

BENJI ACOL

OPENING TWO DIAMONDS & TWO CLUBS

THIS is Benji Acol as I play it and may not be what others regard as standard.

In Benji the opening 2D is the strong opening hand equivalent to the opening 2C in standard Acol.

You should open 2D with any hand that has 23 points or has strength to be game forcing (not necessarily 23 points).

In English the bid says I have a game forcing hand, we must bid to game unless I re-bid 2NT showing 23 points balanced, with no points in your hand you can leave me there.

To make this bid without 23 points you should have 10 tricks in your own hand.

Responder should keep bidding until game is reached. A response of 2H is negative saying I do not have 8 points or 1 + 1/2 tricks.

If opener re-bids with a suit responder can support that suit, bid own long suit (5+) or bid NT (2nd negative).

That is the normal response to an opening of 2D.

I personally prefer responder to show a point count using steps.

2H = 0-3 points.

2S = 4-6 points

2NT = 7-9 points

3C = 10+ points

A Benji Opening 2C says I EITHER have 18/19 points in a Balanced Hand OR 8 playing tricks in a suit as yet unspecified.

This bid is ALWAYS followed by a response of 2D which is a relay asking opener to define which holding he has.

If opener's next bid is 2NT then he obviously has the balanced hand with 18/19 points.

But if opener rebids a suit he is saying he has 8 tricks in his hand with that suit as trumps in just the same way as a strong opening two.

The negative reply is 2NT.

The rules for responder are exactly the same as for a strong two opening .i.e. you need 8 points or 1+ 1/2 tricks to make positive bid.

After negative 2NT If opener re bids opening suit responder does not need to bid but should try to do so with 5-7 points. Opener is only looking for 1 or 2 tricks.

If, after responder's neg 2NT, opener bids a second suit this is forcing for one round.

Responder should give suit preference.

WEAK TWOS in MAJORS.

Opening 2 in a weak major is very preemptive. However you should not be rash about when to do it especially when you are vulnerable.

Opening a weak 2 has 3 requirements 6-9 HCPs, 6 cards in the bid suit and 2 of the top honours (AKQJ) in the bid suit.

The two top Honour rule is by partnership agreement and is not always followed.

I personally like to play it this way as I am less likely to get into trouble and my partner knows straight away the type of holding I have in the bid suit.

Responses to the weak opening bid will vary according to whether or not you adopt this rule.

I personally do not open a weak 2 if I hold 4 cards in the other Major. I wait to hear rest of bidding.

RESPONSES.

Opening is the easy part. Responding is a little more difficult.

As the opening is pre-emptive there will be many occasions where you make it difficult for the opposition but your partnership is not going anywhere,

So pass is often the best response.

With 4 cards in partner's Major and less than 8 points go straight to 4 regardless of points. (2nd preempt).

Responder with 9- 15HCP and 3 of the bid suit should bid 3 (to play not invitational).

With 16+ HCP and 2/3 card support responder can bid game.

Responder can also bid their own suit at either the 2 or 3 level. (at least 5 cards in the suit).

A jump to the 4 level in a different suit is a splinter bid and shows interest in a slam with shortage in the bid suit.

A bid of 2NT over the opening weak 2 shows 16+ points and asks partner to further describe hand.

If opener has a minimum hand they should just re-bid their opening suit.

If opener has a feature (Ace or King to 2 or Queen to 3) then they should bid the suit in which they hold the feature. This may be needed as an entry in a NT contract.

If opener has a very solid suit e.g. AKQxxx or AQJxxx or AKJxxx, they should bid 3NT.

The last option in reply to 2NT (e.g. 2S, 2NT) is for opener with maximum points to splinter bid showing shortage.

If you do not have a partnership agreement that you always have 2 of the top honours your partnership can use a convention called Ogust.

In response to opening weak 2 partner bids 2NT asking opener to describe hand further. Responses are.....

3C - 6-7 points with 1 of top 3 honours.

3D - 6-7 points with 2 of top 3 honours.

3H - 8-9 points with 1 of top 3 honours.

3S - 8-9 points with 2 of top 3 honours

3NT - 3 Top honours

So now you see that it is not enough to sit at table and say that you play Benji.

You also need to know how you are going to construct your weak 2s and their responses.

If playing weak 2s you will probably like to change your overcalls to weak jump overcalls but we will discuss this another week.