

Printable Version 2/1 Introduction - http://www.bridgehands.com/Conventions/Two_Over_One.htm

Many advancing bridge players enjoy the 2/1 system. A large portion of the Standard American bidding system is identical to 2/1 bidding. You will need to modify your basic approach on a few bids – those where your partner opened in a higher-level suit than your suit with two-level response, as 1♠ – 2♣. Such a bid by responder promises an opening hand with a “good” 12+ points. We will learn a new stopgap bid covers certain hands with invitational values, the Forcing Notrump. This fundamental change allows 2/1 players to quickly identify game going and slam invitational hands using low level bids, a concept referred to as “slow shows, fast denies” (extra values). Bid slowly with extra values – bidding is a communication process and it is important to tell the whole story rather than prematurely jump into a contract without fully discussing the attributes of the partnership assets. Consistent with this approach, 2/1 players have numerous conventions to obstruct the opponent’s bidding with weak, preemptive bids.

2/1 Background (see website for details)

Roth Stone; Kaplan Sheinwold; Western & Eastern Scientific.

Let’s start with the basic 2/1 bidding strategy:

- 1) Find an 8+ major card “golden fit” using methods similar to those used by Standard American players. However, when the responder makes a two-level bid in a lower ranking suit than the opener, the bid signifies the responder has 12+ points and is making a game forcing bid.
- 2) Discover notrump stoppers without a golden fit – most players also use a “temporizing” Notrump response as a prelude to show a modest trump fit with the opener. When the responder makes a 1 Notrump bid in response to opener’s 1♥ or 1♠ bid, the response promises a wide range response of 5+ to 12 points – this bid is forcing for one round
- 3) Consider an alternative minor suit contract. Since the partners require additional strength to make game in a minor, these contracts are considered as a last resort when major suit or Notrump contracts are not appropriate.
- 4) The 1 Notrump and 2 Notrump bids, usually 15-17 and 20-21 points precisely describe opener’s strength and shape, identical to the Standard American treatment.
- 5) 2/1 emphasizes finding major suit fit at a low level with methods such as “slow shows, fast denies” bids by responder. Many 2/1 players have extended this approach through their methods. For instance, responses to opener’s bid include:
 - a. Opener's raise of responder's major suit response usually shows 4-card support.
 - b. Responder’s 1 Notrump response by an unpassed hand to opener’s 1♥ or 1♠ opening is forcing for one round. This treatment is at the core of the 2/1 system.
 - c. Responder’s 2/1 response by an unpassed hand forms a game-forcing auction. This “slow shows-fast denies” approach allows the partners to conserve space, preventing unnecessary jumps to force game. Thus, avoiding fast arrival preserves precious bidding space to explore slam.

Basic 2/1 Bids

The 2/1 game forcing auction applies to responders first bid. Early in our bridge career we learned to bid game when our combined partnership assets are 25-26 or more points. Ideally, these assets will sustain 10 tricks in a major or 9 tricks in Notrump. Again, a fundamental construct of the 2/1 system is the philosophy is to quickly identify and communicate game-going partnership values *without* consuming excessive bidding space. With responder hands that are 10-12 points (or a questionable 13 points with several queens and Jacks), consider the Forcing Notrump bid discussed in the next Chapter.

The basic rules for **2/1 game forcing auctions** are:

- 1) When partner opens 1♥ or 1♠, you bid 2 of a lower suit (2♣, 2♦, 2♥ if 1♠). Typically, responder’s suit is a 5+ cards long. On some occasions, responder’s suit contains 4 cards, and on rare occasions the responder may need to make a 2/1 minor suit response with a 3-4-3-3 distribution. Here are the 6 game forcing bids:
1♥ – 2♣; 1♥ – 2♦; 1♠ – 2♣ (Could be as few as 3 ♣s, holding 3=4=3=3 distribution);
1♠ – 2♦; 1♠ – 2♥ (Promises 5+ ♥s); **1D – 2♣** (GF with 4+ cards or GF unless rebid – decide!)
- 2) The responder makes a two level game forcing bid in a lower suit with 12+ “good” points. Thus, the 2/1 system requires a bidding mechanism to describe responder hands that have “in-between” values: those holdings in the 10-12 point range. Recall that using Standard American bidding, responder

could make a two over one bid showing invitational values – not so with the 2/1 system. As we will see later, the responders Forcing One Notrump bid covers the range of 5+ to 12 points to address this need.

