

Two Over One

The Two over One Agreement

Cornerstone of the 2/1 Bidding System

The 2/1 Bids

There are only 6 two-over-one bids:

pard	you
1♠	2♥
1♠	2♦
1♠	2♣
-----	-----
1♥	2♦
1♥	2♣
-----	-----
1♦	2♣

In the Two Over One system, these bids all show an opening hand or better, and they are all game forcing. Actually, the auction can stop in 4 clubs or 4 diamonds if everything has gone bad. But stopping at 4 of a minor is unusual. Game Forcing is the nature of these two over one calls.

The 2 heart bid over 1 spade promises 5 or more hearts. When the auction begins 1♠ - 2♥, responder promises 5 or more hearts. So opener can support hearts holding only 3 hearts. If opener fails to raise hearts, then responder's rebid of hearts would show a 6-card suit.

The other 2/1 bids may be 4-card suits. All other 2/1 bids promise only 4-card suits. As a practical matter, they are quite often 5-card suits, but 4 is the promise. Yet note that a rebid of minor suit promises a good 6-card suit.

Reverses are OFF following a two-over-one bid. For example, if opener has bid 1 heart, and responder bids 2 clubs or 2 diamonds, opener can no longer reverse. So if opener now bids 2 spades, no extra values have been promised. If opener actually has extra values, she will find some other way to express them.

The Principle of Fast Arrival is ON. Because responder's first bid creates a game force, the principle of fast arrival applies. Compare the two following auctions:

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♥	P
4♥			

Partner's jump to game shows 3 or more trump and a minimum hand. She has arrived at game as fast as possible. Fast arrival signifies minimum values, 12 to 14 points.

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♥	P
3♥			

Partner again shows 3 or more hearts, but this time she has proceeded toward game more slowly. This lack of haste expresses extra values. Extra values begin at 15 points.

Fast arrival does not apply to NT

But notrump rebids do NOT apply the principle of fast arrival. The principle of fast arrival applies to suit bids only. Jump rebids in notrump always show extra values, while minimum notrump rebids always show minimum values.

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Bidding 2 clubs or 2 diamonds does not deny a 4-card major. When you have a 5-card minor and a 4-card major and the opportunity to make a 2/1 bid, then bid 2 of your minor instead of 1 spade. This doesn't mean that you've abandoned the search for a major suit fit. Instead, it reflects the power of the 2/1 system to express greater detail about your hand. You will still get the chance to show your 4-card spade suit, but when you do, partner will see the shape of your hand more clearly. If partner has opened 1 heart and rebid 2 diamonds, while you have responded 2 clubs and rebid 2 spades, then you both have acquired considerable knowledge, and the auction is still at the two level.

Summary So Far

- A 2/1 response requires the values of an opening hand and is game forcing
- The 2/1 suit need only be 4 cards in length if a minor, but shows 5 cards if hearts.
- If responder rebids his suit, it must be a 6-card suit, even if the first bid promised only 4 cards. In fact, the 6-card minor should be of good quality.
- Reverses are off.
- The principal of fast arrival is on.
- The principal of fast arrival does not apply to notrump rebids.
- Bypass your 4-card major to make a 2/1 call in a minor, then rebid the major to show your shape.

2 Clubs Over 1 Diamond

When opener begins with 1 diamond and responder answers 2 clubs, the partners should not rule out the possibility of a major suit fit because neither has denied a 4-card major. But even now opener should not stampede into the search. What's the rush? In fact, the sequence of bids that follow have specific significance:

1. Opener must always bid 2 diamonds with 5 or more diamonds. Remember that you and partner are both holding cards. Quite possibly you have a slam. If so, knowledge of your shape could be very important, and diamonds may perhaps even be the best suit for slam. Regarding the search for a major suit fit, there is still plenty of bidding room.

2. Lacking 5 diamonds, but holding a balanced hand, opener must rebid notrump. Opener bypasses a 4-card major to show a balanced hand. If responder has a 4-card major, you will probably hear about it next. If she doesn't, or if her major suit is different from yours, then you have already shown an acceptance of a notrump contract.

Note that opener cannot have 15 to 17 HCP because she lacks 5 diamonds and has a balanced hand. With 15 to 17 she would have opened such a hand one notrump. Therefore opener has either a balanced 12 to 14 (usually) or else a balanced 18 to 19 (sometimes). These hands must be distinguished:

2NT shows 12 to 14

3NT shows 18 to 19

Over 2NT responder bids a 4-card major. Opener will raise with a 4-card fit. Lacking a fit she may bid 3 spades over 3 hearts, or else bid 3NT, as befits her actual hand. The partners will

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now be able to decide whether to play in 3NT or in 4 of a major.

If opener has shown the 18 to 19 point hand, then responder with no interest in slam will have to suppress her 4-card major and play in 3 notrump. The extra values make the 3NT contract a good spot. Of course, responder may want to try for slam if she also has extra values. Over opener's jump to 3NT, use 4 NT as the ace asking bid.

