

..

**2-over-1 Bidding System**  
**Jacoby 2NT**  
**Puppet Stayman**  
**(January 3, 2022)**

**2-over-1 Bidding System**

One of the most popular bidding systems of recent years is the 2-over-1 Forcing-to-Game system. The general approach is just as the name suggests: If responder's first bid is 2 of a new suit (1S by opener-2C, 2D, or 2H by responder), it sets up a forcing auction. The partnership must bid on to game level.

The main advantage in using the 2-over-1 system is that it saves bidding space. After making the initial 2-level response, responder doesn't have to jump to show forcing-to-game values. Because the auction can stay low, the opener and responder have more bidding room to exchange information below game level and to explore a possible slam.

One of the disadvantages is that there is no easy way to show many invitational hands of 10-11 HCP. To describe these type of hands, many players use the Forcing NT convention, which is a key part of the 2-over 1 convention. We will be looking in detail at the Forcing 1NT bids in the next lesson.

The 2-over-1 system is more complex than it may seem. Even though the basic principle is fairly straightforward, the auction can become quite complicated, especially when investigating slam contracts. Forcing notrump auctions can also become difficult unless both partners have a clear understanding of all the possible followup bids.

The summary below is a basic introduction to 2-over-1 agreements. But, there is much more to the system than I can cover in this lesson. If you are serious about learning the finer points, you may find the following books of help.

**Two Over One System by Mike Lawrence**  
**Bridge: 25 Steps in Learning 2/1**  
**2 Over 1 Game Force (The Official Better Bridge) by**  
**Audrey Grant and Eric Rodwell**  
**Understand 1NT Forcing by Marty Bergen**  
**Two-over-One Game Force by Max Hardy**

The 2/1 auctions are: 1D-2C, 1H-2C, 1H-2D, 1S-2C, 1S-2D, 1S-2H.

## Why Play 2/1?

2/1 offers the psychological reassurance that you'll never be accidentally dropped in a part score. 2/1 saves bidding space by curtailing the need for strong jump bids by either player. This extra space can be used to bid games and slams more precisely.

Let's look at the following auction using the 2/1 bidding system.

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
<b>AKQ1065</b>	<b>J43</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>AK1097</b>
<b>A92</b>	<b>Q85</b>
<b>863</b>	<b>AK</b>
1S	2H
2S	3S
4D	4H
4S	4NT*
5D**	5H***
6S	P

4NT\* = Keycard ask

5D\*\* = 3 keys (AK of spades and A of diamonds)

5H\*\*\* = Ask for queen of spades and outside king

6S = Shows queen of spades; but, no outside kings

By using the 2/1 bid of 2H, East initially establishes a game force. Once the spade fit is found, then the pair can investigate slam.

## Drawbacks of 2/1

Invitational hands are excluded from 2/1 responses. What do you do with them? When the auction begins with 1H or 1S, invitational hands get funneled in the 1NT Forcing Convention showing 6-11/12 instead of the standard 6-10 HCP.

The 1NT can create some potential challenges for the responder. The 1NT Forcing may not adequately describe responder's shape. You can no longer stop in a 1NT contract after your partner has opened a major. And, 1NT Forcing may require opener to make some awkward rebids, especially with balanced shapes. Hopefully, next week's lesson will clear up many of these problems for you.

Let's take a look at the following problematic-type hands:

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
KQ1087	A
K94	AQJ83
53	9742
A72	1064

The Bidding:        1S    1NT  
                          2C    ???

East initially responds with 1NT Forcing because his hand is too weak for a 2H game force bid. But, 1NT masks East's heart suit. Most likely the partnership is going to miss its 8-card heart fit.

A perfect bid to show this hand is known as **Bart**. After the 2C rebid by the opener, the responder rebids 2D (must be alerted) to show exactly 5 hearts. If he held 6 hearts, he would rebid 2H.

