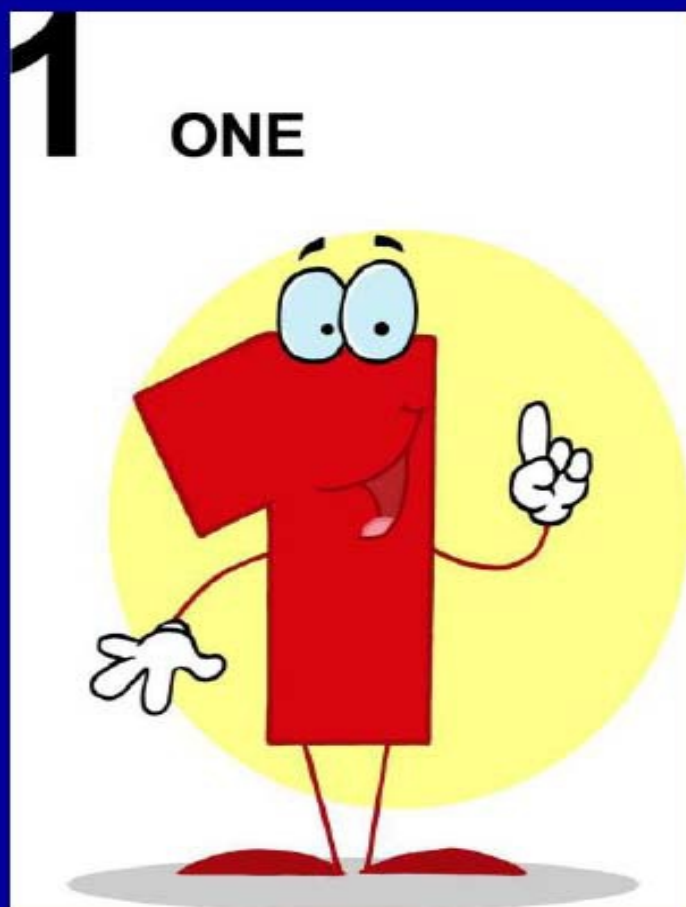


# Larry Teaches 2 Over 1 Game Forcing



OVER



By Larry Cohen

Larry Teaches

2 Over 1

Game Forcing

By Larry Cohen

# Table of Contents

Introduction

When is 2/1 in Effect?

What Happens After the 2/1 Response?

Other Responses to 1♦, 1♥, and 1♠

2/1 Auctions: First Up, 2♣

Opener's Rebid after a 2♣ Response

Jumps by Opener

Bidding After a 2♦ or 2♥ Response

2/1 Responses in a Minor Instead of in a 4-Card Major

Principal of Fast Arrival

The 1NT Response

The Next Step in 1NT Forcing Auctions

Summary

APPENDIX A: Rebid of a Major "Promising" 6+

APPENDIX B: Responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Jump to 3NT

APPENDIX C: Semi-Forcing Notrump and Other Variations

APPENDIX D: Variations on 2/1 GF

## Introduction

Did any of you play bridge in the 1960's? You don't have to admit it. Back then, there was a move to switch from strong two-level opening bids to weak-twos. There was resistance at first, but eventually, everyone succumbed.

Now, we face the same situation with the move from "Standard" to "Two-Over-One Game Forcing" [2/1 GF]. Two-over-one game forcing is by far the superior and easier system. Even for beginners, I recommend 2/1 GF. Most bridge teachers agree with me.

In Standard if your partner opens 1♠ and you respond 2♦ it is natural and 10+ high card points. I can't figure out why the fathers of our game defined the two-over-one response as 10+ points. That number leaves you in no-man's land: If opener has a minimum (12 or 13), and responder has 10+, then she knows the partnership has 22+ (or 23+). What good is that? All it does is cause confusion as to whether or not game should be reached. It is also hard to know if/when any player can pass below game.

In the superior system of 2/1 GF the response of 2♦ to 1♠ is still natural, but promises an opening bid (13+). Now we have two opening bids facing each other and will not stop until we find our game (or slam).

In its simplest terms, the "system" described as 2-over-1 game forcing refers to the following 6 bids:

1♦ → 2♣, 1♥ → 2♣, 1♥ → 2♦, 1♠ → 2♣, 1♠ → 2♦, 1♠ → 2♥

**Note:** Our opponents must pass or the system is off. Also, our opening bid can't come in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> seat.

In this workbook, we will examine those six auctions in depth. We also will explore the 1NT response (which some of you may already think of as "the forcing notrump"). For clarity, I will always refer to the opener as "she" and the responder as "he." Hopefully, this won't result in any complaints about political correctness.

Little by little, I expect everyone to change to 2/1 GF. A few teachers might refuse to teach it, but I suspect that is because they don't want the work of having to switch all of their lesson notes and deals. For players, not switching because "my friends don't play it" is not a good excuse. That kind of thinking is what had some holdouts still using strong two-level opening bids decades after their expiration date (this may refer to both the bids and the bidders). Don't get left in the dust.

It is my hope that you, dear reader, will join the party and convert to the newer and better way. You don't have to necessarily study and memorize every page in this book. In fact, you can start playing 2/1 GF right away—just read the first chapter or two and you are on your way.

## When is 2/1 in Effect?

Now that we've committed to playing a 2/1 GF system, let's make sure we are in an auction that fits the bill. There are only 6 possible "2/1" auctions—all of which were listed in the introduction. Any other response on the 2-level would be either a raise, or a jump-shift (for example 1♥-2♥ is a raise, 1♥-2♠ is a jump-shift and 1♥-2NT is either natural or a conventional Jacoby 2NT raise).

Here is a checklist of auctions that do **NOT** qualify as 2/1 GF auctions.

1) A 1♣ opening. After a 1♣ opening, use what you already use. A 1NT response is natural and usually 6-10 or maybe 8-11. Your choice. Any other response on the 1-level is natural and, of course, forcing 1-round. A raise to 2♣ is natural (you can use inverted minors if you like-but that has nothing to do with 2/1 GF). Any other responses to 1♣ are jumps and must be defined by your partnership as either WEAK or STRONG. Again, your choice. Make sure you know what a 2NT response means (11-12...or maybe 13+, forcing). Discuss 3-level responses, too. Make sure you and your partner **both** agree on these definitions. Just to repeat: After a 1♣ opening there is no such thing as 2/1 GF.

2) A response to 1♦ other than 2♣. If the opening bid is 1♦, the only game forcing response is 2♣. I recommend playing 1♦-2♣ as 100% GF. This auction will be examined in detail later in the booklet. A 1NT response to 1♦ is simply 6-10. It is *not* a forcing (or semi-forcing) notrump. I recommend a 2NT response to show 11-12 balanced, invitational (no 4-card major). Any 2-level response to 1♦ in a major is not a 2/1 GF. It is a jump-shift. Again, make sure you know if your partnership treats it as WEAK or STRONG. If you don't know, expect catastrophic results!

3) Opposition interference. If the opening is 1♠ or 1♥ and the next player **PASSES**, then a 2-level response in a lower-ranking suit is indeed 2/1 GF. If

an opponent doubles or overcalls after the opening bid, we DO NOT use 2/1 GF.

**Note:** If you play any conventional responses to 1♠ or 1♥, those still apply. You can play 2/1 GF with or without any artificial raises. If you like Jacoby 2NT, you are with the majority. If you like Bergen Raises, fine. Some of you probably also use Splinter Bids. Using (or not using) these conventional responses has nothing to do with 2/1 GF.

4) A third- or fourth-seat opening. The 2/1 GF system applies only when we opened the bidding as the dealer or in 2nd position. It is **never** used after our 3rd- or 4th-seat opener. A passed hand is unlikely to be able to force to game. If a player who already passed, all of a sudden has a great hand in support, he can use the Drury convention.

Now that we've reviewed when 2/1 GF doesn't apply, let's also make sure we discuss 1-level responses. Playing 2/1 GF, does anything change with the auction, for example, 1♥-Pass-1♠?

No! Absolutely not. **A 1-level response is what it always has been.** It is natural and 6+ points. It is forcing for one round. It can be made with a 6-count or it can be made with a 20+ count or anything in between. I'd respond 1♠ to any opening bid with, say: ♠A Q J 7 2 ♥K 2 ♦A 3 2 ♣Q 4 2. **Responding on the 1-level doesn't deny 13+.** It doesn't mean there is no game. Don't conjure up a 2/1 response just because you have a good hand. If your long suit happens to be a major, then you show it on the one level and make a strong bid later on in the auction.

