**)

Responder's Options after a 2♣ Opener:

2♦	0 - 7 HCP any shape
2♥/♠	8 + HCP 5+ card major suit
2NT	8 + HCP balanced hand i.e. no 5+ card suit
3♣/♦	8 + HCP 5+ card minor suit

- If the 2♣ Opener rebids 2NT (23+ HCP balanced) responder can use **Stayman** and **Transfers**.
- With a FIT in a long, strong suit, the partnership can explore a **Suit Slam** with fewer points e.g. about 30 points using the **4NT Roman Key Card Blackwood Convention**, to ask for keycards.
- There are **FIVE Key cards** = the 4 Aces + the King of Trumps (or King of last suit bid which you assume is trumps if no fit has been agreed)
- **Responses after 4NT (1430) Keycards**
 - 5♣ = 1 or 4
 - 5♦ = 3 or 0
 - 5♥ = 2 without Q of trumps
 - 5♠ = 2 with Q of trumps
- Although it is a conventional bid, since it is higher than 3NT it is **NOT Alerted** unless bid in the first round.