Another example:

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
AK653	107
K62	Q93
Q74	532
84	KQJ52

The Bidding:        1S    1NT  
                          2D    2S  
                          P

This time East bids 1NT Forcing with a lighter hand. West is stuck for a rebid. He can't pass in case East has invitational values. Lacking a suitable rebid, West rebids the awful diamond fragment. The contract ends in 2S which is a less-than-ideal contract. The best contract looks to be that of 1NT on this hand.

The two hands above illustrate why players are now using the 1NT Forcing bid as semi-forcing. With both of the above hands, the opener can pass 1NT since he holds a minimum of 12 HCP. His partner has not made a 2/1 game forcing bid. We will cover in detail the 1NT Forcing and Semi-forcing bids in our next lesson.

## JACOBY TWO NOTRUMP

The Jacoby 2NT Convention is an artificial game-forcing response to a 1H or 1S opening bid. The 2NT response shows 4+ trump support with about 13+ points. The bid asks partner to describe her hand further so that slam prospects can be judged accordingly.

Jacoby 2NT is intended for 5-card major systems that employ limit raises for game invitations. It fills the need for a game-forcing raise with unlimited strength. Although the bid does not occur that often, it is a very useful one.

### Opener's Rebids

**NOTE: Most of the bids must be alerted!**

After the auction begins 1H/1S-2NT, opener's rebids are:

3C = Singleton or void in clubs.

3D = Singleton or void in diamonds.

3H = If hearts are trumps, then this rebid shows 16+ points with slam interest. It asks responder to further describe his hand.

If spades are trumps, then this bid shows a singleton or void in hearts.

3S = If spades are trumps, then this rebid shows 16+ points with slam interest. It asks responder to further describe his hand.

If hearts are trumps, then this bid shows a singleton or void in spades.

3NT = This bid shows between 15-17 HCP and a balanced hand.

4C = 5+ clubs.

4D = 5+ diamonds.

4H = If hearts are trumps, then this rebid shows a minimum balanced hand (12-14 HCP). It is a signoff.

If spades are trumps, this bid shows 5+ hearts.

4S = If spades are trumps, then this rebid shows a minimum balanced hand (12-14). It is a signoff.

### **The Priority of Opener's Rebids**

- To show a 5-card side suit
- To show a singleton or void
- To bid 3NT with a balanced 15-17 HCP
- To jump to four of the agreed suit with 12-14 HCP
- To bid three of the agreed major with 16+ HCP

When the opener rebids a 5-card side suit, how good does it need to be? Most advanced players advocate some sort of standard. You probably don't want to bid the second suit holding something like Jxxxx and leave the responder guessing on how valuable his Kxx is in the side suit.

Larry Cohen recommends a “decent” second suit with the ace or the king. Otherwise, he would bid his singleton or void first. His approach is a practical one. When he promises at least one top honor in the side suit, it helps his partner to judge the fit between the two hands. With this understanding, it allows the opener to show a side suit more frequently.

Let's look at Example 1 below.

**Example 1.****Opener****Responder**

AKJ73

Q852

KJ

A732

\*bids must be alerted.

Q8642

K3

5

AJ9

The Bidding:

1S

2NT\*

3C\*

3H

4S

P

The opener foregoes bidding 4D because his 5-card diamond suit is so weak and not headed by either the ace or king. Thus, the opener's first priority reverts to showing his singleton/void in clubs.

The following examples further illustrate the possible rebids by the opener.

**Responder's Rebids**

- After any 3-level rebid by opener, responder can bid any suit to show a control, i.e., ace or king, void, etc.
- After ANY rebid by opener, 4NT is Keycard Blackwood if spades is the agreed suit. In addition, 4NT is Keycard Blackwood for hearts unless the pair plays Kickback; then, 4S would be keycard asking bid for hearts.

Let's look at some additional examples.

**Example 2.****Opener****Responder**

AK843

QJ52

A932

KQ

J

A862

1098

Q53

The Bidding:

1S

2NT\*

\*Bids have to be alerted.