What if you have a choice? For example, partner opens 1♥ and you hold: ♠A Q 3 2 ♥K 2 ♦7 6 5 ♣K Q 10 8. Surely you want to be in game or higher. You have enough strength for a 2/1 GF response. Should you respond 1♠ or 2♣? There is no absolutely correct answer to this. If you had a fifth club and the hand were: ♠A Q 3 2 ♥K 2 ♦7 6 ♣K Q 10 8 3, almost all experts would respond 2♣. They would plan to bid spades next to complete the picture. With the original hand, I prefer to respond 2♣ (still planning to show spades later if need be). If I respond 1♠, the auction could get uncomfortable later (I will often have to go through the artificial 4th suit to create a force-and this takes up lots of space). I'd rather respond 2♣ initially

to comfortably and naturally conduct an auction without having to later create a game force. That said, I don't ever completely distort my hand; if my only suit is spades (I have no 4-card or longer minor), then I will reluctantly have to respond 1♠.



## Summary of “The Basics”:

- 1) Make sure you know when a 2/1 GF auction occurs (after a 1<sup>st</sup>- or 2<sup>nd</sup>-seat opening with no interference). Be aware of minor-suit openings (the only minor-suit opening 2/1 GF is 1♦-2♣).
- 2) Know your 1NT responses: they are “normal” after a minor-suit opening or by a passed hand.
- 3) Conventional responses to your opening bids are not changed. Use what you always use (or don’t use).
- 4) One-level suit responses say nothing about game prospects. They mean what they always mean. Unlimited.
- 5) Sometimes you will have a choice of responding on the 1-level in a major or on the 2-level in a (four-card or longer) minor to create a game force right away. If in doubt, I recommend the latter approach.

## Quiz: Is it or Isn't it?

Which of these actions by responder starts a 2/1 GF auction?

	OPENER	OPPONENT	RESPONDER
A	1♥	Pass	2♣
B	1♦	Pass	2♥
C	1♠	Dbl	2♣
D	1♥	1♠	2♦
E	1♦	Pass	2♣
F	1♠	Pass	2♠

### ANSWERS

Only A and E are 2/1 GF auctions.

B is a Jumpshift, C & D have interference and F is a raise.

## What Happens After the 2/1 Response?

Later, I will clarify what is meant by “an opening bid” or “13 points” when responding. Do we count shape? That will be answered. Also, we will go into the details of all the specific 2/1 auctions a little later on. For now, let’s talk in general about the second round of bidding after a 2-over-1 response.

When responder uses a game forcing 2-over-1 bid he is informing opener that he, too, holds at least opening-bid values. Accordingly, the partnership may leisurely proceed to the optimum contract without fear of being dropped below game. **With her next bid, opener shows her “shape,” without implying anything about strength. Bidding is NATURAL.** That is the beauty of this system. As opener, don’t jump (more on that later) and try to best describe your hand. In fact, most all of the follow-ups by both players after the 2/1 response are natural. No science. No alerts, not much memory. You’ll be amazed at how simple it is. In fact, without further instruction, let’s plunge right into some problems. By following your natural impulse, you are likely to make the correct bid.

## Quiz: After the 2/1 response

As **OPENER**, what do you rebid?

YOU	OPPONENT	PARTNER	OPPONENT
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
?			

A	B	C	D
♠ 5 4	♠ 3 2	♠ A K J 2	♠ A Q 3
♥ K Q 10 8 7 4	♥ Q J 10 8 7	♥ A Q 8 7 6	♥ K J 8 7 6
♦ A J 3	♦ A 4	♦ A 5 4	♦ 9 8 7 6
♣ K 4	♣ A Q 5 4	♣ 2	♣ K

E	F
♠ Q J 2	♠ A 2
♥ Q 9 7 6 4	♥ A K Q J 9 8
♦ Q 9 2	♦ K 7 6
♣ A Q	♣ 5 2

### ANSWERS

A) 2♥ - Repeat the 6-card suit. We will cover when 6 cards are promised later.

B) 3♣- Forcing, of course—until at least game is reached. No extras promised.

C) 2♠ - Natural again – and just coincidental that you have extras; not a reverse.

D) 2♦- Just bid naturally-even though the suit is of poor quality.

E) 2NT- Natural—also, not promising extras.

F) 3♥- An unnecessary jump. As you will later see, should show a solid suit. Consider this a preview.

As **RESPONDER**, what is your 2nd bid of the auction?

OPENER	OPPONENT	YOU	OPPONENT
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	?	

G	H	I	J
♠ K J 3	♠ 4 2	♠ 4	♠ 4 3
♥ A 2	♥ A Q J	♥ A 5	♥ A Q 2
♦ K Q 10 8 7	♦ A Q 8 7 6 5	♦ A K Q 10 8 7 2	♦ K Q J 10 8 2
♣ 4 3 2	♣ A 7	♣ Q 3 2	♣ 5 2

K
♠ K Q J
♥ 10 3
♦ A Q 10 8 4
♣ A Q 5

## **ANSWERS**

G) 3NT- No messing around where you don't need to.

H) 3♥- Forcing, of course. Leave room for investigation (more on this later).

I) 3♦- No need to rush into Blackwood.

J) 4♥- When already forced to game, a jump to game is typically the weakest action. This is the Principle of Fast Arrival, which will be discussed later.

K) 4NT- Quantitative (as are all jumps to 4NT from 1NT or 2NT).

## Other Responses to 1♦, 1♥, and 1♠

Let's make sure we know about *all* (not just 2/1) responses to partner's openings of one-of-a-suit. Remember that a 1♣ opener is out of the picture in this system (use what you've always used after 1♣).

## Responding to a 1♦ Opening

After 1♦, the only game forcing response is 2♣. What about other responses to 1♦?

One-level responses in a major are, essentially, “bridge.” A 1-of-a-major response shows 4 or more cards and 6 or more points. A 1NT response shows 6-10 (no 4-card major). A raise to 2♦ is natural. You can use inverted minors if you wish, but this has nothing to do with 2/1 GF. A raise to 2♦, if playing inverted, shows 10+ and is not GF. A jump response to 2♥ or 2♠ also has nothing to do with 2/1 GF. Play it as weak if you wish. Or strong. Remember to always make sure you and partner are on the same page. A 2NT response is natural, and I recommend 11-12. If you’d rather play it as 13+ be my guest, as long as you’ve discussed it with partner. What does a 3♣ response show? I’ll explain shortly. A raise to 3♦ is natural (limit, unless you are playing inverted minors).

## Responding to a One-Of-A-Major Opening

What about after a 1♥ or 1♠ opening? I'll get to the 3-level jumps in a moment, but first let's review the other responses:

- A response of 1♠ to 1♥ is again "bridge." Natural and a one-round force. It could be 6 points or it could be 20+ points or anything in between.
- A 1NT response to either major is part of the system. It is 1NT forcing (or "semi-forcing"). We will get to this much later.
- A 2-level response in a new lower-ranking suit is a natural GF. That is the essential bid in 2/1 GF.
- A raise is a raise. Because a 1NT response with really junky three-card support is part of the basic system, a direct raise from 1 to 2 is played as a decent 7 to 10. (The 1NT response is discussed in depth much later). A raise to the 3-level is invitational with 4 trumps (unless you use Bergen raises).
- A jump-shift on the 2-level (1♥-2♠) needs to be defined. Choose, with partner, to play it as WEAK or STRONG.
- A jump-response to 2NT has nothing to do with 2/1 GF. Most players probably use it as a conventional call (Jacoby 2NT).
- A 3NT response requires partnership discussion. I suggest a balanced, soft (not control-rich) 13-15 with exactly three trumps (4-3-3-3 and passable).
- Jumps in a new suit above 3-of-the-major are Splinter Bids.



## Jumps to 3-of-a-Lower Suit After 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠

A jump to 3-of-any-lower-suit is natural and invitational (denying support for partner). This is not a universal treatment, but I highly recommend it.

Accordingly, 1♦-Pass-3♣ would be something like: ♠5 4 ♥Q 3 2 ♦J 3 ♣A Q J 10 7 6. It shows a 6+ card suit and about 10-11 points. It's a hand that isn't quite good enough for a 2/1 GF. Three clubs on this hand is a great alternative to 1NT (yuck). Without having this agreement, you'd have no choice but to respond 1NT (2♣ would be game forcing) with the hand above.

Using my preferred method, each of the bids below shows a 6+ card suit and about 10-11 playing points:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	EXAMPLE HAND
1♦	Pass	3♣	♠K 2♥43♦43♣AQ109873
1♥	Pass	3♣	♠4♥54♦A532♣KQJ876
1♥	Pass	3♦	♠A4♥-- ♦KQ108762♣10873
1♠	Pass	3♣	♠4♥Q54♦654♣AKJ1063
1♠	Pass	3♦	♠-- ♥K3♦AQJ6542♣9765
1♠	Pass	3♥	♠6♥AQ108765♦K98♣32

This is just a simple recommendation. If you want lots of sophistication (or to keep your beloved Bergen raises), then so be it. I hope Marty Bergen isn't reading this, but honestly I would eschew Bergen raises because I like to use the 3-level for the difficult-to-show invitational hands. What I am recommending is nice and simple. It gives you a quick and easy-to-remember system for all responses. You can use 1NT forcing with most of

the catch-all responding hands and also have the ability to show the invitational one-suiters by jumping to 3-of-a-lower-ranking suit.

