

Strong 2♣

Are you using an opening bid of 2♣ to describe **ANY** hand with 19-21hcp? If so: **YOUR SYSTEM INCLUDES A SERIOUS LIABILITY.**

The recommended method is to open with a non-forcing bid if game is unlikely unless partner has the 6hcp needed to respond.

Examples of hands that should not be opened with a forcing bid:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. | ♠AT84
♥Q
♦AKQ
♣AJ843 | 20hcp, but the longest suit lacks quality. Open 1♣. |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. | ♠87
♥AKQJ
♦QJ987
♣AK | 20hcp. Same problem. Open 1♦. |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| 3. | ♠AJ8
♥AQJT9
♦A9
♣A93 | 20hcp. But if partner has a truly bad hand, this hand could make as few as 7 tricks with hearts trumps. Open 1♥ |
|----|-------------------------------|---|

If partner has a truly bad hand, the above hands will make at most 7 or 8 tricks. Open with a non forcing one level bid and be pleased to record a plus score when partner passes.

It is recommended to open with an artificial forcing 2♣ bid only on hands that can make game without any help from partner. Usually these hands are 22+ hcp, but can be "weaker". Your forcing opening bid requires partner to keep the bidding open until game is reached, even on the weakest hands. (Except after a 2NT rebid showing a balanced 23-24hcp).

Examples:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | ♠6
♥AKQJT95
♦AK
♣A65 | You can make 4♥ by yourself. Start the auction with a game forcing 2♣. |
| | ♠AKJ96
♥AKQ82
♦3
♣AJ | You can make either 4♠ or 4♥. Open 2♣ and as the auction develops, partner can choose which trump suit will work best. |

If partner can trust your 2♣ opening to show a high quality hand, it becomes much easier to judge whether a slam is likely.

There are some variations on this theme but the underlying concept is always that if game is unlikely if partner cannot respond to a 1 level bid, then you should NOT be opening with a 2 level forcing bid.