

PSYCHIC OPENING BIDS

A psychic opening bid should comply with these general principles:

- First seat only. If one opponent has already passed, there is too much danger that partner has a big hand. Psychs in third seat seldom fool anyone.
- Maximum points: 3! (Which must not consist of a king) A queen must be held in the bid suit or long side suit, not in a four card or shorter suit.
- Bid your longest suit. Psyching with a short suit usually leads to disaster.
- Non-vulnerable vs vulnerable preferably, but sometimes (as when badly in need of points) when neither side is vulnerable.
- Duplicate pair events only.
- No four card or longer major suit outside of the bid suit.

You must pull a business double, of course, unless the bidding has been such that partner should realize you have psyched. How can partner know? If the opponents rush to a vulnerable game and he has two or more defensive tricks, he *should* know. Sometimes he can tell even below game level. Vulnerable opponents just don't fool around with notrump bids and the like.

There are some partners with whom you should never psych--those who are so greedy that they don't stop to think before doubling.

Don't psych if you are having a good game. Psychs average about 40% at best. They pay off on *other* hands when the opponents get into trouble because they think you may be psyching when you are not.

Don't psych in a team-of-four event--ever! It is rightly considered to be an insult to one's teammates.

WEAK TWO BIDS

A weak two bid opening implies a hand that has a good six-card suit, but not enough in high cards to definitely call for an opening bid. Vulnerable vs non-vulnerable, weak two bids are often hands that might be opened with one of a suit if not playing weak two bids. Also, with unfavorable vulnerability a seven-card suit is permissible. It is difficult to have enough tricks for a weak two bid with this vulnerability and yet lack opening bid strength.

Requirements

- 6-12 HCP, varying with seat position and vulnerability
- Weakest suit K109xxx, usually better
- Most of the strength in the suit opened
- No side suit of four or more cards

Flaws:

- Five-card suit (only in third or fourth position, please)
- Singleton or void in a minor, or major suit void
- Support for a side major
- Only one of the top three honors in the suit opened

Do not open a badly flawed hand.

Not vulnerable, the hand should have 1-1/2 to 2+ defensive tricks, vulnerable 1-1/2 to 2-1/2. Partner will count on more than one trick from you on defense if she has a singleton in your suit.

Playing trick strength requirements vary with vulnerability:

Favorable	5 to 6 playing tricks
Nobody vul.	5-1/2 to 6-1/2
Both vul.	6 to 7
Unfavorable	6-1/2 to 7-1/2

With a suit like AKQ10xx or KQJ9xx, six playing tricks are enough with unfavorable vulnerability.

These requirements may be relaxed somewhat in third or fourth seat.

The Ogust Convention

This convention consists of an artificial forcing response of 2NT. Opener rebids as follows:

- 3♣ with a poor hand, poor suit
- 3♦ with a poor hand, good suit
- 3♥ with a good hand, poor suit
- 3♠ with a good hand, good suit
- 3NT with a suit headed by AKQ

A passed hand may use Ogust. A "good suit" is one good enough to play in game opposite a singleton without yielding (probably) more than two trump losers. This means the suit should be as good as QJ108xx, KJ108xx, KQ10xxx, AQ10xxx, etc., not vulnerable, even better when vulnerable (when suits should always be at least this good). What constitutes a "poor hand" or a "good hand" also varies with vulnerability.

Ogust applies over an intervening takeout double or two-level overcall:

South	West	North
2♥	Dbl/2♠	2NT - Ogust

Do not use Ogust without some good reason. If you know where the hand should play, just bid that contract immediately instead of wasting time using Ogust. Ogust gives the opponents an opportunity to bid at the three level, besides revealing to them the nature of opener's hand.

Other Responses

-- Simple suit takeouts of a weak two bid are forcing, even over a double, unless responder is a passed hand. To invite with a new suit bid, use Ogust first:

Opener	Responder
2♥	2NT
3♣	3♦

The 3♦ bid is invitational, not forcing. If responder wanted to force, she could have responded 3♦ to the 2♥ opening. With his poor hand/poor suit, opener will no doubt pass 3♦, but could raise with good diamond support and perhaps a side singleton.

