

EDDIE KANTAR - WEAK 2 BID (PART I)

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The Weak Two Bid is an opening bid of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ (not 2♣) describing a hand with a strongish six-card suit along with 7-9 HCP (6 or 10 HCP are exceptions, particularly 10).

It can be compared to an opening three bid, the difference is that a three bid normally shows a seven-card suit.

The distribution of the weak two bidder's hand rates to be 6-3-2-2, 6-3-3-1 or 6-4-2-1. **Notice:** no five-card side suits, no voids.

Suit strength can vary with the vulnerability and seat. Ideally three or four of the top five honors will head the suit. Practically, two of the top five honors along with the 9,8 or 9,7 attached will do just fine, thank you. Suits that look like: AK10765, AK9732, KQ9732, AJ9843, QJ10432, KJ9765 are fine. In addition, at favorable vulnerability liberties are allowed, particularly in third seat.

Third seat weak twos (after partner has passed) are often made with a strong five-card suit as a lead director. Partner is supposed to have four card support plus a side suit singleton or two side suit doubletons to raise a third seat weak two. Discipline!

Opening the following hand-type with 2♠ in third seat eliminates the necessity for many light third hand openings

♠ KQJ105
♥ K8
♦ J76
♣ 765

The advantages of opening a weak two are:

1. limiting the hand immediately;
2. directing the opening lead;
3. taking away bidding space from the opponents.

Assume you deal and hold:

♠ 98
♥ AKJ986
♦ 98
♣ 1076

Not playing weak twos, you pass and hope to bid hearts later. However "later" may not happen!

East (you) South West North

Pass 1NT Pass 3NT

Pass Pass Pass

You can hardly expect your partner to lead a heart unless you beat on your chest. How much easier (and safer) to open 2♥, limit the hand, and get the lead you want.

RESPONDING TO A WEAK TWO BID

Before considering your response, keep in mind that your partner's has about 7/8 HCP along with a reasonable six-card suit.

Your response depends to a large extent on how well you fit partner's suit – unless you are blessed with an independent suit (can play opposite a singleton without trauma) of your own.

With a singleton in partner's suit and no strong suit of your own, do not even think of bidding on unless you have 16+ HCP.

With a small doubleton in partner's suit, you need about 15 HCP to bid on. However, with a doubleton honor in partner's suit (Ax, Kx, Qx), and an interesting looking hand (no wasted jacks or queens) 14 HCP will suffice.

Hands with three or four card support normally do something. Frequently you "further the preempt" by raising partner to the three or four level. All you need is a little distribution plus a

bunch of courage! Keep in mind the opponents figure to have a game, possibly a slam, so if they nail you with a penalty double and beat you a few tricks it may still be a good result.

Rule: *WHEN YOU AND YOUR PARTNER HAVE A 9-CARD FIT OR LONGER, THE OPPONENTS MUST HAVE AT LEAST AN 8-CARD FIT OR LONGER IN ANOTHER SUIT*

Your advantage is that you know where your fit lies; the opponents have yet to find theirs. By raising partner's suit, you make it that much harder for your opponents to uncover their fit.

Assume for the moment that your partner opens 2♥ and your right hand opponent passes. What are your options?

North (partner)	East	South (you)	West
2♥	Pass	?	

Pass. Don't even think of bidding on with the example beneath.

♠AJxx ♥2 ♦J54 ♣K943

Bidding a new suit: A new suit in response to a weak two bid is forcing for one round. Responder must have at least a strong five card suit, more likely longer with opening bid values. With the example hand beneath, bid 2♠, forcing for one round.

Holding: ♠AKJ943 ♥2 ♦AQ10 ♣109x

Raising to 3♥: This is strictly preemptive and opener is not allowed to bid on. Ever! Responder could even have less than the example hand.

♠87 ♥K43 ♦A9432 ♣976

Raise to 3♥.

Raising to 4♥: A two-edged sword. You may have a good hand with hopes of making 4♥, or you may be furthering the preempt, taking an advance sacrifice, so to speak. The opponents now have to find their fit at the four or five level never having had a chance to exchange any information.

♠AKJ3 ♥Q5 ♦4 ♣A76432

♠4 ♥KJ43 ♦KJ743 ♣1087

Raise to 4♥ with either hand.

Responding 2NT: A one round force asking partner to further describe his hand. At this point the opener has several options. Opener can:

- Return to the original suit, the weakest of all rebids.
- Raise to 3NT: This should only be done with a suit headed by the AK, AKJ, AKQ, or AQJ;
- Show a feature-perhaps an ace or a king.

For example, having opened 2♥ with: ♠54 ♥AJ10xxx ♦54 ♣K105

In response to 2NT bid 3♣ to show side strength. If partner then returns to the three level of the agreed suit, you are allowed to pass, but the sequence is invitational. If responder bids 2NT and then bids a new suit, that is forcing.

2. Responding 3NT: This response ENDS the bidding. Responder is not interested in hearing any more about your hand. Responder usually has a solid minor perhaps with a singleton or void in your suit. An example of a 3NT response to a 2♥ opening:

♠K4 ♥2 ♦AKQJ876 ♣K76

Responding 4NT: Simple Blackwood, perhaps Key Card Blackwood, to be determined by the partnership.

Stay tuned for Weak 2 Bids (Part II)

Credit for the above article goes to Eddie Kantar, Master Point Press & Teach Bridge.