



LESSON 19 - STUDENT NOTES

2NT STRONG OPENING BID

Before we go into detail on this lesson it is worth the usual recap

OPENER'S BALANCED HANDS: REVIEW

- 12 - 14 HCP = Open 1NT
- 15 – 17 HCP = Bid a suit then rebid 1NT
- 18 - 19 HCP = Bid a suit then rebid 2NT (Virtually Game forcing)

But with

20 - 22 HCP = Open 2NT

A 2NT OPENING BID SHOWS A BALANCED HAND 20 - 22 HCP

It is a non-forcing, Limit Bid i.e. your hand is described in this one bid!

N.B. A balanced hand has no voids, no singleton and only one doubleton.

However, with a strong 2NT opener, it is acceptable to open with 2 doubletons; provided you have stops in each!

EXAMPLES OF STRONG 2NT OPENING BID:

♠ AK2	♠ AK5	♠ AJ8	♠ A5
♥ AQ85	♥ AKJ	♥ J5	♥ AT98
♦ A954	♦ 63	♦ AKQ	♦ AKT52
♣ K8	♣ AQ983	♣ AQJ64	♣ AQ
20 HCP	21 HCP	22 HCP	21 HCP
2NT	2NT	2NT	2NT Yes, even with 2 doubletons!

RESPONSES TO A 2NT OPENING BID:

**Remember, you need 25 HCP for game*

Pass:	0 - 3 HCP <i>balanced</i>	No Game likely
3♦ or 3♥	0+ HCP <i>unbalanced</i>	Transfer telling partner of your 5-card major
3♣	4+ HCP	Stayman – asking opener if he has a 4-card major
3NT	4+ HCP	Balanced hand, no 4 or 5 card major
4♥ or 4♠	4+ HCP	6+ major suit

NOTE: **Stayman** and **Transfer** Response bids to 2NT Openers are similar to 1NT Openers but at the 3 level rather than 2 level.

They are still **Conventional** and must always be **Alerted** by Partner.

EXAMPLES:

<p>♠QT7643 ♥52 ♦98 ♣K65</p>	<p>♠T52 ♥JT5 ♦K9842 ♣K4</p>	<p>♠KT42 ♥A653 ♦2 ♣8643</p>	<p>♠J32 ♥96 ♦J642 ♣9753</p>
<p>Bid 3♥ Transfer Raise partner's 3♠ to game. Your 5 HCP + opener's known 20 HCP = 25 HCP</p>	<p>Bid 3NT You have no 4 or 5 card major but with 7 HCP + opener's known 20 HCP = 27 HCP</p>	<p>Use 3♣ Stayman to look for a 4:4 Major fit. If Partner rebids 3♦, then rebid 3NT, otherwise 4 of the Major bid. Your 9 HCP and opener's known 20 HCP = 29 HCP</p>	<p>PASS You have a flat hand and only 2 HCP Even if opener has 22 HCP = 24 HCP not enough for game</p>

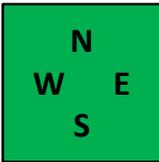
OPENER'S REBIDS AFTER 3♣ STAYMAN

If responder bids 3♣ he is asking: "Do you have a 4 card Major?"

Firstly, Opener must **alert** this **Conventional** bid.

- If Opener has no 4 card Major suit, bid the denial 3♦, **alerted** by partner
- Opener bids a 4 card Major suit if he has one
- If Opener has 4+ cards in both Major suits, bid **hearts** first Responder will support if he has hearts, otherwise he will bid 3NT. **But remember**, if responder rebids 3NT he must have a 4 card spade suit. So, if Opener has 4 cards in spades also, he can convert responder's 3NT bid, to 4♠.

RESPONSES TO 2NT – 20-22 HCP

West has 20-22, HCP balanced	♠AQJ4 ♥AQ82 ♦KQ ♣QJ4		♠KT63 ♥J6 ♦J642 ♣T53	East has 5 HCP and a 4 card major
	2NT		3♣	

With 5 HCP **and** a 4 card major, Responder can bid 3♣ STAYMAN after partner's 2NT Opening bid.

With **BOTH** 4 card majors Opener **MUST** rebid 3♥ **FIRST**
Responder, not having a 4 card heart suit will now bid to game 3NT

Opener thinks ...to use Stayman partner **MUST** have 4 cards in spades so can choose to Pass 3NT, or convert to 4♠



OPENER'S REBIDS AFTER 3♦ OR 3♥ TRANSFER BIDS

If Responder bids 3♦ or 3♥ he is **telling** opener he has a 5 card Major suit, then:

Opener must **alert** this **Conventional** bid.

