

2-OVER-1 GAME FORCE - WINTER 2014 - WEEK 1  
2-OVER-1 BIDDING CONVERSATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

When a partnership follows standard bidding guidelines and opener makes a one level suit opening bid, responder can make a *cheap response*<sup>1</sup> in a new suit with as few as 10 points. In the bidding sequence  $1\heartsuit \rightarrow P \rightarrow 2\spadesuit$ , responder's new suit  $2\spadesuit$  response is a natural unlimited bid that promises at least 10 points and forces opener to bid for at least one round. At this point in the auction

- ✓ at least one of the partners does not yet know if there is an eight card trump fit.
- ✓ at least one of the partners does not yet know if the partnership has the combined point strength to drive to a game.

Because of the low 10 point threshold for the two level new suit bid, the remaining auction:

- can get too high too quickly without the partnership having the fit or point strength to make the contract.
- often uses bidding space just to determine if responder wants to invite or force opener to bid a game. Finding the best *strain*<sup>2</sup> (denomination) often gets less attention.
- leaves little or no bidding space below the game level to explore slam possibilities.

**EXAMPLE**

Suppose your partner opens  $1\spadesuit$  and you hold:

*You (responder):* ♠Q8 ♥K83 ♦KJ7 ♣A9872

You have 14 declarer points and know the partnership belongs in a game. Using standard guidelines you would respond with a new suit forcing  $2\clubsuit$  which describes an unlimited hand with at least 10 points and at least four clubs. Suppose your partner rebids  $2\heartsuit$  to limit the hand to 13-15 points, at least five spades, at least four hearts, and four cards split between diamonds and clubs. You do not have three-card spade support or four-card heart support. But partner could have six spades or five hearts. So what do you do?

- ✓ If you rebid an invitational  $2NT$  to deny support, your partner might pass and your partnership would miss a game.
- ✓ If you jump to a sign-off  $3NT$  and partner has a sixth spade or a fifth heart, you could miss an eight card major suit fit.
- ✓ If you jump to a sign-off  $4\heartsuit$  or  $4\spadesuit$  you might force your partner to play with a seven card trump fit.

<sup>1</sup> *cheap response*: A response at the lowest possible level. For example,  $1\heartsuit \rightarrow 2\clubsuit$ .

<sup>2</sup> *strain*: The component of a contract bid that designates the proposed trump suit or no trump. For example, the strain is diamonds for a  $2\spadesuit$  bid and the strain is no trump for a  $3NT$  bid.

**2-Over-1** bidding guidelines increase the strength threshold for a cheap response in a new suit at the two level from 10 points to 13 points and, because the partnership has enough points for a game, opener is forced to keep bidding until at least a game is reached.

Using **2-Over-1** bidding guidelines, you can confidently rebid **2NT** because you know partner will make another bid which should clarify the situation and allow you to bid the best game contract.

### EXAMPLE

Now suppose your partner opens **1♠** and you hold:

<i>You (responder):</i> ♠75   ♥AKQ43   ♦A96   ♣932
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You have 13 declarer points and know the partnership belongs in a game. Using standard guidelines you would respond with a new suit forcing **2♥** which describes an unlimited hand with at least 10 points and at least four hearts. Suppose your partner rebids **2NT** to limit the hand to 13-15 points with exactly five spades and less than four hearts. But, partner could have three hearts. So what do you do?

- ✓ If you rebid an invitational **3♥** to show the fifth heart, you limit your hand to 10-12 points, partner might pass, and your partnership might miss a game.
- ✓ If you rebid a sign-off **3NT** you might miss an eight card heart fit and if partner has a short club suit with a weak stopper you might get set.
- ✓ If you jump to a sign-off **4♠** you force your partner to play with a seven-card trump fit and the spades in your hand will offer no help.

**2-Over-1** bidding guidelines require at least five hearts to respond a **2-Over-1 2♥**. This means your partner's **2NT** rebid would describe a hand with exactly five spades, less than three hearts, and no four-card minor so your partner would have a **5♠-2♥-3♦-3♣** shape. Knowing that the partnership does not have a major suit trump fit, you know **3NT** is probably the best game try.

## 2-OVER-1 RESPONSE SEQUENCES

**2-Over-1** is based on the premise that:

An Opening Bid + An Opening Bid = At Least a Game
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There are only six possible bidding sequences that have a cheap response of a new suit at the two level:

OPENER (First or Second Seat)			OPPONENT	RESPONDER (Third or Fourth Seat)		
BID	STRENGTH	SHAPE		BID	STRENGTH	SHAPE
<b>1♠</b>	13-21	5+ ♠	<b>PASS</b>	<b>2♥</b>	13+	5+ ♥
				<b>2♦</b>	13+	4+ ♦
				<b>2♣</b>	13+	(3)4+ ♣
<b>1♥</b>	13-21	5+ ♥	<b>PASS</b>	<b>2♦</b>	13+	4+ ♦
				<b>2♣</b>	13+	(3)4+ ♣
<b>1♦</b>	13-21	4+ ♦	<b>PASS</b>	<b>2♣</b>	13+	(4)5+ ♣

Because a *2-Over-1* sequence implies a partnership total of at least 26 points, a *2-Over-1* response is an unlimited *marathon bid* that forces opener to keep bidding until at least a game contract is reached. Thus the name *2-Over-1 Game Force*.