Opener "raises" responder's immediate (forcing) new suit response by bidding notrump--he must never make a real raise at the four level, because responder may be psyching or just trying to find out if opener has a little something in the suit in order to make notrump a reasonably safe contract. Responder might have only Jxx in the suit, for instance, which is okay for notrump if opener has Qx, xxx, or better in the suit. The use of notrump to "raise" must be Alerted ("That is an asking bid, not a telling bid"), as must the new suit response.

If the notrump "raise" is available at the two level, then opener is allowed to make a real raise to three with good support, while a 2NT bid implies a poor raise:

Opener	Responder
2♥	2♠
2NT	- poor spade raise
3♠	- good spade raise

The artificial raise applies in competition, and may be given freely even with a minimum weak two bid.

South	West	North	East
2♥	Pass	2♠	3♣
3♠	- spade support, may be minimum		
3NT	- spade support, club stopper		
Dbl	- no spade support, club stopper		

-- A 3NT response to a weak notrump opening in a major suit gives opener a choice between 3NT and game in the major. It implies a strong doubleton in opener's suit. Opener rebids his suit with a singleton or void, otherwise passes. To give opener no choice about passing 3NT, responder must either use Ogust or respond in a new suit before bidding 3NT.

Opener	Responder
2♥	3♦
3♥	3NT - opener must pass

-- A single raise is not invitational. This is one of the best preemptive bids there is. Do not pass partner's weak two bid if you are willing to go to the three level. Instead, raise immediately, even if RHO passes. This strategy makes life very difficult for the opposition.

-- A jump raise to game may be weak, preemptive, or strong, intending to make game. Let the opponents guess which sort of hand you have.

-- A jump to four of an unbid minor is an asking bid, described in section 6-5.

PREEMPTIVE THREE BIDS

Preemptive openings at the three level show a hand with one long strong suit and nothing in the way of defensive strength. A suit headed by the ace is especially undesirable, representing too much defensive potential if partner has a singleton. Just pass and overcall later if the hand contains an ace.

A singleton or void in a side minor is undesirable for the same reason--too much defense. Shortness in a side major is okay. Adequate trump support for a side major is also a flaw, especially in first or second seat. You could miss a good contract in that major, since partner will assume that a weak preempt lacks good support for a side major.

The strength of a preemptive hand will vary with vulnerability, something like this:

Unfavorable vulnerability - within 1-1/2 tricks of contract

Both vulnerable within 2 tricks of contract

Neither vulnerable within 2-1/2 tricks of contract

Favorable vulnerability within 3 tricks of contract

These can be relaxed 1/2 trick or so if partner is a passed hand.

Responses

New suit responses by an unpassed hand are forcing, except for game bids. A 3NT response is a command for the preemptive opener to pass--it is not a "suggestion." Responder could have a void in opener's long suit and nine tricks of her own. A four-level minor suit response is an asking bid:

Opener	Responder
3♥	3♠ - forcing
	3NT - opener must pass
	4♣/4♦ - asking bids

When the response to a preemptive three bid is a new suit at the three level, opener bids 3NT to show a little support (Qx, xxx) for responder's suit. He must not raise because responder may have only Jxx in the suit, fishing for a notrump contract, or may be psyching. All this must be Alerted, of course: "That is an asking bid, not a telling bid. He is asking me to bid notrump with a little something in that suit, and otherwise to rebid my suit or show a lower-ranked feature."

See section 6-5 for responses to asking bids.

HIGH LEVEL PREEMPTIVE OPENINGS

An opening bid of 4♥ or 4♠ in first or second seat shows a hand that is not good enough in high cards for an opening bid of one in the suit or for an opening bid of 4♣ or 4♦ (NAMYATS --see below). The hand will typically have five or six losers, depending on vulnerability. A side suit headed by KQ counts as one loser, even if there are one or more small cards in the suit. A void in the other major is okay, but a minor suit void is undesirable. In deciding on slam with a big hand, partner may consider that you could be void in a major, but not in a minor.

A preempt in second seat should be quite sound, since there is more of a likelihood that partner has a good hand.

In third or fourth seat the hand can have a little more defense, enough for an opening bid of one in first or second seat, provided that opener is quite sure there is no slam opposite a passed hand.