**Note:** These Invitational jumps are only after RHO Passes (if RHO doubles or overcalls, then we don't use invitational jumps).

## 2/1 Auctions: First Up, 2♣

Now we can get into the fun part of the system-the actual 2-over-1 auctions.

Let's start with a response of 2♣ (the other 2-over-1 responses follow the same basic principles). Also, we'll ignore the specific auction of 1♦-2♣ for now. So our auction is either of the following:

WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♥	Pass	2♣

WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	2♣

This means that we opened 1♠ or 1♥ as the dealer (or in 2<sup>nd</sup> position), because we do not use 2/1 GF after a 3<sup>rd</sup>- or 4<sup>th</sup>-seat opening bid. Also, the opponents must be silent-if they interfere, there is no 2/1 GF.

### *So, what does 2♣ show?*

It is natural, but certainly doesn't promise a 5-card suit. It shows enough points to want to be in (at least) game opposite partner's opening bid. Here are more explicit details on the length and strength of the 2♣ response:

**Length:** While a 5+ card suit would be nice, what can responder bid after partner's 1♠ if he has, say: ♠K 3♥6 5 4 2♦A Q 2♣A J 9 8?

He can't raise spades with only two. The hand is wrong for notrump (no heart stopper)-not to mention that a jump in notrump might be conventional. Even if natural, it preempts our own good auction. Responding 2♥ with only a four-card suit is a no-no (the auction 1♠-2♥ promises at least five hearts, as we will see). That leaves, ta-da, 2♣.

Sometimes, responder will be 4-4 in the minors, in which case I recommend bidding 2♣ to leave the most room. I suppose if the clubs are terrible (♣J762) and the diamonds are good (♦KQJ8), it would be a better

description to respond 2♦. Certainly if clubs is responder's longest suit, that will always be the suit he names first.

### **Can the 2♣ response ever be made on a 3-card suit?**

Rarely. If I had to come up with an example of a 3-card response of 2♣, it would probably be: ♠A 4 3♥J 5 4 3♦A 5 4♣A J 3. After partner's 1♠, I might bid 2♣, just to get the ball rolling. Nothing else seems better.

**Strength:** Basically, a 2/1 response shows an "opening bid." With an opening bid opposite an opening bid, it is expected there will be at least a game. As to defining what constitutes an opening bid, good luck to all of us! Do we count HCP? Shape? Both? There is no easy answer.

A lot also depends on how light your partner opens the bidding. If she is opening every 11-count in creation, you don't want to force to game just because you have some ordinary 12- or 13- count. Opposite a sound partner, you can take more liberties with your 2/1 responses. Also, you need to use your judgment as to what constitutes "13" points, based on the degree of fit.

For example, if partner opens 1-of-a-major, would you force to game with this hand: ♠Q J 3♥6♦A Q 8 7♣Q J 8 4 2?

It was a trick question. You need to know which major partner opened. After her 1♠ opening, you should gladly bid 2♣ and force to game. You have a wonderful hand in support of spades. However, after 1♥, content yourself with 1NT (forcing). Picture partner with, say: ♠A 7 6♥K J 8 7 5♦J 4 2♣K 3- where are you going?

It was simple to start this booklet by saying that a 2/1 response shows an "opening bid." As you can see now, that was an oversimplification. Maybe "13 points counting shape" is a better way to put it. Even so, the way you count shape is based on the degree of fit/mesh with the opening bid.

## **Summary of Length/Strength for a 2♣ response to 1-of-a-Major:**

**Length:** Usually at least four cards. Three if stuck.

**Strength:** Approximately an opening bid, but take shape/support into account based on your fit.

## Quiz: To Bid (2♣) or Not to Bid (2♣)

After partner's 1♠ opening, do you respond 2♣? (Answers follow)

A	B	C	D
♠ K 6	♠ 5	♠ A K	♠ A Q J 5
♥ A Q J 10	♥ A 4 3 2	♥ A 6 4 2	♥ 5 4
♦ 7 6 5	♦ A Q 3 2	♦ J 8	♦ A 3 2
♣ A Q 3 2	♣ A 9 8 7	♣ Q J 9 8 2	♣ A 7 6 4

E	F	G	H
♠ -	♠ Q 2	♠ K Q 2	♠ 5
♥ A 4 3 2	♥ A K Q	♥ 7 6	♥ K Q 7 6
♦ K Q 7 6	♦ A 9 7	♦ 7 6 2	♦ Q 8 7
♣ A K J 6 5	♣ A K J 9 8	♣ A Q J 9 8	♣ K J 6 4 2

### ANSWERS

- A) Yes. Remember, no bidding 2♥ without a five-card suit.
- B) Yes.
- C) Yes.
- D) No- with 4-card trump support, use Jacoby 2NT or some Forcing Spade raise.
- E) Yes.
- F) Yes (There is no hurry to use Blackwood—first find out if there is a fit).
- G) Yes.
- H) No- Not strong enough to force to game.

## Opener's Rebid after a 2♣ Response

Now we move on to the next step in this auction:

WEST	EAST
1♠	2♣
?	

or

WEST	EAST
1♥	2♣
?	

Let's start by expressing the beauty of the 2/1 GF system: Opener's rebid is **NATURAL**. Yes, good-old natural. If opener has a second suit (of 4 or more cards), she bids it. If she is flat (5-3-3-2), she bids notrump. If she has 6+ cards in the major opened, she repeats it. No jumping. Well, for now, anyway. We're just trying to find the trump suit.

Jump rebids are rare and generally should be avoided. They will be discussed soon. For now, we are concerned with the following auctions (we'll start with 1♥-2♣, and then cover 1♠-2♣):

1♥-2♣-2♦: Natural, 5+hearts and 4+ diamonds. Strength is not known yet.

1♥-2♣-2♥: Natural, 6+hearts. Strength is not known yet.

1♥-2♣-2♠: Natural, 5+hearts and 4+ spades. Strength is not known yet.

1♥-2♣-2NT: Natural, 5hearts and 3-3-2 in the other suits. Strength is likely 12-14.

1♥-2♣-3♣: Natural, 5hearts and club support (usually 4+). Strength not known yet.

### Notes:

- 1) There is no memory or artificiality here. You bid what you have. Just

avoid jumping. Save space. Find your fit.

- 2) Bidding a new suit shows at least four. With five, you will repeat the second suit on your third bid. DO NOT JUMP into your second suit. Your bid is showing only your shape for the time being. If you have extras, you will reveal them once you find the trump suit (or notrump).
- 3) Repeating your major promises 6+. [See Appendix A for further discussion] **Do not jump with extras.** For example, after 1♥-2♣, rebid a space-saving 2♥ with: ♠5 4♥K J 8 7 6 5 4♦A♣A K 2. Don't jump to 3♥, which will make choosing the right trump suit too difficult. You don't want to jump unless you are sure about trump, so a jump guarantees a solid suit ("solid" is AKQJxx or longer).
- 4) "Reversing" to 2♠, says nothing about strength. It could be a dead minimum. In general, it is best not to worry about a reverse showing extra values in a 2/1 GF auction.
- 5) The 2NT rebid shows a "weak notrump" type of hand-an opening bid, but less than a strong notrump. So, typically 12-14. It shows a balanced hand; 5 in the major and 3-3-2 elsewhere. Does it promise stoppers? This is not universally agreed upon. My recommendation is to rebid 2NT with xxx in a side suit, but not with only xx in the side suit. With xx in a side suit, prefer instead to raise to 3♣ with 3-card support. Of course if your xx is in clubs, you can comfortably rebid 2NT. [Again, Appendix A has more discussion on the 2NT rebid compared to the 2-of-a-major rebid].
- 6) Raising to 3♣ should usually be reserved for 4-card support, but can occasionally be a 3-carder if nothing else fits. As usual, it could be a 12-count or a 20-count. Strength will be revealed later. First find a trump fit.

**Does anything change if the auction begins 1♠-2♣?**

No. All the information above is valid. Rebid 2♦ or 2♥ with a 4+ card suit.



Rebid 2♠ with 6+. Rebid 2NT with a 5-3-3-2 hand. Raise to 3♣ if nothing else fits.

## Summary of Opener's Rebid after a 2♣ response to 1-of-a-Major

**Bid Naturally.** Don't worry about showing your strength. Show your shape. Once a fit is found, you can show extra values by trying for slam.

## Quiz: Opener's rebid to partner's 2♣ response

As opener, what do you rebid after 1♠ by you and 2♣ by partner?