3D\*

4D

4H

4S

P

The 1S opening promises 12+ HCP and 5+ spades, The Jacoby 2NT bid shows 13+ HCP and 4+ spades and is game forcing. The 3D rebid is showing a singleton or void in diamonds. The 4D bid is showing first-round diamond control. The 4H bid is showing a first-round heart control. The bid of 4S by the responder indicates a willingness to stop in game. The responder is implying concern over his club suit holding. NOTE: if the responder had held a club control, he would have bid 4C rather than 4D. The opener is now **Captain**. He has no extra values; nor, does he hold a club control. He passes the 4S bid.

<b>Example 3.</b>	<b><u>Opener</u></b>	<b><u>Responder</u></b>
	AJ984	K1052
	K3	QJ5
	KQ75	A10
	K6	A983

The Bidding:	1S	2NT*	*Bids must be alerted.
	3NT*	P	

With a balanced hand and 15-17 HCP and no singleton or void, the opener should rebid 3NT. The reason the opener did not start with 1NT initially is because his hand is only semi-balanced with two doubletons. The responder can now pass 3NT or bid 4S. He does not have the necessary HCP to consider an investigation of slam.

<b>Example 4.</b>	<b><u>Opener</u></b>	<b><u>Responder</u></b>
	AQJ862	K1095
	AK	Q98
	943	A10
	K8	AQ93

The Bidding:	1S	2NT*	*bids must be alerted
	3S*	4C	
	4H	4NT	
	5S	5NT	
	6C	6S/6N	

After the responder bids Jacoby 2NT over the opener's 1S bid, he rebids 3S to show extra values. The 4C bid by responder is a cuebid showing first-round control in clubs. The 4H bid by the opener shows first-round control in hearts. The responder can now explore for slam since he has the all important diamond control. The bid of 4NT is keycard for spades. The opener bids 5S to show two keys and the queen of spades. The bid of 5NT asks opener to show outside king. His bid of 6C shows the king of clubs. Now responder, the **Captain**, can place the contract in either 6S/6NT.

### **2NT by a Passed Hand**

Jacoby 2NT is OFF when the responder was originally a passed hand. In this situation, 2NT is a natural and nonforcing bid showing a balanced hand with 11-12 HCP.

### **2NT in Competition**

Jacoby 2NT is OFF when the opponents intervene over your partner's 1H/1S opening. If an opponent makes a takeout double of the 1H/1S opening, some players use the 2NT bid to show 4+ card support and a limit raise (Jordon 2NT). Others use a system known as BROMAD to show their holding in hearts/spades. Refer to the Jordon 2NT and BROMAD bids presented in the October 4<sup>th</sup> lesson.

If the opponents overcall your partner's 1H/1S, then you have available several bids to convey to your partner your holding in his suit, i.e., a simple cuebid shows 3+ trump support and a limit raise plus. It is the strongest bid you can make in support of your partner's heart/spade opening bid. (See the September 27<sup>th</sup> lesson on Competitive Bidding—the Negative Double.)



## PUPPET STAYMAN

Puppet Stayman is used by the responder when he has game values and wants to see if the 1NT or 2NT opener has either a four or five card major. Three situations exist when Puppet Stayman can be most useful:

2NT	3C	(Puppet)	Does not have to be alerted
2C	2D		
2NT	3C	(Puppet)	Does not have to be alerted
1NT	3C*	(Puppet)	Must be alerted

Looking first at the 2NT-3C sequence, the responder may hold one or two four-card majors. Or, he may just have three-card support for one or both majors. The opener's responses are as follows:

3D = one or both four card majors  
3H = 5 hearts  
3S = 5 spades  
3NT = no four or five card major

The advantage of all these bids is that the strong hand is always the declarer. Once the opener defines his hand, responder will pass or launch in a slam try depending on the strength of his hand. Let's look at the following examples in which your partner has opened 2NT:

Hand One:           xx  
                  AQ86  
                  xxx  
                  Qxxx

Bid 3C (Puppet) to see if your partner holds 4 hearts.

Hand Two:           Jx  
                  9xx  
                  xx  
                  KQ109xx

Bid 3C (Puppet) to see if your partner holds five hearts.