3. If opener's rebid is a major suit, she denies 5 diamonds and denies a balanced hand. Responder may find this description useful for deciding on a suit destination, or responder may still wish to try notrump. Responder's bid of 2NT will show 12 to 14 points, while her jump to 3NT would show extra values, 15 to 17.

Examples

What is responder's bid over partner's 1 heart?

1. A4 KJ8 AJ54 10963
2. AJ65 K7 AJ984 104
3. AJ52 K9 AJ73 10932

What is opener's rebid over responder's 2 clubs?

4. A8 KJ75 AJ43 984
5. A6 KJ97 AJ842 52
6. A984 KJ53 AJ86 4
7. AQ7 KJ98 AJ75 A4

1. 2 diamonds. Support hearts next.
2. 2 diamonds. Intending to bid spades next.
3. 1 spade.
4. 2NT. Deny 5 diamonds, show balanced 12-14
5. 2 diamonds. Required with 5 diamonds.
6. 2 hearts. Deny 5 diamonds, deny balance.
7. 3NT. Deny 5 diamonds, show balanced 18-19

Opener's Rebids

We have just discussed opener's rebids when opener has started with 1 diamond and responder has answered 2 clubs. But what if opener's first suit has been a major suit?

Opener can rebid the major to show a 6-card suit. Because responders 2/1 call has created a gameforcing auction, there is no need for opener to jump. Point count is not expressed yet. Responder will likely make a bid expressing her point count next.

Opener can bid a 2nd suit. The second suit is presumed to be a 4-card suit. Point count is not expressed.

Opener can rebid in notrump with a balanced hand. A bid of 2NT will show minimum values, 12 to 14. A jump rebid of 3NT shows 15 to 17. Notice that this is different from the jump to 3NT when the opening bid was 1 diamond. In that case, opener had no 5-card suit, so an opening bid of 1NT would have occurred with 15 to 17. But when opener has a 5-card major, she may have preferred to bid the 5-card major, instead of opening 1NT. Therefore she could still have 15 to 17 HCP.

Opener can raise responder's suit. If responder's suit is hearts, then the principle of fast arrival applies. If the suit is a minor, a single raise awaits developments, while a jump raise to 4 would be a slam try because 3NT has been bypassed.

Responder's NT Rebids

When responder has made a 2/1 call but has a balanced hand with no fit for partner's major, she can elect to make a rebid in notrump. All notrump rebids by responder show a point count range. Responder's ranges are:

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12 to 14
15 to 17
18 to 19
20+

Show 12 to 14 by rebidding 2NT.

Show 15 to 17 with the jump rebid of 3NT.

To show 18 to 19, rebid 2NT, as if you were minimal, but then at your next turn bid 4NT. This 4NT bid is not ace asking. It just shows your shape and point count. Your partner may pass with any minimum opener, but can bid slam based on point count with extra values.

With 20+ points there is no formula to show your hand. Instead, you will simply be responsible to make sure that some slam is bid, either in a suit or in notrump.

Responder's Suit Rebids

Responder will often make a suit rebid instead of a notrump rebid.

To rebid the same suit a second time, the suit must be 6 cards long. If the suit is a minor suit, it should be a good suit, suitable as a trump suit in slam. Remember that you and partner are aiming at games in major suits and notrump. So the rebid of a minor suit by responder must reflect a reason beyond a mere 6-card suit.

If, instead of rebidding the first suit, responder rebids a second suit, there is a strong implication that the first suit is longer than the second. Moreover, there is a suggestion that notrump may not be entirely suitable. This suggestion is not necessarily the case, but since responder is at least 5-4, she is at least only semi-balanced. Finally, even if responder does not favor notrump, opener may still elect to place

the contract in notrump. But opener does this with the understanding that responder may not be rooting for this result.

Responder's suit rebid may, of course, be a raise of one of opener's suits. If opener's first suit was a major, responder will need 3-card support. The principal of fast arrival is on. So a jump to game is minimal and a simple raise shows extra values, 15 or more points.

If opener has rebid 2 diamonds, she promises only a 5-card suit, so responder again needs 3 card support to raise.

But if opener has rebid a major suit, showing 6 card length, then responder can raise with 2 trump only. Responder should apply the principal of fast arrival.

If opener's rebid has promised no more than a 4-card suit, then responder must also have a 4-card suit to raise the bid.

Practice

Make your rebid. Responder has bid 2 clubs.