A	B	C	D
♠ K 8 7 6 2	♠ Q J 9 8 6 5	♠ A K Q 8 7 4	♠ A Q J 5 3
♥ A Q	♥ A 4 3	♥ A 6 2	♥ J 8 5 4 2
♦ J 7 6 5	♦ A Q 2	♦ K J 8	♦ A 3
♣ K 2	♣ 7	♣ 2	♣ 4

E	F	G	H
♠ J 7 6 5 4	♠ Q 7 6 5 2	♠ K Q 9 8 7 3 2	♠ A J 6 5 2
♥ K Q	♥ A K Q J	♥ 7 6	♥ K Q 7
♦ Q J 6	♦ A 9	♦ A 2	♦ 8 7
♣ A 6 5	♣ K 2	♣ A J	♣ K J 6

### ANSWERS

A) 2♦ Naturally.

B) 2♠ Showing 6+ spades.

C) 2♠ No jumping, because this is *not* a “solid” suit.

D) 2♥ Naturally (for now, shows 4 hearts. With 5-5, repeat the hearts next turn).

E) 2NT More descriptive than raising clubs.

F) 2♥ No jumping to show extras.

G) 2♠ Jumping would show solid spades (more on this later).

H) 3♣ Preferable to 2NT with only xx in the unbid diamond suit.

**Note for advanced players:** A 2NT rebid by opener is assumed to be 12-14 balanced. With 15-17 balanced, please make your author (and your partner) happy and open 1NT. What should you do with 18-19 balanced and a 5-card

major? Open the major and after partner's 2/1 GF bid, you have to have an agreement. The simplest way is to play that opener's jump to 3NT shows 18-19 balanced. A little more complex (but more space-saving and thus more efficient) is to rebid 2NT with 12-14 **OR** 18-19 balanced. With the latter, you have to reveal it later by driving towards slam once a fit (or 3NT) is found. The responder always will assume 12-14 for a 2NT rebid unless opener divulges it to be the "big one."

## Jumps by Opener

Alright, I've been telling you not to jump. Now I'm going to tell you when to jump. I should've consulted myself earlier. Sorry. Keep in mind that jumps are the EXCEPTION, not the rule.

So, an example auction is:

WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♠	Pass	2♣
JUMP		

or

WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♥	Pass	2♣
JUMP		

Recall that opener's job is to show her shape. Put another way: Opener's rebid says nothing about strength, she is describing her pattern. Game is already a given, so the new priority is: "What's trump?" The partnership is trying to find out what the trump fit is at as low a level as possible. Once the trump fit is found (or it is determined there is no 8-card fit), then and only then should strength be addressed. Locate the fit (or notrump) and then with extras, look for slam.

That said, opener "never" jumps to show strength. **Opener's jump is used for special hands and should be defined specifically.**

Let's start with the auction where opener *jump rebids* her suit. Here are the possible auctions we are discussing:

1♥-2♣-3♥ or 1♥-2♦-3♥ or 1♠-2♣-3♠ or 1♠-2♦-3♠ or 1♠-2♥-3♠ or 1♦-2♣-3♦

In all cases, opener is showing a solid 6+ card suit. This means that

opposite a singleton, the suit can be expected to run. Accordingly, AKQ-empty-sixth is not “solid.” Opener must have AKQJxx or AKQxxxx or longer. Some pairs agree that the suit can be missing the ace (which will always be locatable with Blackwood), so KQJ10xx or longer is “solid.” What the jump really means is: “Partner, unless we end up in notrump, my suit is trump.”

What about the strength shown? This does not have a universal answer. Some players/teachers require the jump to show extras. I prefer that it doesn’t guarantee extras. All the jump says is: “My suit is trump-if you have slam interest, make a control-bid for me.”

So, I would jump rebid 3♠ after partner’s 2/1 response with as little as: ♠A K Q J 8 6 ♥Q 6 4 ♦6 5 ♣8 6. After my 3♠ jump, partner can bid 3NT (to play) or raise to 4-of-the major. With extras, responder can bid any other suit at the 4-level. This would show his cheapest control (remember that opener’s major is already set as trump). So, this auction:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	

Shows a club control (the ace or king) and a non-minimum, maybe something like: ♠6 2 ♥A K 7 6 ♦6 5 ♣A K J 5 2. Opener would now bid 4♦ with diamonds controlled, and then responder would likely use RKC (Roman Key Card Blackwood). If opener doesn’t bid 4♦, responder would know the partnership is off the ace-king of diamonds and stop in 4♠. If responder wants to play in clubs (or rebid clubs naturally), tough luck. Spades are trump.

**Note:** Opener’s jump rebid to *four* of her major should probably be avoided-it takes up too much space.

## Opener Jump-Shifts (Splinter Bids)

Because opener should not ever jump in a new suit to show extras, common expert practice is to treat opener's jump-shift as a splinter bid. That means opener has trump support (at least 4) for the responder's suit. She jumps in her short (0 or 1) suit. So:

1♥-2♣-3♦: 4+ clubs and 0 or 1 diamond

1♥-2♣-3♠: 4+ clubs and 0 or 1 spade

1♠-2♣-3♦: 4+ clubs and 0 or 1 diamond

1♠-2♣-3♥: 4+ clubs and 0 or 1 heart

1♠-2♦-3♥: 4+ diamonds and 0 or 1 heart

**These bids do not promise extra strength.**

### Notes:

- 1) Never jump shift into a natural suit. With extra strength and a second suit, just bid the second suit on the 2-level and worry about slam later.
- 2) Splinter bids can be made with a minimum hand. You are already forced to game, so just show your fit and your shortness. If the splinter bidder has extras, she can always look for slam later.
- 3) Whereas normal splinters are a "double jump," these 2/1 splinters are only single jumps. Just remember "no natural jump shifts" and it is easy to handle. (The splinter could be on the 4-level, for example: 1♠-2♦-4♣ or 1♠-2♥-4♦).
- 4) Opener shouldn't make a splinter-raise with only 3-card support.
- 5) If you (or your partner) can't handle/remember these splinter bids,

just don't make them.

Example of opener's splinter bid: ♠A Q J 7 6 ♥K 3 2 ♦6 ♣Q J 7 2- After 1♠-2♣, opener jumps to 3♦.



## Opener's Jumps in Notrump

What would it mean if opener jumped to 3NT in an auction such as:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3NT ??			

I prefer to avoid such a space-eating bid. What range can 3NT possibly be showing? If opener had 15-17 balanced, she would have opened 1NT. With 12-14 balanced she would have rebid 2NT. I prefer that with 18-19 she also rebid 2NT (and make a strong move later). If you want to define the jump to 3NT as a specific range, and you and your partner can remember it, then do so at your own risk. I prefer not to make such an indelicate bid before we know the trump suit.

## **Summary of Opener's Jumps after a 2/1 response to 1-of-a-Major**

Jump rebid: Solid suit, no extras promised.

Jump shift: Splinter bid, no extras promised.

Jump to 3NT: Don't do it.

## QUIZ: Jumping the Gun

What would you rebid as opener after 1♠-2♣-?

A	B	C	D
♠ K J 8 7 6 2	♠ A K Q 6 5 2	♠ A K Q J 7 4	♠ A Q J 5 3
♥ A Q	♥ A 3	♥ K 6 2	♥ K 8 5 4
♦ A 6 5	♦ K Q 2	♦ 9 8 6	♦ A K Q
♣ A 2	♣ 7 2	♣ 2	♣ 4

E	F	G	H
♠ J 7 6 5 4	♠ A K 6 5 2	♠ K Q 9 8 7 3 2	♠ A K Q J 10 9 8
♥ K Q J	♥ A K 2	♥ K 6	♥ J 7
♦ 6	♦ A 9 2	♦ A 2	♦ J 7
♣ A Q 6 5	♣ 7 6	♣ A J	♣ J 6

### ANSWERS

A) 2♠- Do not jump without a solid suit. You will unleash your strength later. Just show the 6th spade for now.

B) 2♠- Same as A: Do not set this suit as trumps (you'd belong in 6♣ facing: ♠3♥J7♦AJ3♣KQJ10986).

C) 3♠- Shows 6+ card solid suit (and in this booklet, we don't promise extras).

D) 2♥- Natural. Don't jump to 3♥ (a splinter bid). You will divulge your strength later-find out what is trump first and conserve space.

E) 3♦- Perfect splinter bid.

F) 2NT- Shows 12-14 or 18-19 balanced. If partner raises to 3NT, you will bid 4NT, quantitative to show 18-19.

G) 2♠- As usual, no jumping without a solid suit. Conserve space for now.

H) 3♠- They don't get any more solid than this! Spades are trump (unless

partner insists on notrump).

