



Bidding Basics

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A tour of the bidding box for newer players

In modern bridge, a 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ opening bid shows a decent six-card suit and approximately 5–11 HCP.



would be adequate. You don't need two of the top three honors, nor three of the top five. A suit such as K–10–9–8–6–4 would be acceptable, especially if not vulnerable. When vulnerable, the weak two-bidder should be sounder than if not.

Prior to the '70s, most players used 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠ to denote a very strong hand. Now, all such hands are opened with an artificial 2♣ (see last month's article). That frees up these opening bids to be preemptive.

Some players use 2♦ as something other than weak, such as Flannery to show an opening bid with five hearts and four spades. I recommend using it as a weak two-bid, especially for newer players.

There are many misconceptions about the do's and don't's of weak two-bids. This is because there is no one "right" way. Much depends on personal style – some players are more aggressive than others. Also important is the vulnerability and position, i.e., whether you are the dealer, in second seat (after one pass), third seat (after two passes) or fourth seat (after three passes).

Suit requirements

Generally, a weak two-bid shows a "decent" six-card suit. Something like J–9–7–6–4–2 would not be considered decent. Meanwhile, Q–J–10–9–6–5

Strength requirements

A weak two-bidder is telling partner that he holds less than a one-level opening. A hand such as:

♠A Q J 8 7 6 ♥A 3 2 ♦5 4 ♣5 3

is too strong for a preempt. With the ace-queen-ace, this hand should be opened 1♠. Change the ♠A to the ♠10:

♠Q J 10 8 7 6 ♥A 3 2 ♦5 4 ♣5 3

and it would become a 2♠ opening bid.

With 6–3–2–2 shape and a poor 11 HCP, it would be OK to open with a weak two-bid. Maybe something like:

♠K Q 9 8 7 6 ♥J 2 ♦K Q 2 ♣7 6.

Is there a lower limit? Technically, the low end of the range is 5 HCP, but not vulnerable, I'd definitely open 2♠ holding:

♠K J 10 9 8 7 ♥— ♦10 9 8 7 ♣9 8 3.

This is not "illegal," just a judgment/evaluation call.

On the side

It is acceptable to have an ace (or more) on the side. Also, a side void is possible. For example:

♠K Q 10 9 8 7 ♥— ♦K 7 6 ♣8 6 5 4
would be a good 2♠ opener. Make it stronger, for example:

♠K Q 10 9 8 7 ♥— ♦K 7 6 ♣K 6 5 4

and now it is too strong for a preempt; that hand should be opened 1♠. What about a side four-card suit? A side four-card minor is no problem, but with a decent side four-card major, it is usually a poor idea to preempt. For example, if you open 2♠ with:

♠Q 10 9 7 6 5 ♥A Q 3 2 ♦5 4 ♣2,

your side will have trouble reaching hearts if partner has, say, ♥K J 7 6 4 and short spades. Never say never, however. With:

♠K Q J 10 9 8 ♥5 4 3 2 ♦8 6 ♣2,

ignore the side four-card major and proudly open 2♠.

Position

If you are the dealer, it is OK to preempt aggressively (you describe your hand to partner and preempt two opponents). If you are in second seat (the dealer on your right passes), preempts should be sounder. There is only one opponent to preempt and odds are good that your partner has a decent hand. In third seat (after two passes), you know partner doesn't have a good hand, so this is the best time to preempt. In fourth position (after three passes), you could pass out the deal if weak, so a "weak" two-bid in this position shows roughly 10–13 HCP.

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

You deal with nobody vulnerable.
What is your action as dealer with:

1. ♠J76542 ♥KQ43 ♦65 ♣4
2. ♠QJ10965 ♥A2 ♦7654 ♣2
3. ♠KJ10654 ♥— ♦AQ65 ♣J102
4. ♠765 ♥876 ♦KQ10987 ♣2

RHO passes and you are vulnerable
against not. What is your action with:

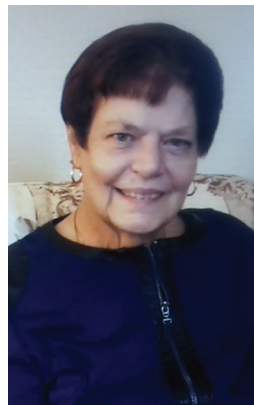
5. ♠76 ♥KJ6542 ♦K32 ♣32
6. ♠874 ♥2 ♦KJ10985 ♣A32

