

## Protection of the 2 Clubs opening bid

The great majority of bridge players in the world play some kind of standard system that includes 2♣ as a strong opening bid.

This bid takes away a lot of bidding room but this is a necessary evil in a standard system unless you play a system like Fantunes (the system played by Italian stars Fantoni - Nunes) or EHAA. Bad as it is, you are not alone. What often happens is that the opponents suddenly find bids when you open 2♣. They normally have about 3 points and a 6-card suit and are not vulnerable. Great. Partner, who is equally broke might tell you if he is completely broke or just moderately broke by doubling or passing, but then RHO raises his partner. Now the auction is at 3 something and I haven't shown anything.

As a response scheme to this opening bid, when it comes up AND opponents pass, I recommend Chris Ryall's Paradox responses which basically means that you respond 2♥/♠ if you have a really bad hand and 2♦ if you can be of some help to your partner. This however still doesn't cope with the auction being at the 3-level when your opponents happen to have shape but no strength.

The solution: Include a Weak Two in ♦ in your 2♣ opening bid (if this is allowed by system regulations). Since you will have the weak variation most of the time, opponents cannot afford to overcall on junk because they need their bids to describe strong hands, and the odds that you get to describe your big hand have improved by a mile. Also a Weak Two in ♦ is a nice preemptive bid to have in your arsenal anyway.

What about responder? Just follow the ParadoX response scheme at the 2-level and use 2NT as your favorite strong relay after a Weak 2. You might think it is dangerous to bid higher than 2♦ with a hand that doesn't want to go to game opposite an Acol Two in a major, but the odds of getting such a hand is remote. Besides, if you have nothing and your partner has a weak two, they probably can make 7 of something.

# posted by Gerben Dirksen @ 22:32

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