## Bidding After a 2♦ or 2♥ Response

We've been dealing with a 2♣GF response, but what about when the response is 2♦ or 2♥? Good news! Not much changes. The auctions we will be examining here are:

1♠-2♦

1♥-2♦

1♠-2♥

All three responses are still natural, but while the 2♦ response might be only a 4-card suit, the 2♥ response *guarantees* at least five hearts. Of course, the only 2/1 auction with a 2♥ response is: 1♠-2♥. Why does it guarantee five? We don't fool around with the majors (the same way we don't open a 4-card major). Without 5 hearts, we manufacture a 2/1 response in one of the minors (usually a 2♣ response). When we make a 2/1 response, and don't have any five-card suits to respond in, the suit we lie about is a minor. We will always have at least a 4-card suit to respond with (because if our only 4-card suit was support for partner, we would begin with a Jacoby 2NT response).

What if partner opens 1♠ and you have something like: ♠Qxx ♥AJxx ♦Axx ♣Kxx? Assume there is no systemic response available that shows a balanced 13+ (some use 3NT for this). Assume 1NT is not completely forcing. Then what? **Don't lie with the 4-card heart suit.** Instead, "lie" in a minor, preferably by responding 2♣. Partner won't expect a 3-card suit, but she will be in no hurry to drag you into clubs without exploring for other contracts. You will surely be correcting back to spades.

## Summary

The 2/1 response is almost always 4+ cards (natural) in a minor, but very rarely 3 cards if stuck. The 2♥ response (which comes only after a 1♠ opening) guarantees 5+ hearts.

## After a 2♦ Response

The auction has started either 1♠-2♦ or 1♥-2♦. Opener bids naturally/normally. Opener shows her shape. There isn't as much space after a 2♦ response, particularly after 1♥-2♦. If opener doesn't have a 6-card heart suit to rebid, she could be stuck. For example: ♠6 5 4♥A J 7 6 5♦A 2♣A 4 2. There is no perfect rebid after 1♥-2♦. Two hearts would show six cards. Two notrump, while right on strength/shape, feels wrong with no spade stopper. Bidding spades or clubs with three, or raising diamonds with two doesn't make sense.

So, it is a question of which lie to tell. Some pairs lie by repeating the 5-card heart suit. I'd prefer to "lie" with 2NT. If partner raises to 3NT and they run five spade tricks, life will go on. However, this isn't likely to happen. If partner raises 2NT to 3NT, he surely won't have a singleton spade (if he did, he would have had some other more descriptive bid available at his second turn to bid out his shape). I'd rather keep the 2♥ rebid as guaranteeing six cards. I draw the line at rebidding 2NT with a small *doubleton* in an unbid suit. The alternative in that case would be to raise partner's minor on three cards. Remember, that both players will head towards five-of-the-minor only as a last resort (preferring to explore for 3NT or four-of-the-major). This topic is further discussed in Appendix A.

Just as after a 2♣ response, jumps are specialized. Opener's jump rebid shows a solid suit and opener's jump-shift shows shortness.

## After a 2♥ Response

Nothing special. The only 2/1 auction with a 2♥ response is: 1♠-2♥. Rebidding 2♠ promises 6 or more. Rebidding 2NT would tend to be exactly 5=2=3=3 shape. Introducing a minor shows 4+ cards there and does not promise extras.



## Quiz: Rebidding After 1♠-2♦

What would you rebid as opener after 1♠-2♦-?

A	B	C	D
♠ K J 8 7 2	♠ A K Q 6 5 2	♠ A K Q J 7 4 2	♠ A Q J 5 3
♥ 6 3	♥ 3	♥ K 6	♥ K 8 5 4
♦ 5	♦ K Q 2	♦ 9 8	♦ A K Q
♣ A Q J 6 2	♣ A 7 2	♣ 5 2	♣ 4

E	F	G	H
♠ J 7 6 5 4	♠ A K 6 5 2	♠ K Q 9 8 7	♠ A K Q 9 8
♥ K Q J	♥ A 2	♥ K 8 6 2	♥ 7
♦ 6	♦ A Q 9 2	♦ A 9 8 2	♦ J 9 8 7
♣ A Q 6 5	♣ 7 6	♣ -	♣ K 6 2

I
♠ A 9 8 7 5
♥ 5 2
♦ K Q 3
♣ A 3 2

## ANSWERS

A) 3♣- I don't recommend, as some do, that going to the 3-level shows extra values. Already in a GF, just bid your shape.

B) 2♠- Repeat the 6-card suit-don't jump when it isn't solid. You can raise diamonds later if need be.

C) 3♠-This is a solid suit. Play jumps the same as over a 2♣response.

D) 2♥- Bid out your shape, don't jump. No rush to raise diamonds.

- E) 3♣- Don't distort by rebidding notrump with a singleton.
- F) 3♦- Support with four. Show your slam interest later.
- G) 2♥- Majors first: you might have a 4-4 heart fit.
- H) 3♥- Splinter raise.
- I) 3♦-The lesser of evils. Avoid a 2NT rebid with a small side doubleton.

## Quiz: Rebidding after 1♠-2♥

What would you rebid as opener after 1♠-2♥-?

J	K	L
♠ K J 8 7 2	♠ A K J 6 5	♠ A 8 7 4 2
♥ 6 3	♥ 3 2	♥ K Q 6
♦ 5	♦ K Q 2	♦ 9 8
♣ A Q J 6 2	♣ 8 7 2	♣ K 5 2

### ANSWERS

J) 3♣-Bid out your shape.

K) 2NT- To show a 5=2=3=3 hand.

L) 3♥- Since 2♥ guarantees five, you can raise with this kind of hand.

## 2/1 Responses in a Minor Instead of in a 4-Card Major

The 2♣ and 2♦ two-over-one responses are natural, but as we've seen in previous chapters, they could easily be based on only a 4-card suit. For example, partner opens 1♦ and you hold: ♠A 3 2 ♥6 4 2 ♦A 4 2 ♣A Q J 3. I would proudly respond 2♣.

With GF strength, five clubs and a 4-card major, I definitely recommend (as stated previously) starting with a 2♣ response. So, with either of these hands: ♠A 6 5 4 ♥6 5 ♦A 2 ♣A K 7 6 4 or ♠8 ♥A J 7 6 ♦A Q 2 ♣K Q 10 8 7, I prefer a 2♣ response to 1♦. There will be plenty of time to find a 4-4 major fit if one exists.

Look what happens if instead of wheeling out the 2/1 response, you start with one-of-the-major. Partner opens 1♦ and you have the hand above (♠A 6 5 4 ♥6 5 ♦A 2 ♣A K 7 6 4). Let's say you respond 1♠, and partner rebids 2♦. Now, you have no choice but to force with 3♣. You are in no-man's land. Partner might bid 3♠ next to show a preference (even though by now, you have no interest in spades). Does he have hearts stopped? This was an awkward auction. Had you responded with 2♣, he would have next bid 2♦. Then you'd complete your description with 2♠ and be much better placed to explore intelligently. Ironically, starting by taking up a little more space (going to the two level instead of responding in your major on the one level) ends up creating a more space-efficient auction in the long run.

I even like to respond 2♣ or (2♦) with 4-4 in the major and the minor. This goes against mainstream thinking, but I find that a 2/1 auction is much better than starting with 1-of-a-major and having to later go through fourth-suit forcing. So I would respond 2♣ to 1♦ with: ♠K 8 7 6 ♥A 2 ♦A 7 6 ♣A Q J 9. But, with a good 4-card major and so-so clubs, I would respond in the major.

## Opener's Rebid After 1♦-2♣

After 1♦-2♣, opener bids naturally. I am beginning to sound like a broken record (and that's a good thing—systems that repeat themselves are easier to remember). Opener bids out her shape—nothing says anything about strength. There are a few partnership rules I like to use:

- 1) With 5+ diamonds, opener's rebid is always 2♦ (*except for jumping to 3♦ with a solid 6+ card suit*). Note: Many of you have been trained not to repeat a 5-card minor. But that refers to a one-over-one auction. In other words, if you open 1♦ and partner responds on the one level, don't rebid 2♦. This 2/1 auction is a different animal. You can repeat your diamonds to show 5+ ♦ and still have plenty of space to look for other landing spots.
- 2) Without 5+ diamonds, opener's next obligation is to show four-card majors up-the-line.
- 3) Without 5+ diamonds and without a 4-card major, opener usually bids 2NT. (She can also raise clubs if 2NT doesn't appeal).
- 4) Opener's jump-shift to 3♥ or 3♠ is a Splinter bid (consistent with our other 2/1 auctions).