3) By the way, auctions that are **not** 2/1 game forcing auctions include:

A) The 2 level bidder is a passed hand (since responder's pass limited the hand to 12 or less)

P – 1♥; 2♣ or P – 1♠; 2♥

B) The opponents have made an **intervening** bid:

1♥ – (1♠) – 2♣; Most 2/1 players advocate “systems off”

1♥ – (X) – 2♦

1♥/♠ – (any) – 3♣/♦; Responder jump bids are typically preemptive, (partnership agreement)

1♠ – (2♦) – 2♥

1♥ – (P) – 2♣ – (2♦); 2/1 game force is on. The 2/1 auction was established *before* interference

C) Simple raises

i. **1♥ – 2♥;**

ii. **1♦ – 2♦; Most 2/1 players treat the raise of a minor as Inverted Minors (Forcing 1 round)**

D) Jump responses and jump shifts

i. **1♠ – 3♠; invitational or preemptive, depending on partnership agreement**

ii. **1♥ – 2♠; weak or strong, depending on partnership agreement**

iii. **1♦ – 2♥; similar scenario as ii)**

E) Notrump response

i. **1♥ – 1N; Forcing Notrump**

ii. **1♠ – 2N; most play this as a conventional bid, as Jacoby 2NT (Balanced 4-card raise)**

8) Partnership dependent: **1♦ – 2♣** Many play 2♣ bid is game forcing. Some advocate a rebid of the minor to show an invitational hand. Exercise: For each question assume opener opened in an unspecified major and decide whether or not to make a game-forcing 2 level bid:

♠AK32 ♥K102 ♦KJ32 ♣32	With 14 points, responder should make a game forcing bid in response to major suit. The 2♦ response is game forcing, showing responder's side suit.
♠32 ♥32 ♦J 2 ♣AKJ5432	With 9 high card points, the responder cannot make a 2 level bid. There are two bidding styles to describe this type of hand (as 1♠ – 1N; 2♥ – 3♣, or 1♠ – 3♣)
♠A Q32 ♥A2 ♦AQ432 ♣32	With 14 points, force game. First bid 2♦ temporizing, supporting ♣s later if opened. Many 2/1 players would use the Jacoby 2NT convention in response to opener's 1♠ bid.
♠432 ♥AQ2 ♦AQJ ♣AK32	With 20 points, responder forces game bidding 2♣. If opener bid 1♥, we plan to support the suit later. While responder is interested in exploring slam, the 2♣ bid is at least game forcing so responder need not worry about opener passing.
♠AK2 ♥2 ♦KQJ432 ♣432	With 13 points, the responder commits to partnership to game, bidding 2♦ for starters. We will avoid the merits of conventional bids at this time (Jacoby 2NT or Splinter bids).
♠AJ32 ♥32 ♦Q5432 ♣K2	With 10 points, responder cannot make a game forcing bid if opener bid 1♠. Depending on partnership methods, responder either raises the bidding to 3♠ or makes a conventional response to show extra support (Bergen or Hardy Raise). If opener bid 1♥, responder bids 1♠ in an attempt to locate a partnership fit – responder's raise in a new suit is one-round forcing.
♠32 ♥432 ♦AQ32 ♣KQ32	With 11 points, the responder cannot make a 2/1 game forcing bid. We will learn about the 1NT forcing bid in the next chapter.
♠432 ♥KQ2 ♦K32 ♣A432	With 12 points, responder is nearing game values. However, responder should not make a game forcing 2/1 bid with these values, particularly with a flat 3=3=3=4 distribution and spread values.
♠2 ♥2 ♦AKQ432 ♣KQJ102	With 15 points, responder should bid 2♦ as a game forcing bid looking to find the best contract in follow-up bidding

Why are these bidding scenarios **not** game forcing?

a. **P – 1♠; 2♥**

b. **1♥ – (2♣) – 2♦**

c. **1♠ – 3♠;**

Answers: Some use Drury to show invitational hands after passing.