Opening bids of 5♣ or 5♦ are also preemptive, require an additional playing trick, and tend to deny adequate trump support for a major suit. They also deny opening bid values or a hand suitable for notrump play (e.g., AKQ suit).

Responses to Game Bids

A response of 4♠ to an opening bid of 4♥ is natural, a signoff. The 4♠ bidder might have ten tricks in her own hand and a void in hearts, so opener must pass. All other new suit responses are asking bids (see section 6-5):

A raise of 4♠ to 5♠ or of 4♥ to 5♥ asks opener to bid six if his trumps are good: one loser at most, even with a singleton opposite.

A 4NT response is Roman Key Card Blackwood. See section 6-6 for responses to RKCB.

A response of 5NT is the Grand Slam Force (see section 6-4).

Opener	Responder
4♠	5♣/5♦/5♥ - asking bids
	4NT - Roman Key Card Blackwood
	5♠ - not invitational
	5NT - Grand Slam Force

A response of 5♦ to a 5♣ bid is also an asking bid, but a response of 5♥ or 5♠ to a 5♣ or 5♦ opening is natural.

Opening Bids of 4♣ and 4♦ (NAMYATS)

These openings are artificial, showing a major suit preempt with fewer losers than a normal preempt: 4♣ shows hearts and 4♦ shows spades. The hand should have no more than four losers in top cards, except that the queen of trumps can be another potential loser. You can assume that finesses are possible, so AQJ is 1/2 loser, Kx is 1-1/2 losers. With three losers only, a forcing two bid is usually in order, but with fewer than five controls (ace 2, king 1) a 4♣ or 4♦ opening with ten tricks is acceptable.

In fact, these openings deny as many as five controls, and they deny having a void suit. Open one of a suit with five controls or a void, if the hand is not good enough in high cards for a strong two bid. A 7-4-1-1 hand is also undesirable for NAMYATS.

Typical hands for NAMYATS:

♠AKQ8732 ♥4 ♦KQJ ♣65

♠K3 ♥AQJ107654 ♦K3 ♣8

♠AKJ109732 ♥KQ ♦3 ♣75

♠KQJ1085432 ♥KQJ ♦3 ♣A

Responses to NAMYATS

Responder knows that any ace will be worth a trick because opener cannot have a void. The king or queen of trumps is obviously worth 1/2 trick or more. Outside kings, even when accompanied by an ace, may not be of value. Twelve playing tricks will not produce a slam if the other side can take two tricks off the top. An outside singleton will not produce a ruffing trick if opener also has a singleton there.

With less than two key cards (aces, or king of trumps) responder signs off by bidding the next higher ranking suit. With two or more key cards (aces, or king of trumps), responder can employ Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB, see section 6-6) or show her hand by step bidding:

Opener	Responder
4♣	4♦ - signoff, one or no keys
	4♥ - two key cards
	4♠ - three key cards
	4NT - RKCB
	5♣ - four key cards

The "retransfer" signoff lets opener, who is likely to have more high cards to be led up to, play the hand. This supposed signoff may also be used as a device to get opener to bid his suit, prior to using RKCB. Responder should do this when she has no reason to play the hand (i.e., no tenace to protect):

Opener	Responder
4♣	4♦
4♥	4NT - RKCB

Opener	Responder
4♦	4♥ - signoff, one or no keys
	4♠ - two key cards
	4NT - RKCB
	5♣ - three key cards
	5♦ - four key cards

If opener jumps to five of his suit, or raises from four to five, he is asking about trumps:

Opener	Responder
4♦	4♠ - two key cards
5♠	Pass - bad spade holding
	6♠ - Q, xx, or better in trumps

Similarly, a jump by responder or non-competitive raise to five of opener's major asks about the trump queen, without which opener passes (unless he has nine trumps to the AKJ!).