### Example rebids for opener after 1♦-2♣:

- A) ♠A 2 ♥A Q 6 5 ♦K J 7 6 5 ♣6 4: Rebid 2♦ with 5+. Responder will bid hearts next if he has 4.
- B) ♠K 5 4 ♥K J 6 5 ♦J 10 8 7 ♣A 4: Rebid 2♥. This is not considered a reverse showing extras. It also denies 5+ diamonds.
- C) ♠K J 4 ♥Q 8 7 ♦A J 8 7 ♣Q 7 6: Rebid 2NT. This typically shows a weak notrump with no 4-card major, and fewer than five diamonds (so 3=3=4=3).
- D) ♠A Q 4 ♥7 6 ♦A Q 5 4 ♣J 9 4 2: Rebid 3♣. Partner can explore for 3NT; if he bids 3♥, you will bid 3NT.

## Responder's Rebid After He Has Responded 2 ♣ to 1 ♦

:

You know what I'm going to say about responder's bids: natural! Each player bids naturally (using guidelines as above) until a suitable trump fit (or notrump) is found. In all of these 2/1 auctions, the mantra should be: "Game before slam." Don't worry about slam (or showing extras) until you know which suit (or notrump) you are playing.

## Quiz: Starting with 1♦

What should you respond to partner's 1♦ with:

A	B	C	D
♠ K J 8 7 6	♠ A K Q 6	♠ A Q J 4	♠ A 5 3
♥ A Q	♥ A 3	♥ K 6 2	♥ K 8 5
♦ 8 6 5	♦ Q J 2	♦ 9	♦ A K
♣ A Q 2	♣ 9 8 7 2	♣ A Q J 8 2	♣ Q J 8 4 2

### ANSWERS

A) 1♠- Don't distort. We don't "psyche" a 2/1 just to get into a GF auction. Here, 1♠ is normal with 5 cards.

B) 1♠- While 2♣ is possible, (you know I love 2/1 auctions), with such good spades and poor clubs, this feels best.

C) 2♣- With 5 clubs and only 4 spades, starting with 2♣ definitely leads to the best auctions.

D) 2♣- No rush to bid notrump. You might belong in 6♣, opposite, say: ♠K 4♥Q J 2♦8 7 6 4 2♣A K 3.

What should opener rebid after 1♦-2♣ with:

E	F	G	H
♠ A K 6 5	♠ K J 9	♠ Q 10 9 8	♠ Q J 4
♥ A K 2	♥ K J 7 6	♥ J 7	♥ Q J 4
♦ A 9 3 2	♦ A 8 7 2	♦ K J 8 7 2	♦ Q J 8 7
♣ 7 6	♣ 3 2	♣ A Q	♣ K Q 2

### ANSWERS

E) 2♠- Show the 4-card major (denying 5+ diamonds). You can look for slam later (after a fit is found).

F) 2♥-Again, show the 4-card major (denying 5+ diamonds). This could be (and is) a dead minimum.

G) 2♦- First priority is to show 5+ diamonds. Partner will bid a major next if he has four. By going this route, you can more accurately describe your entire distribution.

H) 2NT- Denying 5+ diamonds and denying a 4-card major (so, usually 3=3=4=3).

**What should responder rebid after 1♦-2♣-2♦ with:**

I	J	K	L
♠ A K 6 5	♠ K Q	♠ A Q	♠ Q J 4
♥ K 2	♥ J 7 6	♥ 8 7	♥ Q J 4
♦ 3 2	♦ A	♦ K J 8 7	♦ 8 7
♣ A K 7 6 4	♣ K Q J 10 9 3 2	♣ A Q J 7 6	♣ A K Q 4 2

## **ANSWERS**

I) 2♠- Show that 4-card major. Partner could easily have four herself. No rush to bid notrump or to jump.

J) 3♣- Naturally.

K) 3♦- We might be heading to 6♦, but for now, let's just tell partner about our support.

L) 2NT- You might want to discuss with your partner what this means as opposed to 3NT. Some play that a jump to 3NT is a dead minimum/Fast Arrival. Others play that jumps to specifically 3NT show medium/extras. There are a few topics such as this that won't be specifically covered here. For more, see Appendix B.



## Principal of Fast Arrival

In general, 2/1 GF bidders use the “Principle of Fast Arrival”. This means that going straight to game is the weakest action for either player. Going slowly could be a sign of slam interest. For example, consider these two auctions:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♥
2NT	4♠

as opposed to:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♥
2NT	3♠

On the first auction, responder is announcing a *minimum*. The jump to 4♠ (Fast Arrival) is saying, in effect, “Partner, I know what suit we are playing in, and I really don’t want to leave any room for slam exploration. Because I have a minimum, and don’t wish to have any more dialogue, I am placing the contract in 4♠.”

**Note:** Opener might have other ideas. She could possibly be looking at a 20-count; she was always driving to slam after the 2/1-now she has learned responder has a minimum with spade support-she can still use RKC or bid 6♠ if she knows what she is doing.

On the second auction, responder’s 3♠ bid is forward-going—more than a minimum.

## Responder's Rebids

What might responder's second-round jump to 4♠ look like? How about: ♠K Q 2 ♥A Q 10 8 7 ♦10 4 ♣J 4 2? Responder had enough for his 2/1 GF response to 1♠ of 2♥, and upon hearing partner's 2NT, jumped to 4♠ showing his spade support and minimum hand.

**Note:** Some 2/1 players use "picture bids." This means that the auction we are focused on (2/1 then a jump to game in opener's first suit) specifically shows that all the main high cards (pictures) are in the two suits named. However, my preference is to play these jumps to show *any* minimum, and can be made with, say: ♠J 5 4 ♥A K 8 7 6 ♦K 5 4 ♣Q 2.

**What might the Slow Arrival raise to 3♠ (as in 1♠-2♥-2NT-3♠) look like?**

First of all, here is a **VERY IMPORTANT** rule for all of responder's 2/1 rebids: When responder's second bid is a raise of opener's major, he is guaranteeing

3-card support, NEVER a doubleton. Even if opener has promised a six-card suit, responder should not raise with a doubleton.

So, back to 1♠-2♥-2NT-3♠: The 3♠ bid guarantees 3-card support AND shows extras. With a dead minimum, responder would have signed off in 4♠. So, 3♠ could show something like either of these two hands:

♠K 4 2 ♥A Q 8 7 6 ♦A 2 ♣K 3 2

or

♠J 10 8 ♥A K Q 8 7 ♦Q 2 ♣A Q 2

Opener will know that responder has extras, and opener can cooperate by making a control-bid, or by using RKC if everything is under control. Note

that responder's first job is to set trump (with the 3♠ bid) before slam exploration (usually via control-bidding) can begin. If responder were allowed talk, he would be saying, "Partner-I am supporting your spades and at the same time, keeping the auction low so we can explore for slam. Do you want to make a control-bid for me?"

What if responder doesn't have three-card support for opener's major? In that case, he can't support opener. For example, after the auction begins: 1♠-2♥-2NT, responder can't at his next turn raise spades on a doubleton.

He can do any of the following:

- Bid notrump with a flat hand and everything stopped.
- Repeat his own suit (typically showing 6+ cards).
- Bid a new 4+ card suit.
- Punt. That's sort of a joke - but sometimes, responder will be stuck and have to invent a bid on the fly. Most of the time, he will have an easy natural bid to make. The power of the second-round raise guaranteeing three trumps is worth the trade of occasionally having to invent a bid.

## Examples of “Other” Hands Without 3-Card Major Support:

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♠	2♣
2♦	?

With:

- 1) ♠K 8♥K J 7♦K 8 7♣A J 10 8 7- Rebid 2NT.
- 2) ♠Q 7♥8 7 6♦K 2♣A Q J 10 9 2- Rebid 3♣.
- 3) ♠A 7♥5 4 2♦A Q 2♣A 10 8 7 6- Rebid 3♦: I don't like raising the second suit on 3, but it is the least of evils. Don't bid 2♥ which would be natural (there is no “artificial 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing when already in a 2/1 GF auction). Don't raise to 2♠ with only a doubleton—this would have long-term poor effects on bidding accuracy.

If responder jumps to game in his *own* suit (for example, 1♠-2♥-2NT-4♥) that is also a sign-off. It shows a minimum under the principle of Fast Arrival. What about jumps to 3NT (by either player)? I touched on the subject, and if you wish to keep things simple, you can play that if anyone jumps to 3NT it is a sign-off (minimum). That would be the consistent way of system building.

**NOTE:** Most experts actually invert the Fast Arrival principle when it comes to jumping to 3NT; the reason being that it is not desirable to jump to 3NT and preclude further investigation of the correct game contract. Still, for this roughly intermediate-level booklet, I'd hate to recommend Fast Arrival on some auctions but not on others. Again, this is covered further in Appendix B.

## Summary of Fast Arrival

All jumps to game are weak actions. If you and your partner wish to invert the meanings for jumps to 3NT, that is a slightly better way to play it, but involves extra memory and increases the risk of having a mishap.

## Quiz: Fast and Furious

What should responder rebid after 1♠-2♣-2♦-?