Hand Three:        KJxx  
                      xxx  
                      xxx  
                      K10x

Bid 3C (Puppet) to check for either the 4-4 spade fit or the 5-3 heart fit.

If the 2NT opener responds with 3D, he is showing either one or both four-card majors. The responder bids as follows:

3H = four spades  
3S = four hearts  
3NT = he does not have a four card major  
4D = he holds both four card majors

Hand Four:        Jx  
                      Kxxx  
                      xxx  
                      Axxx

If your partner bids 3D in response to your 3C (Puppet Stayman) bid, he is showing one or both majors. In the above hand, you should bid 3S which shows that you hold four hearts. Reverse the above spade and heart holdings and you would have bid 3H which shows four spades.

Hand Five:        Axxx  
                      Kxxx  
                      xxx  
                      xx

If your partner bids 3D in response to your 3C (Puppet Stayman) bid, he is showing one or both four card majors. In the above hand, you have both majors. You should bid 4D which asks the opener to set the contract in either 4H or 4S.

Many players are making a bid of 4C to show both majors and slam interest.

Hand Six:           Axxx  
                      K10xx  
                      KQx  
                      10x

The Bidding:       2NT:3C\*:3D\*:4C:4D\*

If the 2NT opener bids 4D over your 4C query, he, too, is interested in making a slam try. His bid of 4D asks you (the responder) to bid 4H. Then a bid of 4S = Kickback for hearts; a bid of 4NT = keycard for spades. The bidding proceeds naturally to 5H/5S or to a 6H/6S slam. If the 2NT opener simply bids 4H or 4S over your 4C bid, he is showing no interest in slam. You should pass unless you hold extra values.

Hand Seven:        Kxx  
                      K10x  
                      1098  
                      AQxx

In response to your 3C (Puppet Stayman) bid, the opener shows either a five card heart suit or five card spade suit, the bidding proceeds naturally. You can sign off in 4H or 4S. Or, in the hand above, you should make a slam try. A bid of 4S over 3H is keycard for a heart slam; while, 4NT over a response of 3S is keycard for a spade slam.

**NOTE: If the bidding sequence is as follows: 2C – 2D – 2NT, a bid of 3C is Puppet Stayman asking for a four or five card major. The bidding proceeds as in the above examples for the 2NT – 3C bid.**

Finally, Puppet Stayman is quite useful after your partner opens 1NT (15-17 HCP) if you hold one of the following type hands. **NOTE: your hand must hold a minimum of 10+ HCP to make this bid.**

- 4-3 in spades and hearts
- 3-4 in spades and hearts
- 3-3 in spades and hearts
- 3-2 in spades and hearts
- 2-3 in spades and hearts

NOTE: If the 1NT opener holds 15-16 HCP and a five-card major, he usually opens with 1NT. If he holds 17 HCP, he normally opens with one of the major. **If you hold both four card majors, it is better to use regular Stayman (2C).**

The 1NT opener can make one of the following responses\* to your 3C Puppet Stayman bid:

- 3D = one or both four card majors
- 3H = five hearts
- 3S = five spades
- 3NT = no four or five card major

**\*All of these bids must be ALERTED, including the 3C bid.**

Once the responder knows his partner's holding, he will proceed as in the above examples. He is the Captain.

\*\*\*\*\*

Below is one final bidding sequence which illustrates how valuable the Puppet Stayman bid is in reaching a slam contract.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
AQ	K86
AJ5	K76
KJ1073	Q9
KQ5	AJ843

<b>The Bidding:</b>	2NT	3C
	3NT	???

Partner opens 2NT. When you bid 3C (Puppet Stayman), he responds 3NT (must be alerted) showing no four or five card major. With 13 HCP, you should bid 6NT. You know that your side has a minimum of 33 HCP. No lead by the opponents should keep this hand from making 6NT.

NEXT Week:        Index of 2021 Zoom Lessons  
                      One Notrump Forcing/Semiforcing  
                      Concluding Remarks