Opener may have more problems than just key cards and trump holdings. What if responder has the wrong ace(s), or has the right ace(s) but no other cards to help out? For instance, responder shows two key cards and opener has ♠AKQJ1087 ♥KQJ ♦7 ♣32? If responder's two aces are red, there may be two club losers, but not if responder has KQ of clubs. If her two aces are in hearts and clubs, that is still only eleven tricks unless she has the king of clubs or heart length (and A432 is not good enough with a club lead). If responder shows three key cards (three aces, in this case), that is twelve tricks off the top. Is there a thirteenth? We may need some extra asking ability for these situations. We have two ways for opener to inquire further about responder's hand:

1) A 4NT bid by opener (not RKCB, since he knows about key cards from the response), or 5NT if the bidding is at the five level, states that all key cards are accounted for and asks responder how many quick tricks in side suits can be run from her hand, excluding aces. A club response shows none, diamonds one, etc. In doing this responder assumes that the ace of a suit will be played *first*, and that the partnership has all the aces (a prerequisite for the trick-asking bid). With a doubleton KQ responder counts just one playing trick (ace played first). The reason for this is that opener may have a doubleton or singleton ace. With KQx she counts two playing tricks, AKQJ as three, etc.

2) A new suit bid by opener (i.e., any suit other than his major) is an asking bid. See section 6-5, Asking Bids and Responses.

These methods may not solve opener's problems completely, but they should help.

When The Opposition Intervenes

-- If the opening bid gets doubled naturally (i.e., either showing the suit, or for lead direction), responder bids exactly the same except that she passes with no controls and may not bid opener's suit (showing two key cards) with two fast losers in the doubled suit. Instead, she redoubles to show two key cards. A bid of opener's suit therefore not only shows two key cards, but also at least second round control of the doubled suit.

South	West	North
4♣	Dbl	Pass - no key cards
		Rdbl - two keys, no club control
		4♦ - one key card
		4♥ - two keys, club control
		4♠ - three key cards
		4NT - four key cards

The purpose of the redouble, of course, is to let the lead come up to opener's hand when responder lacks first or second round control of the doubled suit.

-- If the opening gets doubled conventionally to show a specific suit plus an unspecified suit (e.g., showing the "other major" plus diamonds), a bid of opener's suit requires not only two controls, but at least second round control of the doubler's known suit. Other calls have the same meaning as when the double is natural. If the double shows two specific suits, a redoubler may have control of one of the suits, but not both.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in the ranking suit, a pass shows no key cards, a double one key card, and other bids the same as over a pass.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in opener's suit, probably a Michaels cue bid:

South	West	North
4♣	4♥	Pass - no key cards
		Dbl - one key card
		4♠ - two key cards
		4NT - RKCB
		5♣ - three key cards
		5♦ - four key cards
		5♥ - preemptive, no key cards

The 4♥ bid was Alerted as showing spades plus a minor. The raise to five in competition is preemptive, not a query about trump quality.

-- If the opening bid gets overcalled in a suit higher than partner's suit, responder bids whatever she thinks is right. A double is for business.

Opening Bids of Five in a Major

Opening bids of 5♥ or 5♠ show a hand that is solid except for the ace and king of trumps: ♠QJ108765 ♥AKQ ♦AKQ ♣ void. Partner bids six with one of the missing cards, seven with both. Lacking the ace or king of the suit opened, she must pass unless she can make slam in her own hand (e.g., 12 solid clubs and an outside loser).

Opening Bids of Six in a Suit

These openings show a hand that is solid except for the ace or king of trumps: ♠KQJ108763 ♥ void ♦AKQ ♣AK. Partner raises with the missing high trump, otherwise passes.

MARVIN TWO SPADES

The popular "Gambling 3NT" opening shows a solid seven-card minor with little outside strength. Besides being rather restrictive as to suit quality, the notrump contract is played from the wrong side. Not only is the lead through dummy's strength, but the exposure of that hand lets the opponents put up a "double dummy" defense. If responder can't support a 3NT contract, the bidding ends up at the dangerous four level.

Marvin 2♠ shows the same sort of hand, or (ten times as frequent) a semi-solid (KQJ or AQJ) seven-card minor with one ace or king outside. The hand must contain at least one ace, so responder can count on seven playing tricks. Besides a solid minor, opener could have:

	♠32 ♥A7 ♦KQJ10876 ♣J2
or	♠K3 ♥9 ♦962 ♣AQJ9432
or	♠875 ♥92 ♦AQJ7652 ♣A

A third-seat bidder might cheat with an eight-card suit or regard an AKJ10 suit as solid.