A	B	C	D
♠ Q 2	♠ K 3 2	♠ 5	♠ 8 7
♥ A Q J 3	♥ A 5 4	♥ A 2	♥ K J 5
♦ Q 2	♦ A 2	♦ K Q 4 3	♦ K J 7
♣ A 7 6 5 4	♣ K Q J 8 7	♣ A 7 6 5 4 2	♣ A J 7 6 4

E
♠ K 7 6
♥ A 2
♦ Q 5 2
♣ K J 8 7 6

### ANSWERS

A) 2♥- Natural, there is no “artificial 4th suit GF” since you are already in a GF. Just describe your hand.

B) 2♠- Promising three-card support and denying a dead minimum.

C) 3♦- Support with support: the most natural thing you can do with this hand.

D) 3NT- You have stoppers and a flat notrump hand. If not using Fast Arrival here, then bid 2NT.

E) 4♠- Showing three-card support and a minimum. Partner can still bid on with a 20-count or the like.

What should responder rebid after 1♥-2♦-2♥-?

F	G	H
♠ 4 3	♠ K Q 7 6	♠ J 4
♥ A Q 2	♥ 2	♥ J 5 4
♦ A Q J 8 6	♦ K Q J 8 7 6	♦ K Q J 10 8 7
♣ Q J 4	♣ A 2	♣ A J

## **ANSWERS**

F) 3♥- Showing three-card support and extras, “Partner, I’m interested in bigger things and leaving room for you.”

G) 2♠- Natural. Partner might be 6-4 in the majors. Just describe your hand for now. Don’t rush to bid notrump.

H) 4♥- Three-card support and a minimum, “Partner-I’m not interested in talking anymore.” It is better to intimate things like this during the auction than after the game.

## The 1NT Response

In our exploration of 2/1 auctions, I hope you've seen how useful the system can be. Now, we pay the price. We have to examine the downside. **The worst part of the system is the 1NT response.** Many of you have probably heard this referred to as "1NT forcing." For starters, we'll use that term. In Appendix C, I address the alternative, which is "1NT semi-forcing."

First of all, let's make sure we know the auction we are discussing. The opening bid must be 1-of-a-MAJOR. **A 1NT response to a minor is not affected by this system**—play it like you do now (presumably, 6-10). Furthermore, the 1♠ or 1♥ opening must be by the dealer or by the player in 2nd seat. We already know that we don't use any of our 2/1 system, including "1NT forcing" after a 3<sup>rd</sup>- or 4<sup>th</sup>-seat opener.

A forcing notrump auction goes:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠ or 1♥	Pass	1NT

**Note:** The opponent (East) passed. If there is interference (an overcall or takeout double), we don't use 1NT forcing.

I am often asked, "Larry, do you like 1NT forcing?" The answer: **NO**. Nobody likes it. But, it is part of the 2/1 GF system and needs to be learned. We'll keep it as simple as possible for now.

In a nutshell, here is why this 1NT forcing animal exists: In Standard, a 1NT response to a major is 6-10 (because you need only 11+ to respond on the two-level).

In 2/1 GF, a 1NT response is 6-12 (because you need 13+ to go to the 2-level).

Do you see the difference? The 1NT response with 2/1 GF becomes a bit of a catch-all as it is for any hand up to 12 points. This 6-point wide range presents some obstacles. First of all, can the 1NT response be passed by the



opener?

The majority of players treat a 1NT response as completely forcing. That means opener cannot pass. (Incidentally, in ACBL-land, this 1NT response is not alerted, but is announced-like a Jacoby transfer. When responder bids 1NT, opener says “forcing”). We’ll focus on the 100% forcing 1NT. For information on the semi-forcing NT, see Appendix C. In some ways, this is an overrated issue. No matter what it’s called, a 1NT response shows 6-12.

**Note:** Sometimes, you might tactically respond (especially at favorable vulnerability) with less than 6, but partner will expect 6-12.

If 1NT is totally forcing, opener CANNOT pass! If she has nothing special to say, she must invent a bid, typically in a 3-card minor.

For example, after  $1\spadesuit \rightarrow 1NT$ , opener holds the following hand:  $\spadesuit A J 10 8 2$   $\heartsuit 9 7 3$   $\diamondsuit A 2$   $\clubsuit K J 2$ . The appropriate rebid is  $2\clubsuit$ . Opener cannot rebid her major since this would show a 6-card suit. She cannot make a  $2\heartsuit$  call because a rebid of the other major shows at least a 4-card suit. Lastly, she can’t pass if 1NT is forcing, and she cannot bid  $2\diamondsuit$ , a 2-card suit. In any event, this rebid in a 3-card minor is really the only “new” rebid to learn when using 1NT forcing.

## Opener's Rebids after 1NT Forcing:

- 2♣/2♦ – At least a 3-card suit. (**Note:** 2♣ might be exactly 4=5=2=2 if not strong enough to reverse. While I “ignore” reverses in an actual 2/1 auction, surely the auction 1♥-1NT-2♠ is a reverse, showing extra values.)

Example: ♠A Q 7 6 4 ♥K 3 2 ♦8 7 ♣A 8 7: Bid 1♠-1NT-2♣ (because you cannot pass 1NT forcing).

- 2 of the other major – At least a 4-card suit (1♥-1NT-2♠ shows extras as it is a reverse).

Example: ♠K 10 8 7 5 ♥A Q 6 5 ♦3 ♣K 7 6: Bid 1♠-1NT-2♥ to show 4+ hearts (just as in Standard).

- 2 of the same major – At least a 6-card suit, NF.

Example: ♠K Q 8 7 6 4 ♥4 ♦A 3 2 ♣K J 4: Bid 1♠-1NT-2♠ to show 6+♠(just as in Standard).

- 2NT – More than a strong notrump, balanced.

Example: ♠Q 8 7 6 4 ♥A Q ♦A K 5 ♣K 10 8: Bid 1♠-1NT-2NT to show 18-19 (just as in Standard).

- 3-level – same as over a normal 1NT response.

Example: ♠A K Q J 7 6 ♥A Q 2 ♦2 ♣10 9 6: Bid 1♠-1NT-3♠ invitational (just as in Standard).

## Quiz: Responses to a Forcing 1 NT

Now, try these examples for opener after 1♠-1NT:

A	B	C	D
♠ A Q 9 8 2	♠ Q J 10 6 5 2	♠ A K Q 5 2	♠ A J 5 4 2
♥ A 5 2	♥ A 5 2	♥ A K Q 10 2	♥ A K 2
♦ Q J 2	♦ Q J 2	♦ 10 5 2	♦ K 2
♣ 7 3	♣ A	♣ -	♣ K 8 3

E
♠ A Q J 10 5 4 2
♥ A J 2
♦ K 2
♣ 3

### ANSWERS

A) 2♦- But pass if playing 1NT as semi-forcing (discussed in AppendixC).

B) 2♠- shows 6+ spades and a minimum.

C) 3♥- Natural jump shift forcing to game.

D) 2NT- shows 18-19 balanced - as does any 2NT rebid after a 1-level response.

E) 4♠- Extra spades, extra points.

Notice that the answers to B,C,D, and E are the same as if it were 1960 and nobody ever heard of “2/1 GF.” Only with the hand-type of example A, is a “strange new bid” made. In 1960 (or with 1NT semi-forcing), you would pass with Hand A.

## The Next Step in 1NT Forcing Auctions

Quick refresher: You have just bid a forcing one notrump after your 1<sup>st</sup>- or 2<sup>nd</sup>-seat partner opened one of a major and the opponents both sat on their hands (my favorite opponents are quiet opponents). Opener rebids “naturally,” but without pass as an option. This means 1NT can’t be the final contract. So a bid of 2♣ or 2♦ might be only a 3-card suit.

Opener is “stuck” if she opens 1♠ with, say:

♠K J 8 7 5 ♥Q 5 4 ♦A 2 ♣Q 3 2. She would like to pass a 1NT response to her 1♠ opening, but has to dredge up a rebid since 1NT is forcing. She has to rebid 2♣, her 3-card minor. Anything else would be a worse lie; she can’t rebid her 5-card major and she can’t bid 2NT which would show 18-19. When opener has that dreaded 5-3-3-2 minimum, she usually picks her cheapest 3-card minor.

What happens *after opener makes her rebid*? Since 2♣ (or 2♦) could be a 3-card suit, responder shouldn’t be too anxious to raise it.

Responder will make a natural bid at his second turn. If he has close to an opening bid (like 11 points), he is likely to make a forward-going bid (trying to invite game). With a weaker hand, he will make a less-encouraging bid.

