

2/1 Auctions create a good foundation for slam bidding because they guarantee that the partnership has at least the values for game. This allows the partnership to take its time describing shape and exploring for fits. However, a question arises concerning how to use jump sequences after a 2/1 response. E.g.,

1S -- 2C
2S -- 4S

1S -- 2C
2S -- 4C

1S -- 2H
4H

Fast Arrival

In a game forced auction, a jump raise or rebid by either partner shows a minimum and denies slam interest. When a jump raise or rebid is available, any non-jump promises extra values and at least mild slam interest.

When the 2/1 system was first invented, the idea was that after a 2/1 call, the auction should stay low when a player held extra strength and should go straight to game when a player had a minimum. This bidding approach was called *Fast Arrival* and applied generally throughout the system. Examples:

1S -- 2C
2S -- ?
3S = A raise with extras (approximately 15+)
4S = A minimum raise (approximately 12-14)

1S -- 2H
?
3H = A raise with extras
4H = A minimum raise

1S -- 2C
?
3S = long spades and extras
4S = long spades and a minimum opener

Fast arrival sounds like a good idea and in practice works well most of the time. However, it has a hidden flaw. Can you see it? In the fast arrival auctions above, no one has limited their hand. This means the jump bidder is jamming the auction *before he knows whether the partnership is in the slam zone*. Consequently whenever partner holds extra values or good shape, he will be forced to guess whether to try for slam at the 5-level where if his guess is wrong, he has endangered a game.

Suppose you hold the hand below. According to the Fast Arrival theory, your next call should be 4S to describe a minimum game forcing hand.

Responder's Hand
KJx, xx, xxx, AQJxx

Auction
1S -- 2C
2H -- ?

However, over 4S a cold slam may be missed opposite a moderately good opening hand as in this example:

Responder
KJx
xx
xxx
AQJxx

Opener
AQxxxx
Axxx
x
Kx

Auction
1S -- 2C
2H -- 4S
P

Perhaps you think opener should bid over 4S with his good shape. However 5S is in jeopardy opposite this responding hand which might also bid 4S:

Responder
xxx
Qx
KJTx
AQxx

Opener
AQxxxx
Axxx
x
Kx

Auction
1S -- 2C
2H -- 4S
4NT -- 5C
5S

The Flaw with Fast Arrival

A Fast Arrival jump limits your hand, but says little about *the location of your values*. When partner also holds a minimum this is no problem, since slam is unlikely. However when partner holds extra values so that the partnership is in the slam zone, slam will often depend on whether your hand contains cards that fill the holes in partner's hand. The jump has reduced his ability to discover if you have the right cards. Further the exploration must occur above game where our game bonus is in jeopardy. So the flaw is compound:

- The fast arrival jump bid does not describe the bidder's hand precisely
- The fast arrival jump bid cramps the auction before we know whether the partnership is in the slam zone

Whenever partner's hand is not precisely limited, jump bids should send a precise message about trump quality, location of value and shape. Splinter bids do this, and that is why they work so effectively. They provide such a precise picture, that partner can evaluate accurately when the partnership can or can not make slam. We'd like our jump raises to do the same thing.

Picture Jumps

An alternative to Fast Arrival called *Picture Jumps* was propounded by Al Roth, the grandfather of the 2/1 system*. After a 2/1 auction any jump in a suit announces, "My trump support is excellent" and "my own suit is good" and makes a statement about outside controls. Let's look at some examples:

1S -- 2C

2H -- ?

4S = excellent trump support, good club suit, no outside controls

3S = excellent trump support, good club suit, one or more outside controls

Responder

KQxx

x

KJx

AQTxx

Bid 3S. This call shows 4-card support with two of 4 honors, a good 5-card suit of your own and strong slam interest. If partner had bid 2D instead of 2H, you could have splintered in hearts, but with a singleton in his second suit you have no splinter bid available. Why not just "keep the auction low" and bid 2S? After a wide ranging 2S, opener won't know much about what responder holds. He won't suspect that responder's trumps are so good and he may not cooperate with a weak a spade suit.