Then Opener **MUST** complete the transfer: 3♦ into→ 3♥, OR 3♥ into→ 3♠

Responder will then Pass if very weak (0 - 3), rebid 3NT leaving **Opener** to Pass, or convert to 4 of the Major if holding 3+ cards in that major.

REMEMBER: 2NT is a **Limit Bid** so **Responder is in charge** and determines whether Game or Part Game is possible.

However, **Opener** may be able to choose where the game is played!

RESPONSES TO 2NT – 20-22 HCP

West has 20-22 HCP balanced	♠AJ5 ♥AK8 ♦KQ8 ♣QJ42		♠KT ♥QJ976 ♦964 ♣T53	East has 6 HCP and a 5 card major
	2NT		3♦	
	3♥		3NT	
	4♥			

With a 5 card major, Responder makes a TRANSFER bid after partner's 2NT Opening bid (intending to rebid game)
Opener **MUST** rebid 3♥ **and** Responder will now rebid game - 3NT

Opener knows Responder has game points **and** a 5 card heart suit so having a 'fit' can choose to Pass 3NT, or convert to 4♥



BUT WHAT IF RESPONDER HAS A STRONG HAND TOO?

Game is definite. i.e. 3NT or 4 of major, or even 5 of a minor, but might there be a slam i.e. making 12 or all 13 tricks?

RESPONDER NEEDS TO KNOW THE STRENGTH OF OPENER'S BID

A 4NT BID USED IMMEDIATELY BY RESPONDER AFTER PARTNER OPENS NT CARRIES A SPECIAL MEANING!

After a NT opener, a **bid of 4NT by Responder** is a **Conventional** bid to explore for a slam in NT. It is called a **Quantitative 4NT** and asks opener one specific question!

“Pass if you have minimum HCP for your opening bid, but bid 6NT if you are maximum”

This is an immediate bidding sequence of 2NT - 4NT (or 1NT – 4NT)

A 2NT Opener must rebid 6NT with the maximum 22 HCP and pass with a minimum 20 HCP.

A 1NT Opener must rebid 6NT with the maximum 14 HCP and pass with a minimum 12 HCP

SO, WHAT KIND OF HAND DOES RESPONDER NEED TO HAVE TO USE THE 4NT QUANTITATIVE BID?

Slam Enquiry after a 1NT or 2NT Opening Bid by Partner

The Partnership needs:

- 25+** HCP for Game
- 33+** HCP for 6NT = Small Slam
- 37+** HCP for 7NT = Grand Slam

So, If Opener bids 2NT (20-22)

Responder needs a minimum of 11 HCP ($11 + 22 = 33$ HCP) to make a slam enquiry in NT using the 4NT Quantitative Bid.

And if Opener bids 1NT (12-14)

Responder needs a minimum of 19 HCP ($19 + 14 = 33$ HCP) to make a slam enquiry in NT using the 4NT Quantitative Bid.

Example 1: Opener has the maximum 22 HCP so bids to 6NT straight away.

The 4NT Quantitative Bid in Action after a 2NT Opener

The **Quantitative 4NT** says to partner, the NT Opener:

'Pass if you have minimum points for your NT opener, but bid 6NT if you are maximum!'

The **Quantitative 4NT** bid by Responder to an Opening bid of 2NT (or 1NT) is a **Conventional** bid.

It must be **alerted** by Opener.

Opener 20-22 HCP	♠AK9 ♥QJ7 ♦AK92 ♣KQ9	N W E S	♠Q842 ♥K82 ♦Q65 ♣A85	Responder 11 HCP
Opener is maximum 22 HCP	West		East	
	2NT		4NT	
	6NT		Pass	

In example 1 above, responder with 11 HCP uses the 4NT Quantitative Bid which asks opener the same specific question!

'Pass if you have minimum HCP, bid 6NT if you are maximum'

It can also be used if Opener bids 1NT (12-14)

But now **Responder needs minimum of 19 HCP** ($19 + 14 = 33\text{HCPs}$) to make a slam enquiry in NTs

In example 2 below, responder with 19 HCPs uses the 4NT Quantitative Bid which asks opener the same specific question!