Here is a look at what responder should do for his second bid after he has responded 1NT (completely) forcing:

- New suit on 2-level: Non-forcing

Example: ♠6 ♥K Q 9 8 7 6 ♦4 3 2 ♣Q 3 2: After 1♠-1NT-2♣, bid 2♥

- Preference to opener’s major: Typically weak, usually 2-card support

Example: ♠Q 7 ♥A 4 3 2 ♦J 8 7 6 4 ♣J 3: After 1♠-1NT-2♣, bid 2♠

**Note:** This delayed raise, is usually a two-card “preference.” The range is about 6-9 points in support. It can also be a really lousy 3-card raise. For example, responder might have 3 trumps and 5-6 points in support. Rather

than passing, he can respond 1NT, and later raise to two-of-the-major. This frees up a direct raise from 1-of-a-major to 2-of-a-major to show a decent (some call it “constructive”) raise in the range of 7-10.

- Raise of opener’s second suit: Invitational, natural (if 1NT was “forcing” the raise of a minor should show 5-card support).

Example: ♠4 ♥A 3 2 ♦6 4 3 2 ♣K Q 10 8 7: After 1♠-1NT-2♣: Bid 3♣.

- 2NT Rebid: Invitational, Natural.

Example: ♠Q ♥Q 8 7 6 ♦K 10 8 7 2 ♣A 10 7: After 1♠-1NT-2♣: Bid 2NT.

- Jump Raise of opener’s major: 3-card limit raise.

Example: ♠K 4 3 ♥7 6 ♦A 8 7 5 ♣K J 3 2: After 1♠-1NT-2♣: Bid 3♠ (With a 4-card limit raise, you raise directly from 1 to 3 of a major).

## Quiz: You Bid a Forcing Notrump, Now What?

What is your second bid as responder after 1♠-1NT-2♣?

A	B	C	D	E
♠ 6	♠ A 5 2	♠ Q 7	♠ 10	♠ 4
♥ 10 3 2	♥ Q J 9 8 2	♥ A Q 6 2	♥ Q 10 9 8	♥ K Q 10 8 7 6
♦ Q 5 4 2	♦ K 10 2	♦ 9 8 7 6	♦ K Q 10 8 7	♦ Q 4 3 2
♣ A K J 6 4	♣ 10 9	♣ 5 4 2	♣ A 8 2	♣ J 2

### ANSWERS

A) 3♣- Invitational.

B) 3♠- This sequence is used to show a 3-card limit raise.

C) 2♠- This could be a very bad 3-card raise, but is usually a hand like this—a “false-preference.”

D) 2NT- Natural, Invitational.

E) 2♥- Natural, non-forcing.

**Note:** Although the stated range for a 1NT response is 6-12, many players respond with fewer than 6 points (often for tactical reasons). A 1NT response on real garbage, especially when not vulnerable, can be used to try to bluff the opponents.

## Summary

The 2/1 GF system is here to stay. It is not a passing fad. Over the past few decades, more and more players have been adopting 2/1 GF. It is easier than Standard, more effective than Standard and doesn't require a large amount of memory.

Even if you can't digest and memorize everything in this booklet, you can still play the system. When you have an "accident," refer back to these pages to see if you and your partner can discover if and how you went wrong. There are many bells and whistles which can be added (for example, "Serious 3NT"). My general advice is to try to keep it as simple as possible. If you can master everything in this booklet, you're playing well over 90% of a complete 2/1 GF system.

Of course, no system is perfect. Just because you are playing 2/1 GF, don't expect to always reach the right contract. In those times, don't blame the system (or worse, me), blame bridge. It's a tough game. That's why we play it.

## APPENDIX A: Rebid of a Major “Promising” 6+

There is much debate about what opener should rebid following a

1♠-2♥ auction with ♠AQ642 ♥52 ♦542 ♣AK3. Should opener rebid 2NT with such a shaky diamond stopper? Might not it be best to leave the notrump bidding up to partner- who might hold a real diamond stopper? What if opener held:

♠AKQ98 ♥52 ♦542 ♣A32? How about: ♠AKQJ2 ♥52 ♦542 ♣Q32? In this booklet, I recommended that rebidding opener’s major “guarantees” 6+ cards. Without 6 cards, I recommended 2NT on a 5-3-3-2 hand, even without everything stopped. Bidding notrump with three small in an unbid suit is not likely to lead to a disastrous 3NT. If responder’s next bid is 3NT, he surely won’t have a singleton opposite your three small. If he had a singleton, he would have had some other shape-showing bid available (either repeating his suit, introducing a new suit, or raising opener’s suit). The worst that can happen by rebidding 2NT with a three small suit is that 3NT is reached with three small opposite two small. In that case you can hope they either lead something else or that the suit splits 4-4. It’s not like there is necessarily a better contract anyway.

However, I am willing to have some flexibility. On the first hand above, I would rebid 2NT as usual. With the second hand, you could talk me into treating the spades as a 6-card suit. I might “break system” and rebid 2♠. On the third hand, I’ll pretend I have a club in with my spades and will “lie” by rebidding 2♠. Partner will be expecting six of them.

Every partnership using 2/1 GF needs to address the question:

### **Does opener’s rebid guarantee a six-card major?**

There is no perfect answer. I recommend adopting the suggestions in this booklet. However, I am not egotistical enough to insist that there is no other way.



## APPENDIX B: Responder's 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Jump to 3NT

In the auction 1♠-2♣-2♦-3NT the responder has jumped to game. In general, this booklet advises “Fast Arrival.” Certainly when it goes 1♠-2♦-2♠-4♠, the jump to game is the weakest action.

However, most experts agree to invert the meaning when responder is jumping to 3NT. Here is why. Say that the responder to 1♠ holds:

♠Q2 ♥KQ10 ♦AQ982 ♣K32. He responds 2♦ and opener rebids 2♠. Now what? Playing “Fast Arrival” he can't jump to 3NT. Jumping to game shows a minimum. So, he would have to content himself with 2NT. But now, when opener raises to 3NT, there is a dilemma. Opener could have a little extra himself. Opener might hold: ♠AKJ982 ♥A32 ♦8♣QJ3. Opener didn't want to go past game. He had a little in reserve, but had no way to show it. Responder also has something in reserve, but does he want to go past 3NT with his 16-count? If he passes, a laydown slam is missed. To solve this problem, you can play that responder can get his extras off his chest by jumping to 3NT at his second turn. Thus there is one exception to Fast Arrival: 1x-2y-2z-3NT shows about 16-17 points. The X, Y and Z mean that there was an opening bid in suit “x”), a 2-over-1 (in suit “y”) and then opener bid something (suit “z”) which is either a new suit or his opening suit on the two level. Responder can then use a jump to 3NT to show extra values. Make sure your partnership discusses whether or not it is using this exception to Fast Arrival. If it isn't discussed then assume that *all* jumps to game are Fast Arrival.

## APPENDIX C: Semi-Forcing Notrump and Other Variations

Some treat the 1NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ as “**semi-forcing**,” meaning the opener can pass. What does that mean? Is it forcing or is it not forcing? Opener will pass only if she has a balanced minimum (like 5-3-3-2 and 12 or 13 points). If opener does pass, then 1NT will be the final contract.

The downside of playing 1NT semi-forcing (passable) is that sometimes 1NT will be the final contract when the responder had something else in mind.

Over 1♠, responder would bid 1NT semi-forcing with each of these hands:

♠ A 4 2 ♥ K 2 ♦ Q 10 8 7 ♣ J 10 8 7

or

♠ 2 ♥ A J 10 8 7 6 ♦ 4 3 ♣ Q J 7 6

In the first case, responder was hoping to bid 3♠ on his second turn to show a 3-card limit raise. On the second hand, he was hoping to bid 2♥ next to play there. It turns out there might be no “next” as 1NT will be the final contract if opener passes with her flat minimum.

That is the downside of “1NT semi-forcing.” On the upside, if opener does bid again after 1NT semi-forcing, she bids completely naturally—just as in Standard. Her rebids in a new suit promise four or more cards (no bidding 3-card minors). Also, 1NT will often be the right contract when responder has a flat hand opposite opener’s flat hand. Personally, I prefer to treat 1NT as semi-forcing, but for now, I am in the minority.

## APPENDIX D: Variations on 2/1 GF

In this series, I have given my preferences. There are other treatments out there. Be aware that some partnerships use the following exceptions to what is in this series:

- They play that opener's "reverse" [ex. 1♥-2♣-2♠] shows extras.
- They play that opener's rebid on the 3-level shows extras.
- They play that opener's rebid of her major does not promise six cards-it is the default rebid.
- They play that opener's rebid of 2NT guarantees stoppers in all unbid suits.
- They play that opener's jump rebids show extras.
- They play opener's immediate jumpshifts as natural and strong.
- Not everyone plays 2/1 as 100% game forcing.
- Not everyone treats 1♦-2♣ as GF.

I have tried to give what I think are the mainstream treatments. I've spelled out what I believe to be the simplest and best way to play/remember 2/1 GF. I have listed the variations above just so you are aware that there has been no standardization (as this is being written in the year 2012) yet of all 2/1 GF systems.