a. **P – 1S; 2♥**

Responder is a passed hand – not *game* forcing but promises a rebid

b. **1♥ – (2♣) – 2♦**

Opponent made an intervening bid – not *game* forcing but promises a rebid

c. **1S – 3S;**

Suit raises, jump or otherwise, are not forcing; opener may pass a limit raise

Forcing Notrump

The 2/1 bid by responder is game forcing. After the opener bids 1♥ or 1♠ (unpassed hand), responder uses 1NT forcing to describe hands with 5+ (good) to 12- (bad) points. As its name suggests, the bid is forcing one round, assume responder is not a passed hand; some play “semi forcing” bids (Opener can pass 1N only if would not accept a 3-card limit raise). The Forcing Notrump bid requires partner to further to describe features of the opener’s hand – recall opener’s range is very large: 12 – 22 points. Responder can still make a natural bid of 1S with 4+ ♠s over opener’s 1♥ bid.

Here are some of the responder’s benefits of the Forcing Notrump approach:

1. Better describe balanced hands with invitational strength
2. Precisely show a weak hand with a long suit
3. Belatedly show modest fit with opener after learning more of combined assets
4. Steer clear of many questionable 2/1 bids with only invitational values
5. Find a low-level part score when partners do not have a fit.

When partner opens 1♠, the responder has a limited number of options which we respond in this sequence:

1. Pass, with less than a good 5 or 6 point hand
2. Raise opener’s ♠ suit, with 3+ in opener’s major
3. Bid a new suit at the 2 level or higher. If responder’s bid is at the 2 level, the 2/1 response is game forcing.
4. Respond in Notrump, when we cannot make one of the above bids.

Note that when the opener specifically bids 1♠, responder’s 1 Notrump bid does not promise any ♠s – with 6-11 points and no ♠ support, the responder must use the Forcing Notrump as a “catch-all” bid.

When partner opens 1♥, the responder has the opportunity to bid 1♠ in addition to the above guidelines.

Thus, should responder bid 1N in response to 1♥, the responder typically holds at least 2 Hearts (otherwise, with bidding 1♠ with 4+ Spades since 3=1=4=5 and 3=1=5=4 hands are rare). If partner is a passed hand, partner’s 1 Notrump response is not forcing; many players play 1NT as “semi-forcing.” Semiforcing means that opener would not accept a 3-card invitational raise and can pass 1N.

Above we noted that opener must have 6+ cards in major to rebid the suit when responder bids a Forcing Notrump (but not so with a 2/1 bid), or needs 17+ HCP to reverse from 1♥ to 2♠. Assuming opener does not to open 1N with a 5 card major, the rebid is:

More likely 2-3 in Minor (rounded suit shape - bad)	Less likely 2-3 in Minor (pointed suit shape - good)	In-between (same color suits - ok)
1♥ – 1N; 2♣	1♠ – 1N; 2♦	1♥ – 1N; 2♦ or 1♠ – 1N; 2♣

Let’s assume the responder bids the Forcing 1 Notrump. This shows at least a good 5 point hand up to a bad 12 point hand. Here is a listing of Opener’s rebids:

If auction begins 1S – 1N;		
Opener’s Rebid	HCP Strength	Length in Suit/s
2♣/♦ – Non-forcing	12 -18	3+
2♥ – Non-forcing	12 – 18	4+
2♠ – Non-forcing	12 – 15	Promises 6+ (or 5 with "100 honors")
2N – Invitational (some play exactly 18-19 HCP)	17 – 18 Standard*	5-3-3-2 shape
3♣/♦ – Forcing Jump Shift	19 – 21	4+ Game Forcing
3♥ – Forcing Jump Shift	19+	4+ Game Forcing
3♠ - Invitational	16 – 17	Promises 6+ (or 5 with 100 honors")
3N - Forcing	19	5-3-3-2 shape
4♠	12+ (14+)	8+ Spades (7+ Spades)
If auction begins 1♥ – 1N;		
2♠ – Forcing 1 Round	17+	4+ Spades (Hearts longer than Spades)

Here are typical Opener rebids used after the Forcing 1 Notrump bidding:

1♠ – 1N;	Rebid	1♠ – 1N; 2♣ – ?	Rebid
1. ♠AQ864 ♥Q4 ♦KJ3 ♣753	2♣	1. ♠5 ♥KJ3 ♦97532 ♣J952	Pass
2. ♠AK1086 ♥K84 ♦J2 ♣KJ5	2♣	2. ♠4 ♥9732 ♦KQ7532 ♣108	2♦
3. ♠AK963 ♥J7 ♦AK4 ♣K1096	2♣	3. ♠ - ♥KJ7632 ♦Q542 ♣743	2♥
4. ♠AJ 8732 ♥95 ♦3 ♣AKJ8	2♣	4. ♠97 ♥A542 ♦KJ85 ♣J97	2♠
5. ♠87532 ♥A5 ♦AQJ3 ♣5	2♦	5. ♠104 ♥KQ72 ♦KJ95 ♣Q63	2N
6. ♠Q10932 ♥AK10 ♦753 ♣K4	2♦	6. ♠8 ♥AQ3 ♦1093 ♣KQ976	3♣
7. ♠AQ432 ♥K1093 ♦K5 ♣K4	2♥	7. ♠32 ♥A7 ♦KQ10953 ♣J32	3♦
8. ♠KQ1086 ♥AJ1093 ♦7 ♣72	2♥	8. ♠Q86 ♥753 ♦KQ92 ♣A104	3♠
9. ♠A107654 ♥A6 ♦J4 ♣KJ5	2♠	1♠ – 1N; 2♦ – ?	
10. ♠AQ976 ♥KJ4 ♦AQ ♣Q109	2N	9. ♠9 ♥J9543 ♦A52 ♣Q876	Pass
11. ♠AJ1087 ♥KQ ♦KJ6 ♣A98	2N	10. ♠ - ♥KQ8732 ♦975 ♣8542	2♥
12. ♠AKJ52 ♥9 ♦A6 ♣KQ1095	3♣	11. ♠Q9 ♥J94 ♦8732 ♣AQ94	2♠
13. ♠AK1054 ♥AJ3 ♦10 ♣AK32	3♣	12. ♠3 ♥J75 ♦AQ973 ♣A109	3♦
14. ♠AKJ92 ♥AQ1095 ♦KQ6	3♥	1♠ – 1N; 2♥ – ?	
15. ♠AQJ86 ♥AKQ7 ♦A8 ♣J 4	3♥	13. ♠ - ♥982 ♦A9732 ♣Q643	Pass
16. ♠AQJ1094 ♥32 ♦AQ ♣K54	3♠	14. ♠32 ♥54 ♦10653 ♣AQ876	2♠
17. ♠AKQ6543 ♥K86 ♦107 ♣9	3♠	15. ♠K ♥54 ♦106532 ♣AQ876	2♠
18. ♠AKQ107 ♥KQ3 ♦93 ♣KJ9	3N	16. ♠8 ♥J72 ♦AQJ9 ♣KJ985	2N
For: 1♥ – 1N;		17. ♠96 ♥KQ106 ♦KJ95 ♣532	3♥
19. ♠AQ87 ♥AQ543 ♦86 ♣92 (cannot reverse without 17+ HCP)	2♣	18. ♠KQ4 ♥5 ♦7652 ♣AJ1093	3♠

**Responder Rebids after making a Forcing Notrump
and Opener's 2 level Suit Bid**

Opener's Rebid	Responder's Hand	Responder's Rebid
2 of Minor Suit 2 of Major Suit (non-reverse)	5 – 8 HCP, no better bid	Pass
	2+ in Opener's Major Suit with 5 – 10 HCP, or 3+ in Opener's Major Suit with shape & 2 trick source	2 in Opener's Major Suit
	No Opener fit but 10 – 12 HCP w/stoppers	2N
	4-5+ Opener's Minor Suit 10-12 HCP playing points	3 in Opener's Minor Suit
	3 in Opener's Major Suit 10-12 playing points	3+ in Opener's Major Suit
	5 – 9 points and 5-6+ card suit	New Suit at 2 Level (signoff)
	5 – 11 points and Good 6+ card suit	New Suit at 3 Level – nonjump (signoff)
	10 – 11 points and Good 6+ card suit	New Suit at 3 Level – jump (invitational)

Note: Bidding the “Impossible 2S” (1♥ – 1N; 2x – 2S) is an artificial/conventional bid. Typical agreements use this specialized call to show difficult-to-bid invitational hands; one method instructs opener to bid 2N, after which responder shows a good 5+ card minor with 10-12 playing points (1♥ – 1N; 2♦ – 3♣ would be a signoff)