'Pass if you have minimum HCP, bid 6NT if you are maximum'

Example 2: Opener with only 12 HCP declines responders slam enquiry - he passes 4NT

Opener 12 HCP Opener is minimum (12-14)	♠AK9 ♥Q97 ♦K962 ♣987	N W E S	♠QJ82 ♥AK82 ♦QJ5 ♣AQ5	Responder 19 HCP
	West 1NT Pass	East 4NT Pass		

WHAT IF YOU WANT TO ENQUIRE ABOUT A NT SLAM AFTER INITIALLY BIDDING SUITS?

This is where the 4♣ **Gerber Conventional Bid** is useful. The most common usage of Gerber to investigate Ace "controls" is when the partnership has not found a suit fit and has made a NT bid at a later stage in the auction. This is shown in the examples below where one of the partnership makes a NT response or re- bid.



Normally a jump bid of 4♣ identifies the bid as **Gerber** e.g.

West	East
1♥	1♠
1NT	4♣ (Gerber asking how many Aces do you have?)

RESPONDING TO GERBER ENQUIRY BIDS

Replying to 4♣ Gerber Ace asking enquiry are in steps:

- 4♦ = 0 or 4 Aces
- 4♥ = 1 Ace
- 4♠ = 2 Aces
- 4NT = 3 Aces

We are going to use the 4♣ **Gerber conventional bid** to ask for Aces only after the partnership has bid NT and the final contract is likely to be in NT. This allows the partnership to ‘bail out’ and play in 4NT or 5NT if they find they do not have sufficient to bid onto 6NT.

Example: Responder knows opener has 17-18 HCP given his 2NT rebid. Responder, holding 15 HCP tries for a slam by bidding 4♣, the **Gerber convention**, asking for Aces. Opener’s 4♥ response shows only one Ace. With 2 Aces missing responder bails out by bidding 4NT.

♠ K 9 4 ♥ A K Q T ♦ 9 8 7 ♣ K Q 3	N W E S	♠ Q J 8 5 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ K Q J 4 ♣ A J
West		East
1♥		1♠
2NT		4♣
4♥		4NT

When Responder asks for Aces with 4♣ Gerber and discovers that two aces are missing.

Responder signs off in 4NT, now knowing that 6NT will go down.

HAND EVALUATION IN NT

What if Opener has 21 HCP and Responder invites Game?
Opener thinks

“I’m 1 HCP short of bidding Slam. Is my hand worth upgrading by 1HCP?”

A ♠ A 7 4 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ A K 8 2 ♣ K J 5	B ♠ K J 6 ♥ A 5 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ A K J T 5	C ♠ A K J ♥ K Q J ♦ Q J T 9 ♣ K J T
Hand A has no intermediates and no 5 card suit	Hand B has a good 5 card suit which can be established	Hand C is loaded with 10s and 9s - good intermediates
PASS 4NT	Bid 6NT	Bid 6NT

Slam bidding is part of the *'risk and reward'* system that is evident in all parts of this game of Bridge, so you will not be surprised that there are significant additional bonuses for bidding and making slams, with of course the risk of losing everything!

The additional bonuses for bidding and *'making'* 'Small Slams' seems on first sight complex!

It's simple really you just add:-
500 to non-vulnerable game scores
and
750 to vulnerable game scores

Similarly with 'Grand Slams' you add:-
1000 to non-vulnerable game scores
and
1500 to vulnerable game scores

SUMMARY: STRONG 2NT OPENERS

1. An opening bid of 2NT shows 20 - 22 HCP and a Balanced hand. It is NOT a game forcing. Responder with 0 - 3 HCP and no long suit, can pass.
2. With 4+ HCP Responder's bids after a 2NT opening are the same as after a 1NT opening: i.e. Responder can use 3♣ Stayman and 3♦ and 3♥ Transfer Bids.
3. With 33+ points in the partnership, enquire about a NT Slam using the **Quantitative 4NT Conventional** bid. This asks opener to:

'Pass if you have minimum HCP for your opener, but bid 6NT if you have maximum HCP for your opening bid'
4. After a 2NT opening bid Responder needs 11 HCP to use the 4NT Quantitative Bid and after a 1NT opening bid Responder needs 19 HCP.
5. Opener may evaluate his hand and 'upgrade' or 'downgrade' a mid- point hand depending upon its shape or intermediate cards.
6. The 4♣ **Gerber Conventional bid** is used for Ace asking when the partnership have not found a suit fit and have bid NT at some later stage in the auction.