Responder bids 3♣ to sign off, whereupon opener will pass with clubs, or rebid 3♦ with diamonds. If responder would raise clubs but not diamonds, she responds 3♦. If she would raise diamonds but not clubs, she bids 3♣. Opener can correct if responder bids the wrong suit.

A response of 3♥ or 3♠ is forcing. Opener bids 3NT to show Qx, xxx, or better support, so responder (perhaps fishing for a notrump contract) need not have a real suit (e.g., respond 3♥ with ♠A7532 ♥J76 ♦A87 ♣K2). Although this response must be alerted ("That is an asking bid, not a telling bid."), its ambiguous nature can make it useful as a lead inhibitor, or as a complete bluff when an opposing game is feared. (A worthless Asking Bid is not a psych because it says nothing, it only asks).

A 2NT response asks for clarification. Opener bids 3NT with a solid minor, or indicates where the outside high card is located when the minor is only semi-solid:

Opener	Responder
2♠	2NT?
	3NT - solid minor suit
	3♣ - club suit, high card in diamonds
	3♦ - diamond suit, high card in clubs
	3♥ - high card in spades, may have either minor
	3♠ - high card in hearts, may have either minor

Opener's rebid will usually give responder the information needed to place the contract. These bids are designed so that opener's LHO cannot double to direct a lead through the high card (perhaps an unguarded king).

A 4♣ response asks opener to show a short suit:

Opener	Responder
2♠	4♣?
4♦/4♥/4♠/5♣ - short suit	
4NT - no short suit	

A 4♦ response asks for a major suit preference ("Ripstra"), and 4NT is Blackwood (5♣ or 5♦ with one ace--must have one--5♥ with two).

A game response is a signoff, but a jump to 5♣ is "pass or correct" (to 5♦).

When the Opponents Intervene

If the 2♠ opening gets doubled, presumably showing a spade suit, responder may choose to make a forcing pass. She would pass, for instance, with ♠972 ♥QJ543 ♦A2 ♣A53, giving opener a chance to bid notrump if he has spades stopped:

South	West	North	East
2♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2NT - spade stopper			
3♣/3♦ - no spade stopper			

Suppose there is an overcall and responder cue bids:

South	West	North
2♠	3♣	4♣

South now bids 4♦ with solid diamonds, 4♥ with a high card in spades, 4♠ with a high card in hearts, 4NT with a high card in clubs, and 5♣ with a solid club suit! (Maybe 3♣ was meant as Michaels). Similarly:

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♦	4♦	Pass
4♥ - high card in spades			
4♠ - high card in hearts			
4NT - high card in diamonds, club suit			
5♣/5♦ - solid suit			

When the cue bid is in a major, opener has less room to show his hand and responder may have to guess opener's minor:

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♥	4♥	Pass
4♠ - high card in spades, unknown minor			
4NT - high card in hearts, unknown minor			
5♣/5♦ - natural			

The 5♣/5♦ bids show either a solid suit or a high card in the unbid minor.

South	West	North	East
2♠	3♠	4♠	Pass
4NT - high card in spades, unknown minor			
5♣/5♦ - natural			

The bidding here is so crowded that opener can show an outside high card in spades only.

Summarizing the advantages of Marvin 2♠ over Gambling 3NT:

- 1) It gives an accurate picture of more hard-to-describe hands.
- 2) It comes up ten times as often.
- 3) Notrump is played from the right side.
- 4) Responder can bail out at the three level.
- 5) Responder can inquire about a major at the three level.
- 6) Responder can ask for a short suit.
- 7) It frees the 3NT opening for another purpose (e.g., a nine-trick notrump hand, also hard to describe).

With a normal weak two bid in spades, you can use the Marvin 2♥ opening (section 6-3), which shows a strong two bid in hearts or a weak two bid in spades. Users of the “Multi” convention (weak two bid in an unspecified major) can incorporate Marvin Two Spades without losing the weak 2S bid.