Responder

KQxx

xx

xx

AQJxx

Bid 4S. This jump shows 4-card support with two of 4 top honors, a good 5-card suit but *no control* in either of the suits you have not bid. Opposite this precise picture jump opener will have no trouble judging when to pass despite extra values (because one of the red suits is uncontrolled) or when to bid on with a minimum, because both red suits are controlled and the black suits will take plenty of tricks.

Picture Jumps Versus Fast Arrival

Let's contrast the two methods.

Hand 1

Responder
KQxx
x
KJx
AQTxx

Opener
Jxxxx
Axxx
Ax
Kx

Auction 1 (with Picture Jumps)

1S -- 2C
2H -- 3S!
4C -- 4D
4H -- 4NT
5H -- 6S

3S = Excellent trumps, excellent clubs, slam interest.

The partnership has an easy sequence to a near cold slam. Opener recognizes he holds the perfect cards for and that trumps are not a worry so he cooperates aggressively.

Auction 2 (with Fast Arrival)

1S -- 2C
2H -- 2S
4S! -- ????

4S = I have a minimum

Opener has no idea just how slammish responder is, so he makes a fast arrival jump to 4S to describe his own minimum. Now the ball is in Responder's court. Responder has no idea that opener holds the three key cards he needs to make slam excellent. Responder must worry that opener has: AJTxx, KQJx, xxx, x where 5S could go down. If he guesses to bid Blackwood, a good slam will be reached. But even after the Blackwood response of 5H he can't be sure whether slam will be good! If the Opener holds: AJTxx, AKxx, xx, xx, even 5S might go down!

Hand 2

Responder
KQxx
x
KJx
AQTxx

Opener
AJTxx
AKxx
xx

xx

Auction 1 (with Picture Jumps)

1S -- 2C

2H -- 3S!

4H -- 4S

P

3S = Excellent trumps, excellent clubs, slam interest.

After the 3S call, opener cuebids 4H, bypassing both diamonds and clubs. Responder recognizes that the partnership

is off both the diamond ace and the club king since partner would have cuebid either of those before the heart ace.

Hence slam is at best on a club finesse and usually has little play. He has an easy signoff in 4S.

Auction 2 (with Fast Arrival)

1S -- 2C

2H -- 2S

4S! -- ????

4S = I have a minimum

Responder has a super hand and slam might easily be lay down opposite the right minimum. On the other hand, 5S

might go down opposite the actual hand. Responder must guess well to bid good slams and avoid bad ones after this

auction.

Hand 3

Responder

KQxx

xx

xx

AQJxx

Opener

Axxxx

AKxxx

x

Kx

Auction 1 (With Picture Jumps)

1S -- 2C

2H -- 4S!

4NT -- 5S

6S

Opener knows immediately that slam is a lively possibility because clubs are certain to provide tricks and the 5-level is

safe because partner's trumps must be strong enough to support a 5-level contract opposite.

Auction 2 (Fast Arrival)

1S -- 2C

2H -- 2S

3C -- 4C

4D -- 4S

???

Opener has no idea how good responder's trumps are. With only Axxxx of trumps, he must worry that responder holds: QTx, QJ, Jx, AQJxxx. This hand is off two key cards and might fail at the 5-level facing a poor trump break.

Conclusion

The Fast arrival jump:

- Limits the bidder's values
- Leaves precise shape/location of values unknown
- May or may not contain excellent trumps

The picture jump:

- Limits the bidder's values
- Describes the bidder's shape/location of values accurately
- Immediately removes worry concerning trump quality

Picture Jumps Part 2 [<http://andrew-gumperz.blogspot.com/2011/12/picture-jumps-part-2.html>]

* Al Roth invented the Roth-Stone system in the 1950's which introduced many bidding ideas that we now take for granted--strong 2/1 bids, the forcing NT response to 1M, negative doubles and much more. The Roth-Stone system was the foundation on top of which the modern 2/1 system was created.

Posted 27th December 2011 by [Andrew Gumperz](#)

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B [February 29, 2012 at 8:31 AM](#)

In 1994 our great Fred Gitelman spoke about "The (misguided) principle of fast arrival". He revived the picture bids, and they found their way into BWS2010 !

I am really glad you brought them back into the spotlight ! Very good article.

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