

**Rationale**

♠K9 This is certainly a good hand.  
 ♥AQT62 However, in terms of trick-taking  
 ♦A86 it will need some help from partner.  
 ♣AQ6 This hand deserves to be opened with 1H. If you think the hand is too good for 1H, ask yourself this question:- "Am I likely to be able to make game opposite a hand which can't respond to 1H?" The answer is a resounding "No!"

The above is a good test as to whether a hand should be opened with a "demand" bid such as 2C.

**• Benjamin Twos and Balanced Hands**

Regardless of whether you have just one demand bid or two, your structure should allow you to describe ALL balanced hands with No Trump ranges. Here is one structure – work out your own with partner.

- Balanced with no 5 card major
- 12 – 14 HCP: open 1m & make a minimum NT rebid
- 15 – 17 HCP: open 1NT
- 18 – 20 HCP: open 1m and jump rebid 2NT or 3NT
- 21 – 22 HCP: open 2NT
- 23 – 24 HCP: open 2C and rebid 2NT
- 25 – 26 HCP: open 2D and rebid 2NT
- 27 – 28 HCP: open 2C and rebid 3NT
- 29 – 30 HCP: open 2D and rebid 3NT etc

- Balanced hands with a five card major
- 12 – 15 HCP: Open 1M & make a minimum NT rebid
- 16 – 18 HCP: Open 1M and rebid 2NT
- 19 – 20 HCP: Open 1M and rebid 3NT (above hand)
- 21 – 26 HCP: Open as for no 5 card major and use Puppet Stayman as per lesson 9.
- 27+ HCP, open 2D and rebid the major.

**• Benjamin Twos and Unbalanced Hands**

Many strong 4-4-4-1, 5-4-4-2 and 6-3-2-2 hands with a 6 card minor are perhaps better treated as "balanced" since they lack the playing strength to focus on the suits. Be guided by the location of the high cards in making your decision.

- Having both 2C and 2D as strong bids mean that the reverse (lesson 7) and the jump shift by opener don't have to work quite so hard.
- 1D – 1S This bid can be made on 16–19HCP and 2H 5-4 in the reds and is not quite forcing. It may also be made with a little less and better shape.
- 1D – 1S This bid can be made with 17-19HCP and 3C 5-4 in the minors and is not quite forcing. It may also be made with a little less and better shape.

**• What hands should we open with 2C?**

Remember 2C promise a hand just short of game Force. Having eliminated hands which we think we can adequately describe with a one level opening, we are left with the following:-

- ♦ Hands with a 6 card major and 19 – 22 HCP.
- ♦ Hands with 5-4-3-1 shape and 20 – 22 HCP
- ♦ Hands with 5-4-4-0 shape and 19 – 22 HCP
- ♦ Hands with 5-5 or 6-4 or 7 with good strength
- What responses should we use to 2C?

Here is one guide but you need to work it out with partner. Rarely pass opener's rebid if a fit is found.

- ♦ 2D! is a weak bid with 0 – 5 HCP, shape unknown. However, if you bid again, opener will keep going.
- ♦ 2H, 2S, 3C, 3D are 5 card suits 6+ HCP, FTG

♦ 2NT is 6+ balanced, no 5 card suit. If this is followed by opener's 3C!, it is stayman.

**• What hands should we open 2D?**

Remember, you will be going to game, even opposite 0 HCP. Apart from the balanced options, it should be a huge one or two suiter, 9 playing tricks

**• How should we respond to 2D?**

- ♦ 2H! is 0 – 5 HCP, shape unknown. But we will keep bidding until game is reached. Never drop partner when they open a game force. Even when it works out well, you have damaged the partnership.
- ♦ Other bids are positives and encourage slam exploration. Be ready to raise opener whenever possible.

**• Big Two Suiters**

It's tempting to open big two suiters with 2C or 2D because, you know they play so well. However, it can backfire. I rate this as the best hand I've ever held.

-- Drooling, I opened 2D artificial game force but determined to bid 7C or 7D

♦AKQxxx 2D! (4S) P (6S)

♣AKQxxxx ???

So, I got to show my first suit at the 7 level:(We were vulnerable, they were not). I bid 7C and got doubled. After an eternity, I passed. You guessed it – 7D made and 7C was one off when my right hand opponent held Txxxx of clubs. At a dinner, I asked a 20 year old expert what to do with the hand. He said: "Open 1D, rebid 7C and the fish is really good." Partner would have shown preference to the loony across the table by returning to 7D.

"What if they pass me out in 1D?" I wailed. He replied "When you hold that hand, someone bids the majors"

**Principle of Fast Arrival (PFA)**

PFA states that, in a game-forcing situation, the faster that we bid to game, the weaker the hand.e.g.

2C! 2H 2H established a game force  
 2S 4S 4S is weaker than 3S. But...  
 2C! 2H 2H established a game force. 4H  
 4H says "I have no more than you could reasonably expect". 3H would show that the hand has grown considerably.

2D! 2H! Again 4S is weaker than 3S, despite  
 2S 4S the 2H negative. Here, responder has two or three trumps and very little else.

Try bidding these hands

♠KQ2 ♠J863 2C! 2D!  
 ♥AQ6432 ♥75 2H pass

♦A832 ♦K87 Sure, you might open 1H &  
 ♣A ♣J964 play there. However, on a

different hand, partner would answer 1H and you would have trouble with your rebid.

♠AKQT543 ♠J6 2D! 2H!  
 ♥A7 ♥K72 2S 4S

♦83 ♦9542 This hand looks to have 9

♣A9 ♣T832 tricks – 7 spades and 2 aces.

Jx of trumps is plenty.

♠AK94 ♠QT62 2C! 2NT!  
 ♥KQJT ♥A92 3C! 3S!!

♦AK ♦874 4S enough

♣K75 ♣962 Responder has just 6 HCP.