MARVELOUS TWO DIAMONDS

One of the awkward rebids for a five-card 1♥ or 1♠ opener comes after a two-over-one response in a minor, when opener has support for the minor but lacks the extra strength implied by a minor suit raise. He must just rebid the major, which could result in a 5-1 or even 5-0 trump fit when a 5-3 or 6-3 fit is available.

A less serious situation occurs when the response to a 1♠ opening is 2♥ and opener lacks the extra values required for a 2NT rebid. He does not need extra strength to raise hearts, but he does need three-card support. If he must bid 2♠ with a 5-2-3-3 hand, responder might have to pass with six hearts, or a five-card minor, and spade shortness.

In fact, a two-over-one responder has problems with any two-suited hand that lacks sufficient strength to show the second suit (a forcing bid, by an unpassed hand):

Opener	Responder
1♠	2♦/2♥
2♠	?

Responder has five clubs, but not enough strength to make the forcing rebid of 3♣. The result could be a 5-1 spade contract when a 5-3 minor suit contract is available.

The Marvelous Two Diamond opening reduces these problems somewhat. It shows a minimum or near-minimum (good 12 to bad 14 HCP) opening bid with a five-card major suit, a doubleton in the other major, and support for both minors. The ideal hand has 5=2=3=3 or 2=5=3=3 distribution, but it's okay to have 4=2 or 2=4 in the minors if the four-card suit is very weak and the doubleton very strong (two of the top three honors).

The maximum strength for a 2♦ opening is a poor 14 HCP. Don't open 2♦ with a 14 HCP hand that could raise a two-over-one response in either minor or could rebid 2NT. It is permissible, for instance, to raise a two-over-one response in a minor with only 14 HCP when holding two of the top three honors in support. Open 1♠ with ♠Q8732 ♥62 ♦AQ5 ♣AQ3 and raise a minor suit response. You would rather not play 2♠ opposite a doubleton with that weak suit, and a minor suit raise is not too much of a stretch, nor is a 2NT rebid if the response is 2♥.

Similarly, rather than open 2♦ with ♠Q8732 ♥AQ ♦K87 ♣QJ8, open 1♠ and rebid 2NT after a minor suit response. In fact, a 2♦ opening tends to deny a holding of AQ or AK in the short major; responder will assume opener has at most one stopper in that suit.

The Marvelous Two Diamond opening is used in first or second seat only. Since a third or fourth seat opener can pass a two-over-one response (or three-over-two rebid), the convention is less valuable in these positions. For reasons shown later, the convention is not appropriate for a matchpoint contest. Use it only with International Matchpoint (IMP) or rubber bridge scoring.

Responses

-- A 2♥ response is a signoff. Responder is not interested in game, and sees no better place to play the hand if opener's suit is hearts. If opener has spades, he rebids 2♠ over 2♥. Responder then passes or otherwise places the contract.

-- A three-level suit response is also a signoff. Responder has six or more cards for a major, five or more for a minor, and no interest in game. Opener can raise a 3♥ or 3♠ response, however, if the bid happens to hit his suit. It might seem unnecessary to sign off with a 3♦ response, since 2♦ can be passed, but the 3♦ response may be preferred for preemptive reasons. The major suit three bids imply shortness in the other major, and the minor suit three bids deny as many as three cards in either major.

-- A 2♠ response is an artificial relay asking opener to indicate his suit:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT	- heart suit
3♣	- spade suit

Responder might pass 2NT if his response was based on spade support and 10-11 HCP or so. With a weaker 4-1-4-4 or even with a weak 5-1-3-4 or 5-1-4-3 hand, responder must bid 2♥ and hope opener bids 2♠ or an opponent bids. With six spades the response is 3♠, even with a weak hand, hoping no one doubles.

Suppose responder has a weak hand with spade support and a five-card or longer minor. If opener's suit is hearts, responder will sign off in the minor:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT	3♣/3♦ - signoff

With a stronger hand, responder could invite game with a 3♠, 4♣, or 4♦ bid:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT	3♠/4♣/4♦ - invitational

Opener will tend to accept a game invitation if his trump holding is better than might be expected (i.e., a strong doubleton support for spades instead of a weak doubleton, good support for a minor instead of three small). If opener chooses not to pass, he will usually just raise responder's minor suit invitation. He may, however, bid his major instead if it is playable opposite a weak doubleton (e.g., AKQxx, AQJxx, KQJxx).