After three passes (nobody vulner-
able), what is your action with:

7. ♠87 ♥KJ9765 ♦Q87 ♣Q2
8. ♠AQJ1087 ♥7 ♦K32 ♣Q92

Answers

1. Pass. Your suit is poor and you don't want to preempt with such a good four-card major on the side.
2. 2♠. Suit is good enough, hand is good enough. No reason not to preempt.
3. 1♠. Too much playing strength for a weak two-bid.
4. 2♦. A minimum, but you're not vulnerable and the suit is excellent.
5. Pass. Second position at this vulnerability calls for soundness.
6. 2♦. Good enough suit and strength for a weak two-bid.
7. Pass. No reason to open this one. You are likely outgunned and headed for a minus score. Just pass out the deal.
8. 2♠. Delighted to be in fourth seat. In any other position, this would be a 1♠ opener. ■



Judith Groeneboom



Steve Valencic

International Fund Game winners

A pair in the Harrisburg PA area won the ACBL-wide International Fund Game held Feb. 4. Judith Groeneboom and Steve Valencic of Mechanicsburg scored 75.30%, playing at the Harrisburg Bridge Club in Camp Hill. The win came a few weeks before the death of Groeneboom on March 18 after a long illness. With 776 tables of play, the game raised \$5703.60 to support ACBL teams in international competition.

Overall scores

1.	Judith Groeneboom – Steve Valencic, Mechanicsburg PA	75.30%
2.	Sheila Gabay, Newton MA; Pat McDevitt, Brookline MA	73.30%
3.	Dick Majcher, Woburn MA; Thomas Shake, Waltham MA	73.21%
4.	Peter Bolgar, Southfield MI; James Walter, Ann Arbor MI	71.86%
5.	Lloyd Harris – Michel Malette, Sudbury ON	71.13%
6.	Kay Schulle – Gerald Sosler, Purchase NY	70.08%
7.	Laurie Hardin III, Portland OR; Martha Maroney, Lake Oswego OR	69.72%
8.	Susan Bullard – H. Gordon, Lexington KY	68.59%
9.	Sharon Benz, Buffalo NY; Christine Urbanek, Tonawanda NY	68.52%
10.	Edwin Katten, Cave Creek AZ; Audrius Mizeikis, Scottsdale AZ	68.01%

Top scores by district

1	Sharon Crawford – Catherine Marko, Ottawa ON	66.54%
2	Lloyd Harris – Michel Malette, Sudbury ON	71.13%
3	Kay Schulle – Gerald Sosler, Purchase NY	70.08%
4	Judith Groeneboom – Steve Valencic, Mechanicsburg PA	75.30%
5	Sharon Benz, Buffalo NY; Christine Urbanek, Tonawanda NY	68.52%
6	Shirley Prikals, Oak Hill VA; Noi West, Vienna VA	64.12%
7	Mike Grodsky – Sharon Grodsky, St. Simons Island GA	65.74%
8	Darryl Bremner, Clinton IL; Ray Dostal, Bloomington IL	59.26%
9	David Begin, West Melbourne FL; Monty Page, Palm Bay FL	66.67%
10	Elizabeth Bell – Katilou Murchison, Montgomery AL	61.98%
11	Susan Bullard – H. Gordon, Lexington KY	68.59%
12	Peter Bolgar, Southfield MI; James Walter, Ann Arbor MI	71.86%
13	Joan Siavelis, Arlington Heights IL; Elaine Jonkheer, Roselle IL	59.52%
16	Anthony Bianchi – J. Gittelman, Houston TX	66.78%
17	Edwin Katten, Cave Creek AZ; Audrius Mizeikis, Scottsdale AZ	68.01%
18	David Driggers – Susan Driggers, Casper WY	66.37%
19	John Stafford, Seattle WA; Craig Zastera, Woodinville WA	64.73%
20	Laurie Hardin III, Portland OR; Martha Maroney, Lake Oswego OR	69.72%
21	Brenda Pugsley – Paul Pugsley, Carson City NV	63.66%
22	Roman Matusik, San Clemente CA; Abdol Samiian, Laguna Hills CA	66.67%
25	Sheila Gabay, Newton MA; Pat McDevitt, Brookline MA	73.30%