

Responding to an opening weak 2 bid - Ogust – Ron Kral

Vul None	♠ AQ75												
South deals	♥ 543			West									
Lead: ♠♥♦♣ x	♦ J2			North									
	♣ AK84			East									
♠ K1093		<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S			South
	N												
W		E											
	S												
♥ A7		♠ J8		2♥									
♦ A984		♥ 109		Pass 2NT ¹									
♣ 1096		♦ KQ1053		Pass 3♥ ³									
		♣ Q732		Pass Pass									
	♠ 642												
	♥ KQJ862												
	♦ 76												
	♣ J5												

¹ Ogust – How good is your preempt partner?
² I have a good suit, but on the low end of our agreed HCP range
³ Too bad – if you had a maximum I'd have bid game
 Note: North has the MINIMUM hand needed to use the 2NT Ogust bid. Even 3♥ is iffy if the ♠K is offside

The Ogust 2NT convention was developed by Mr. Harold Ogust in the mid-50's when weak 2's were becoming popular in the US. It's needed when opener preempts his partner rather than the opponents. The Ogust 2NT bid by responder to "asks" opener "How good was your preempt?" Opener uses a system of step responses to further describe his hand. After hearing the answer, responder typically sets the final contract. After responder bids 2NT, Ogust, the rebids by opener are as follows.

3♣	Shows minimum strength and a poor suit	5-7 HCP	Ax, Kx, Qx, AJx, KJx, QJx
3♦	Shows minimum strength and a good suit	5-7 HCP	AK, KQ, AQ, AJ10, KJ10
3♥	Shows maximum strength and a poor suit	8-10 HCP	Ax, Kx, Qx, AJx, KJx, QJx
3♠	Shows maximum strength and a good suit	8-10 HCP	AK, KQ, AQ, AJ10, KJ10
3NT	signifies a solid suit	N/A	AKQxxx

The mnemonic I use to remember the responses is "Bid more with more points". Or "minors are minimum". A "good suit" is defined as 2 of the top 3, or 3 of the top 5. The responses above are the modern ones used most often. Within the bridge community some partnerships have agreed to different responses. When agreeing to play Ogust, make sure you go over the responses with partner.

When responder discovers the quality of the opening bid, responder sets the final contract.

NOTE: A new suit by an unpassed responder is still **FORCING** for one round using standard methods. Responder can bid a new suit with a good hand. Opener supports responder with 3 cards in responder's suit, and rebids his own suit without support. By a **passed hand**, a new suit by responder is just trying to improve the contract (eg, 2♦ - 2♠). Responder is typically void in opener's suit. With a singleton, just play in the weak 2 suit. You **can** agree to play that a new suit by an **unpassed hand** is non-forcing, but that treatment must be alerted.

A direct raise of opener's suit to the 3-level is simply adding to the preempt. Responder has a hand in the 0-14 HCP range with 3-card support for opener's suit. Raising to the 4-level shows 4-card support and can be any hand in the 0-19 HCP range! When responder bids 4♥ or 4♠, the opponents don't know if responder is adding to the preempt or bidding to make. Occasionally you can use the 2NT response to fool the opponents. If responder intends to just bid 3 anyway, he can bid 2NT to pretend he has a good hand, then bid 3M over whatever response opener gives.

Additional notes:

- 1) A common alternative to Ogust is "feature". Using "feature", when responder bids 2NT, he's again asking about the quality of opener's preempt. When opener has maximum HCP for his preempt, opener bids another suit where he has an honor. With a minimum preempt, opener simply rebids his original suit. Whether you agree to play Ogust or feature is your partnership decision.
- 2) Some people play "disciplined" weak 2's in 1st and 2nd seat. They already promise a "good" suit. If you have this agreement, it's better to play "feature" rather than Ogust.
- 3) Normally you do not use either Ogust or feature unless you hold 2 or 3-card trump support and 15+HCP (use the rule of 17 as a guideline).
- 4) **Do not** bid 2NT Ogust or feature when it's clear your hand will produce game opposite a minimum opening preempt. You may give the opponents room to compete or double to find a sacrifice or lead.