

## WHEN IS A HAND STRONG ENOUGH TO OPEN A STRONG, ARTIFICIAL, AND FORCING “2C”?

Many means of assessment have been offered in an attempt to set forth a minimum criterion that would ordinarily signal enough of a holding to warrant an opening “2C”, strong, artificial, and forcing bid by a would-be-opener.

- a. Originally, a threshold of HCP’s coupled with a suit length requirement for unbalanced hands was used as the standard method of evaluation towards this question.
  - 25 HCP’s with a 5-card suit
  - 23 HCP’s with a 6-card suit
  - 21 HCP’s with a 7-card suit
- b. Some suggested setting a minimum threshold of at least 21+ HCP’s or more without consideration as to the distribution of the hand and the number of cards within a given suit.
- c. Still others, using the losing-trick count criteria suggested opening “2C” with any hand holding no more than four (4) losers.
- d. Some suggest that opener not bid “2C” as an opening call, even if an arbitrary point count or losing-trick count is satisfied, if, the hand contains two or more biddable suits.

Recently, a more exacting method of assessment has been set forth to deal with this issue. It embraces the suggestion that any hand, regardless as to its distribution, and whether or not it contains even two biddable suits, be considered as a candidate for a strong, artificial, and forcing “2C” opening if it satisfies the following two (2) requirements:

1. **It contains at least Nine (9) Playing Tricks;** i.e., not more than four (4) losing tricks.

And

2. **It contains at least as many “Quick Tricks” as losers,** defined as the number of defensive tricks one would take on defense against an opponent’s suit contract.

**AK = 2 Quick Tricks** (No suit may have more two (2) quick tricks)

**AQ = 1½ Quick Tricks**

**A = 1 Quick Trick**

**KQ = 1 Quick Trick**

**KX = ½ Quick Trick** (Jacks are never “quick”)

**Example Hand:**    **AKQJXX**    (2 Quick Tricks - No Losers)

**AX**            (1 Quick Trick - 1 Loser)

**X**                (No Quick Tricks - 1 Loser)

**KQXX**          (1 Quick Trick - 1 Loser)

This hand contains four (4) Quick Tricks and only three (3) Losers. This one qualifies. **Open “2C”.** (Note: Hand holds only 19 HCP’s)

3. **Always open “2C” with any hand with six (6) or more quick tricks.**