A jump to 4NT after a 2♠ response is Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB):

Opener	Responder
2♦	2♠?
2NT/3♣	4NT - RKCB

The "agreed" suit for RKCB purposes is opener's major, even if responder does not intend to play in that suit.

-- A 2NT response shows a heart raise and at least some interest in game; just bid 2♥ with no game ambitions. When you have responded 2NT, opener will bid 4♥ over an opponent's 3♠, 4♣, or 4♦ overcall if he likes his hand, so you had better have some game interest.

If opener has spades, he passes 2NT. With hearts, he clarifies his hand:

Opener	Responder
2♦	2NT - heart raise
Pass	- spade suit
3♣	- good hand, heart suit, clubs stronger than diamonds
3♦	- good hand, heart suit, diamonds stronger than clubs
3♥	- heart suit, minimum

With ♠6 ♥Q1087 ♦AQ83 ♣K964, respond 2NT, a heart raise. If partner has hearts, he will bid. If partner has spades, he will pass 2NT. If the hearts and spades were reversed, you would respond 2♠ and pass if opener shows hearts by bidding 2NT. With 5-3 in the minors, you would respond 2♠ and sign off in the five-card minor if opener shows hearts (safer than passing 2NT).

Don't bid 2NT with heart support and no hope for game; just bid 2♥. If opener bids 2♠ you can pass, bid 2NT, or three of a minor, according to your hand. Opener must pass any further bid you make.

Don't bid 2NT if you want to be in game no matter which major opener has, because opener will pass 2NT with five spades. Respond 2S with game-going or better hands if you can't place the final contract immediately.

-- A response of four in a major is a signoff but is unlikely to be weak. Why preempt in a major when opener no doubt has the other major and may have a good 3-3 in the minors besides?

-- A response of 4NT to the 2♦ opening is unusual notrump, asking opener to take a choice between the minors. Opener bids 5♣ with equal length, disregarding any difference in honor strength. To use Roman Key Card Blackwood (see section 6-6), respond 2♠ first and then bid 4NT (but opener's major will have to be the "agreed" suit).

-- A response of 5♣ or 5♦ is a signoff. To invite slam, bid 2♠, then five of the minor.

To summarize:

Opener	Responder
2♦	Pass! - five or more diamonds
	2♥ - pass or correct, weak
	2♠ - artificial relay
	2NT - heart raise
	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - signoff
	4♣/4♦ - invitational
	Game bids - signoff
	4NT - asks for minor preference

If responder has a hand such as ♠K2 ♥42 ♦J8732 ♣AK97, he has a problem. He can either pass 2♦ (no need to preemptively bid 3♦, with this good hand) or bid 2♥. He probably should go for a sure plus and pass. Hands like this are why the Marvelous Two Diamond opening should not be used in a matchpoint game. There is too good a chance that a better result could be obtained in a major suit or notrump partscore. At IMP or rubber bridge scoring the difference is unlikely to matter, and a diamond contract is safer.

If Two Diamonds Gets Doubled

If the 2♦ opening is doubled, any bid by responder is natural and non-forcing, and a redouble is to play. If not sure what to do, he can pass the double around to opener, who must bid his major.

If Two Diamonds Gets Overcalled

If the overcall is in a major or in notrump, then a double is for business. If in a minor (through 4♦), a double is negative--asking opener to bid his suit. All new suit bids are non-forcing and there are no artificial responses:

South	West	North
2♦	2♠	Dbl - business
		2NT - invitational
		3♥ - heart raise
		3♠ - cue bid, strong
		3♣/3♦ - signoffs
		4♣/4♦ - invitational

The 3♠ cue bid doesn't exactly ask for a spade stopper, but opener will no doubt bid 3NT with spades stopped.

The free 2NT response will usually be based on a long minor and a single stopper. Opener should not raise unless he has a strong spade doubleton or good support for both minors. The raise to 3♥ is strictly competitive and should be passed. Responder must bid 4♥ with game interest, a bid that may push the opponents into a phantom save.

