

DEFENCE TO WEAK TWO'S

Background

The standard weak two opening bid is based on a six card suit; about 6 – 10 points; little defensive strength.

In general, in defence to weak two's you should aim to be aggressive – try to make a bid.

General

A number of defences exist, but the general style is primarily determined by the use to which the double is put. Is this for take out or for penalty? Whatever defence you employ, there will always be the hands which cannot be ideally bid and some judgement will be required.

For intermediate players I would strongly recommend the style based on take-out doubles, primarily due to the extra flexibility at a lower level on hands without a long suit, and also the principles are similar to take-out doubles of one level opening bids. The summary of the defence is:

Double – take-out; shortage in the opponent's weak two suit; cover in other three suits; opening values
Suit Overcalls – 12+ points and a six card (or good five card) suit.

2NT – 16-19 points semi balanced with a stop in the weak two suit.

Pass – any other hand including minimum opening values with length/strength in the opponent's suit.

Jump to minor or 4NT – 'Leaping Michaels' – two suited hands – opening values.

Doubles

The basic guideline requirements for the take-out double are:

- shortage in opponent's weak two suit
- 12+ points (or 11 points with a 4-4-4-1 hand).
- with minimum values (12 – 14 points) - at least two four card suits, and support (3 card) for the third suit. Ideally the hand should have four cards or a **good** three cards in the other major.
- with 15+ points only two of the suits need to be present (typically 5-4-2-2 hands).
- in fourth seat after 'two-bid, pass, pass,' you need to be even more aggressive, and should aim to double on about two points less than you would in second seat (yes – this might mean a 10 point double). Your partner may have values in the opponent's suit and was forced to pass. He could then pass your take-out double.

If your partner makes a take-out double in fourth seat, be conscious of the fact that he may only have about 10 points. So with a 12 point hand which you may have previously passed (wrong shape), do not overbid in response.

Examples (all over a weak 2♠ opening bid):

a) ♠ 7	b) ♠ 83	c) ♠ 7	d) ♠ KQ943	e) ♠ 7	f) ♠ 7
♥ KQ73	♥ KQ7	♥ AK74	♥ 6	♥ K1072	♥ AK972
♦ J742	♦ QJ42	♦ QJ743	♦ AJ7	♦ Q853	♦ Q5
♣ AJ83	♣ AJ83	♣ QJ107	♣ K843	♣ AJ86	♣ AQJ54

- Double - this hand is about the minimum for a double - ideal shape 11 points.

Suit Overcalls

- a) You should bid on the basis that partner has 8 or 9 points.
- b) Good suit – strong 5 cards of solidity, or a longer suit.
- c) Values for an opening bid – 12+ points (however 2♠ over a 2♥ opener doesn't require quite as much, say 11+ points – you are still at the two level if problems arise).
- d) With stronger one suited hands (16+), either jump bid or double and then bid the suit (i.e. ignore partner's choice)

Responding To Suit Overcalls

- a) Partner expects you to have 8 or 9 points, so only take further action on 10+ point hands (including points for shortage etc.).
- b) In general raise by one level with 10-11 points, and with 12+ points go for game (if responding to partner's 2♠ overcall he may be slightly weaker).
- c) With 10+ points and a stop in the opponents suits, consider a no-trump contract.
- d) A change of suit would show 15+ points and would be forcing.

2NT Overcall

16-19 points with a stop in the weak two suit (one stop is sufficient)

In response you should use the same responses to a 2NT (20-22) opening bid, but adjusted for points (i.e. go for game on 8+ points (or a good 7). With six or less points you should pass: partner may have 19, but this could still be a struggle.

Jump To 4♣, 4♦, or 4NT

These are known as 'Leaping Michaels' bids showing an opening hand and (over 2♥ opener):

4♣ - clubs and spades (5/5)

4♦ - diamonds and spades (5/5)

4NT – clubs and diamonds (5/5)

Responses To Leaping Michaels

Bid the nearest suit not shown to show slam interest in the major. Bid the other suit not shown, to invite slam interest in the minor.

Eg. 2♥ - 4♣ - pass - ?

The 4♣ shows 5/5 in clubs and spades.

4♦ - slam interest in spades

4♥ - slam interest in clubs

4♠ - to play

4NT – natural to play (not Blackwood)

5♣ - natural to play