



Pre-emptive ("Barrage") Bids

The pre-empt opening of three of a suit shows seven or more cards in the suit, few high card points, typically six-nine, mostly in the suit.

♠	K Q J 5 4 3 2
♥	9 7
♦	10 2
♣	3 2

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
3♠	?		

The intent is to disrupt the opponents on the assumption that they have most of the points. The opener's hand must be good enough for a profitable sacrifice expecting to be doubled.

This type of pre-emptive opening is so well established that it is neither announced nor alerted.

The opening bid is not expected to succeed as a contract. It assumes that the opponents have most of the high card points, enough for game.

It is intended to give away less, even doubled, than the opponents can make.

This means that the vulnerability should be checked, and adverse vulnerability treated with caution.



Strong Twos...

In Pure ACOL an opening bid of 2♥ or 2♠ shows a strong hand, taking 8 tricks in the bid suit without help. This bid shows values greater than 1♥ or 1♠ opening showing 12-19 and less than 2♣ opening showing 23+ or the capability of taking 9 tricks in a suit. Partner must say "Strong".

Weak Twos

Many partnerships agree to use an opening 2 to show a weak hand (6-9HCP) with six cards in the suit. These hands are more common, and the bid is pre-emptive, making it difficult for the opposition to find their best contract.

Benjaminised ACOL, or "Benji", is an agreement to open 2♥ or 2♠ on weak hands (6-9HCP) with six in the suit.

"Weak Two's in Three Suits", where the partners agree that an opening bid of 2♦ shows a similar hand but with 6 diamonds.

Letting opponents know

Under English regulations, at the table, opening 2 of a suit, where the suit bid is the long suit in the hand requires an announcement by partner. If weak, partner must say "Weak". Online, the bid should be alerted with the explanation "Weak".

At the table, these opening bids require the STOP card.



Bidding against Pre-emptive ("Barrage") Bids

You need to be quite sure which version of ACOL you and your partner are playing. You need to understand weak twos so that you and your partner can compete against them when opponents use them.

When opponents use a weak three level opening

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
3♣	?		

You need to be sure that the bid is weak, so if considering action and in any doubt, ask.

Then check the vulnerability.

A simple defensive system:

1. Double for take-out.

If you have a hand with opening values and a shortage in the opened suit, double the opener's bid for take-out by your partner.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
3♣	X		

♠	K Q 6 5
♥	K Q 9 7
♦	A 10 2
♣	3 2



2. 3NT if you can make it.

If you have a balanced or "semi-balanced" hand with 16+ HCP and a "stop" in the opened suit, bid 3NT.

♠ K Q 6 5
♥ Q J 7
♦ A 10
♣ K J 3 2

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
3♣	3NT		

3. A natural suit overcall.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
3♣	3♠		

♠ K Q 6 5 4 3
♥ Q J 7
♦ A 10
♣ 3 2

If you have a long suit (five with two honours, six with one honour or seven), you can overcall your suit, even at the three level with 12 HCP, or 7 losers.



4. Cue bid a two-suited hand.

Bid the opponents suit if you are five:five or better with no more than seven losers, or at least 12 HCP.

N E S W

3♣ 4♣

♠	K Q 6 5 4
♥	K Q J 7 6
♦	A 10
♣	3

5. Otherwise Pass.



Fishbein

The standard defence to three level pre-emptive openings has one flaw. You never get to double for penalties!

If you use the Fishbein convention you and partner agree that a double will be for penalties and NOT take out. You must ALERT this double.

N E S W

3♣ X!

♠ K Q 6 5
♥ Q J 7
♦ A 10
♣ K J 3 2

If you have a hand suitable for take-out, you make an overcall of the next SUIT up.

N E S W

3♣ 3♦!

♠ K Q 6 5
♥ K Q 9 7
♦ A 10 2
♣ 3 2

This is alerted. Any other call or bid has the same meaning as before. Partner responds to an overcall of the next suit up as though it was a take out double. If they happen to have your suit, they can pass.



Any other overcall is natural.

N E S W
3♣ 3♠

♠ K Q 6 5 4 3
♥ Q J 7
♦ A 10
♣ 3 2

When opponents use a weak two- level opening

A simple defensive system is the same as above.

X	For Take-Out
Suit Overcall	Opening quality hand with quality suit

However, again, you can't double for penalties.



Alternative defence to Weak 2s

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
2♠	2NT!		

♠	3
♥	K Q J 7
♦	A Q 10 8
♣	K J 3 2

2NT Overcall shows 11-15 HCP and is for take-out. It must be alerted. The hand should meet the criteria for a normal take-out. It should have opening values and four cards in unbid major(s).

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
2♠	X!		

♠	A 7
♥	K Q J 7
♦	A J 10
♣	K J 3 2

Double shows 16+ HCP and is for penalties (though partner should be free to convert to take out by bidding). It must be alerted.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
2♥	2♠		

♠	K Q 6 5 4 3
♥	Q J 7
♦	K 10
♣	3 2

An overcall is a natural, near opening quality hand with 5+ card suit.



The Multi 2 Diamonds

N E S W

2 ♦!

An opening bid of 2 ♦ is used by some players to show one of a "list" of possible meanings. The bid is alerted.

Opener's partner will not know which of the possible types of hand until the auction proceeds further.

The Multi Two "Options"

The options usually include weak twos in either Hearts or Spades. It's generally the most likely option.

Other possible meanings of the bid vary but are usually strong.

If you are in the direct position over the opener, you will often be able to make a good guess whether the opener is weak or not.



BC L04 Defence to Pre-empt

NOTES

If East has few points (less than 10), the opener is probably strong!

N E S W
2♦! Pass

♠ K 6 5 4 3
♥ Q J 10 7
♦ K 10
♣ 3 2

If the opener has a strong hand you will probably have a weak hand and almost certainly pass. You might overcall with an exceptionally good and long natural suit overcall. So, a good agreement with partner is that any suit bid by you is a natural overcall.

N E S W
2♦! 2NT!

♠ 3
♥ K Q 8 7
♦ A Q 10 8
♣ K J 3 2

If East has more points (more than 9, and a shortage in one of the majors) the opener is likely to hold a weak two in that major.

You need an agreement that allows for the fact that partner may not know what opener's long suit is.

2NT Overcall shows 11-15 HCP and is for takeout. This must be alerted.

Partner must bid their best suit, remembering that this bid indicates that you believe that the opener has a weak two.



N E S W
2♦! X!

♠ A Q
♥ K Q J 7
♦ A J 10 8
♣ J 3 2

Double shows 16+ HCP and offers to defend for penalties.

Partner is free to convert to take out by bidding. This is a good idea if weak with a long suit. This must be alerted.

These simple tools allow the partnership to double for penalties if partners holding and vulnerability are suitable, or to convert to a contract otherwise.