South	West	North
2♦	2♥	Dbl - business
		2NT - invitational
		2♠ - weakish spade raise
		3♣/3♦ - signoff
		3♥ - cue bid
		3♠ - invitational spade raise
		4♣/4♦ - invitational

South	West	North	East
2♦	3♦	Dbl*	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠ - invitational	
		4♣ - signoff	

* Negative

North would bid 3♠ immediately with a non-invitational hand that lacks heart support.

Further Advantages of the 2♦ Opening

Besides avoiding a rebid problem, the 2♦ opening has some preemptive value. It also has the merit of describing a hand pretty well in one bid, which is always good. Occasionally it will result in a good contract that is unreachable by standard methods. Since the bid is not weak, there are good possibilities for penalizing the opponents if they enter the auction.

Disadvantages

The main disadvantage is that it uses up a bid (2♦) that could be used for other, more frequent purposes. It also prevents the hand from being played in one notrump, often a good contract for hands of this type. This is another reason that the convention is unsuitable for matchpoint contests.

WEAK JUMP OVERCALLS

Single Jump Overcalls

Single jump overcalls are normally strong, but not:

-- Directly over 1♣ or 1♦ artificial openings, strong or not, and responses to them:

North	East	
1♣	2♦/2♥/2♠/3♣	- weak, preemptive

South	West	North	East	
1♣	Pass	1♦/1♥	2♠/3♣/3♦	- weak, preemptive

-- Directly over 2♣ artificial strong opening and responses to it:

North	East	
2♣	3♦/3♥/3♠/4♣	- weak, preemptive

-- Directly over a 1♣ or 1♦ opening by five-card majorities, but not over responses to such an opening, when playing Marvin vs Five-Card Majors (see section 12-10).

North	East	
1♦	2♥/2♠/3♣/3♦	- weak, preemptive

South	West	North	East	
1♣	Pass	1♥	2♠	- strong jump overcall

And not when balancing:

South	West	North	East	
1♦	Pass	Pass	2♥/2♠/3♣	- invitational

This is a standard intermediate-strength jump overcall. See section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding.

-- Over a notrump opening, strong or weak:

South	West	
1NT	3♥/3♠/4♣/4♦	- weak, preemptive

A strong hand would reach these suits by a conventional route.

Balancing:

South	West	North	East	
1NT	Pass	Pass	3♥/3♠	- mildly invitational

The reopening jump is not very strong. With a really promising hand, fourth seat can show the single suit by an artificial overcall and follow with a jump. See section 12-2, Marvin vs Strong Notrump Openings, and section 12-3, Marvin vs Weak Notrump Openings.

If opener's partner has responded with a weak natural bid, or a conventional bid that might be weak, all jump overcalls are strong:

South	West	North
1NT	2♦*	3♠ - strong, invitational

* signoff or transfer

-- Jump overcalls in RHO's suit, when partner has not bid:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♥	3♥ - weak, preemptive

South	West
1♣	3♣ - weak, preemptive

-- Jump overcalls of a 1NT response or negative double by RHO when partner has overcalled:

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♥	1NT/Dbl	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - weak, preemptive

A good hand would double 1NT or redouble over the double..

Requirements

At the two level, requirements for a weak jump overcall are the same as for a weak two bid (see section 7-2, Weak Two Bids).

At the three level or higher, requirements are the same as for an opening preemptive bid at that level.

A jump overcall in a minor suit will often tempt an unpassed partner into a 3NT bid, so jumps to 3♣ or 3♦ should be sound if partner has not passed.

The Ogust convention (see section 7-2) applies to weak jump overcalls at the two level. New suit advances of the overcall are forcing for one round, unless advancer has previously passed. Overcaller bids notrump to show support for advancer's suit, but may raise a two-level advance instead of bidding 2NT when holding good values for the raise (e.g., three trumps and a singleton). If advancer then bids 3NT, overcaller must pass. This is the standard weak-two approach.

Double/Triple Jump Overcalls

North	East
1♣	3♦/4♦/4♣

If less than game, these overcalls deny any defensive strength outside the suit bid (and preferably no ace in the bid suit). Game bids may be stronger, having the same considerations as opening game bids. See section 7-4, High Level Preemptive Openings.