1. AKJ84 K97 K1084 7
2. AJ862 QJ3 AQ8 86
3. AQ9532 4 J1084 AQ
4. AJ86 KQJ98 Q9 95
5. AKQ KQJ104 J6 1097
6. AJ AJ1098 98 KJ43
7. A AK984 9 KQ985

Partner opened 1 spade and bid 2 diamonds over your 2 club response. What is your bid:

8. Q4 KJ3 J96 AQ864
9. AJ4 QJ3 J8 AQJ96
10. KJ4 KJ5 A106 AQ86
11. AQ4 8 Q72 AKJ1098
12. 8 AK43 Q6 A97543
13. AJ 8 KQ98 A96532

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Discussion of Practice

1. 2 diamonds. Bid your shape.
2. 2NT. Express your shape and minimum points
3. 2 spades. Your diamonds are unexciting, your aim is the game in spades, if possible.
4. 2 spades. Reverses are off, bid your shape.
5. 3NT. Show your 15 to 17 count.
6. 3 clubs. You have no bid more descriptive. From your point of view, notrump will be the favored destination. But bid your shape because you have a partner with whom you are cooperating.
7. 4 clubs. Bypass 3NT to set course for slam.
8. 2NT. Balanced, minimum point range.
9. 3NT. Balanced, 15 to 17.
10. 2NT. Balanced 18 to 19. Partner thinks you have 12 to 14, so bid 4NT next to clarify.
11. 3 clubs. Showing your good 6-card suit is more descriptive than a notrump rebid.
12. 2 hearts. Bid your shape.
13. 3 diamonds. Marking time. Partner will drive toward 3NT unless your bid ignites slam aspirations.

2-Way & 3-Way Raises

Imagine that partner has opened 1 spade, and you have an opening hand with 3-card spade support. You have responded 2 clubs to show your values, planning to show your spade support at your next turn. After partner rebids 2NT, you have 2 ways to bid spades, either 3 spades or 4 spades. You decide which to bid based on the principle of fast arrival, leaping to game with minimal values, going slow with extra values.

But now imagine the same hand, only this time partner rebids 2 hearts. Now you have a choice of three ways to raise, either 2 spades or 3 spades or 4 spades. When this extra bid

becomes available, it means you have to clarify the meaning of your bids. What bid shows minimum values, which shows extra, and what meaning can we give to the third bid?

The two-over-one system has, in fact, sorted this situation out:

- with minimal values, bid 2 spades
- with extra values, jump to 3 spades
- bid 4 spades with 15 to 17 points concentrated in your 2 suits, and with no first or second round controls in the two unbid suits.

The three-way situation turns the principle of fast arrival off. Bidding low means less, and jumping means more. Here is a hand that would jump to 4 spades:

A97 Q4 984 AKQJ85

Extra values, no shortness, no ace or king in the two unbid suits. Notice that the values are all concentrated in two suits. When most of 15 to 17 points are concentrated in just two suits, losers in those suits become unlikely. If opener has good control of the unbid suits, slam may be possible. Without control of one of the unbid suits, slam is immediately forgotten.

Splinters

The term “splinter” is not, strictly speaking, a 2/1 term. It is a general bridge term that has application in 2/1. To have a “splinter” you must first have trump support for partner’s bid suit. If you have support AND if you also have a singleton or void, then you have a “splinter,” and you can make a “splinter bid.”

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	4♦	

This unusual jumpshift is a splinter bid. You have just told partner you have 4 hearts and a singleton or void in diamonds.

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Splinters, as they apply within the two-over-one agreement, are always marked by a jumpshift, and they tend to appear somewhat strange. They always show support for the suit that was just bid by partner. Look again at the sample we just saw. When partner bid 2 hearts, your splinter shows an acceptance of hearts as trump. The purpose of showing your shortness is to explore for slam.

Here are a few more splinters:

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	4♦	

You show 4 hearts and shortness in diamonds. Since you are making a slam try, you must have more than a minimum bid. In fact, counting your distribution points for the shortness, you should come close to a minimum of 15.

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♦	P
2♠	P	4♣	

Here you show club shortness and spade support. You need 3 spades to make this splinter. Even though you would have spade support holding only two spades, your ruffing value with 2 spades is so brief that a splinter isn't justified.

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♣	P
3♥			

This time it is opener who splinters. Would you understand that opener has clubs and a heart shortness? That is precisely the meaning of the bid. Doubtless opener has a very interesting hand, and you can count on extra values. When you hear a jumpshift within a 2/1 auction, it's a splinter.

Practice

Partner opens 1 heart, you respond 2 clubs, and partner rebids 2 diamonds. What do you bid?

1. A9 Q42 109 AQ8732
2. 65 AQ4 109 AKQ753
3. A5 AQ4 K9 K97532
4. 8 A5 KQ652 AJ986

You hold: K75 7 KJ85 AQ1074

5. What do you bid after:

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♠	P	?	

6. What do you bid after:

pard	opp	you	opp
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	?	

Discussion of Practice

1. 2 hearts. 3-card support, minimal values. Your 6-card doesn't look productive.
2. 4 hearts. 15-17, 3-card support, no aces or kings in unbid suits. These concentrated values imply productive clubs while disclaiming help in the two side suits.
3. 3 hearts. 15+ points, 3-card support.
4. 3 spades. Your splinter bid in spades suggests your slam values in a diamond contract.
5. 4 hearts. Show your singleton heart and your 3-card spade support simultaneously. Even though your HCP are in minimal range, your shape justifies your splinter bid.
6. 2 spades. Show 3-card support and minimal values. Don't take shape points when they are in one of partner's suits. If partner were now to show slam interest, you can be excited, but don't initiate slam interest.