



Play & Learn

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Weak twos

A common agreement for weak twos, which are more clearly defined than higher-level preempts, is a six-card suit with 5 to 10 or 11 high-card points. *Partner will expect your hand to usually produce five or six tricks.*

Would you open a weak two with the following hands? Would vulnerability or position affect your decision?

- 1) ♠K Q 10 9 8 3 ♥5 2 ♦7 6 2 ♣9 2
- 2) ♠Q 9 7 5 3 2 ♥9 3 2 ♦K 7 2 ♣6
- 3) ♠6 2 ♥K Q J 8 6 ♦J 8 4 ♣7 5 3
- 4) ♠7 4 ♥A Q J 8 7 3 ♦9 5 ♣K 4 2
- 5) ♠A Q J 9 8 3 ♥7 4 3 ♦A 6 4 ♣8
- 6) ♠Q 7 ♥J 6 ♦A Q J 6 5 2 ♣J 7 5
- 7) ♠A J 10 7 ♥A J 6 5 3 2 ♦7 3 ♣8
- 8) ♠7 5 3 2 ♥A Q J 10 9 8 ♦7 3 ♣8

- 1 is a minimum 2♠ opening in all but fourth seat where weak preempts do not exist. Your 5 HCP are at the low end of the range, but your suit is strong enough that a penalty double isn't likely to be attractive to opponents.
- 2 has 5 HCP but your suit isn't strong enough for a weak-two opening in most seats. In third seat, you're more anxious to block your fourth-seat opponent, who is likely to have a good hand, so you might venture a non-vulnerable 2♠ opening.
- 3 might tempt some players to open 2♥ in first or second seat not vulnerable. Partner will expect to find you with six hearts, so I prefer

passing with this hand. It's a different story in third seat, where we lower our requirements about strength and suit length, making a 2♥ opening attractive. Some might pass at unfavorable vulnerability, but your good suit, plus the advantage of directing an opening lead and blocking the opponents, outweigh the fear of being doubled and going down too much.

- 4 is a maximum 10-point weak 2♥ opening in first or second seat. Vulnerability and partnership style determine your bid in the remaining seats. In third seat, you could open 2♥ or push to bid 3♥. In fourth seat, opening the bidding means you expect to get a plus score. While partner is likely to have enough strength that it's reasonable to expect 2♥ to make, you also have to consider whether the opponents will enter the bidding to either make 2♠ or push your side too high.
- 5 falls into the 5 to 11 HCP range, but it's too good to preempt no matter which range you choose. With two-and-a-half quick tricks and a six-card suit, this is a fine 1♠ opening in first or second seat. Because I can see the possibility of game opposite the right 11-point hand, I prefer a third seat 1♠ opening but won't quibble with 2♠. In fourth seat, this is the ideal 2♠ opening. Remember, "preempts" in fourth seat aren't your normal weak bids.

- 6 also has 11 HCP, but I suggest preempting whether the top end of your range is 10 or 11. With no quick tricks outside of diamonds, this hand looks a lot more like a preempt than a 1♦ opening. *Defined point ranges are no substitute for good judgment.* With time and experience, you will learn not to be a slave to points when opening at any level.
- 7 is within either weak-two range, but I don't suggest preempting. Your hearts aren't super strong and you have a valuable spade suit. It's almost impossible to locate a 4-4 fit after opening with a preempt. With two quick tricks, your hand meets the Rule of 20 + 2. Open 1♥.
- 8 is weak with a very good suit. Should the side four-card spade suit prevent you from opening 2♥? No, not with such a disparity in the strength of your suits. *Weak twos and other preempts announce that your long suit is clearly the most important feature of your hand.* A good four-card major on the side can be a deterrent to preempting. Extra distribution, such as a second long suit or a void, can make a hand near the top of the weak-two range too strong to preempt. Weaker hands need not be as concerned about missing game. Open 2♥ in first or second seat. Bidding 2♥ is OK in third seat, but you might instead push to open 3♥. ■