Note that *2-Over-1* does not apply when:

✓ **Opener opened 1♣.**

A two level response of a new suit after a 1♣ opening is a jump shift response. All of the cheap responses of a new suit are at the one level.

✓ **Responder is a passed hand (failed to open in first or second seat).**

The pass has already limited responder's strength to 0-12 points so it is not an opening bid facing an opening bid.

✓ **Responder's right hand opponent overcalls or doubles the opening bid.**

Unless responder has a good five-card minor to bid at the two level, it is better to show the major suit at the one level instead of the point strength at the two level. Since the new suit response is forcing for one round, responder will be able to show the extra strength on the next turn.

Responder with 13 or more points should not make a *2-Over-1* response when:

✓ **Responder can make a standard one level major suit response.**

✓ **Responder can make a more descriptive conventional response.** For example, responder might have four-card support for opener's major suit. With a good five-card or longer side suit, responder should make a *2-Over-1* response. Otherwise responder should bid a *Jacoby 2NT*, which is also an unlimited marathon bid, to describe the strength **and** trump support.

*A 2-Over-1 response resolves the minimum bidding level but does not resolve the strain. The Jacoby 2NT resolves both the minimum bidding level and the strain.*

**EXAMPLE**

Assume that your partner opened the bidding in first or second seat, your right hand opponent passed and your partnership has agreed to play *2-Over-1*. Suppose you hold:

*You (responder):*   ♠A T 4   ♥K Q 8 3   ♦9 2   ♣K Q 4 2

What is the appropriate response after your partner:

- **Opened 1♠:** Respond a *2-Over-1 2♣* to describe a hand with at least 13 points and at least four clubs. This marathon bid is forcing to game. You can show your spade support or the four-card heart suit on the next turn.
- **Opened 1♥:** Since you do not have a good five-card side suit, respond a *Jacoby 2NT* to describe a hand with at least 13 points and at least four-card heart support. This marathon bid is forcing to game.
- **Opened 1♦:** Respond a standard *1♥* to describe a hand with at least 6 points and at least four hearts. This new suit bid is forcing for one round.

*You can not respond with a 2-Over-1 2♥ because you do not have five hearts.*

*Although a 2-Over-1 2♣ would show the strength, explore for a major suit fit first. You can show your strength on the next turn.*

### OPENER'S REBID AFTER 2-OVER-1

After a *2-Over-1* response, the partnership can focus on finding the best strain because the minimum contract level has been established. Opener's priorities are:

- **Support responder's suit:**
  - ✓ Raise responder's hearts with three or more hearts.  
*Responder must have at least five hearts to make a 2-Over-1 2♥ response.*
  - ✓ Raise responder's minor with four-card support.  
*Without a better alternative, raise responder's minor with strong three-card support.*
- **Show a second suit:**
  - ✓ Bid a new five-card suit.
  - ✓ Bid a new four-card suit at the two level.  
*Do not bid a very weak suit (one high card point or less).*
  - ✓ Bid a new four-card suit at the three level only if the hand has extra strength.
- **Rebid a six-card or longer suit.**
- **Bid notrump:**
  - ✓ Bid 2NT with a balanced hand and a stopper in at least one of the unbid suits.

Given a choice between bidding a new four-card suit or rebidding a six-card suit:

- ✓ With extra values, bid the new four-card suit and rebid the six-card suit later.
- ✓ With a minimum opener, rebid the six-card suit.

There will be many hands with a five-card major that do not meet the requirements for any of the suggested rebids. In that case, rebid the five-card major.

### EXAMPLE

Suppose you opened **1♠** with:

♠ A K 9 3 2	♥ A 4 3	♦ J 9 8	♣ T 4
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What is the appropriate rebid after partner:

- **Responded 2♦**: Without a sixth spade and lacking support in diamonds, rebid **2NT** to show a balanced hand with a stopper in either hearts or clubs.
- **Responded 2♥**: Since partner must have five hearts to respond a *2-Over-1 2♥*, rebid **3♥** to show your support for partner's hearts.
- **Responded 3♠**: The limit raise promises four spades with 10-12 points. Without extra values, pass.

### EXAMPLE

Suppose you opened **1♥** with:

♠ 8 3	♥ A K 8 5 4 2	♦ K Q J 9	♣ 6
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What is the appropriate rebid after partner:

- **Responded 2♣**: Rebid **2♦** to show the good four-card diamond suit instead of the extra length in hearts. You can show the extra heart on the next turn.
- **Responded 2♦**: Rebid **3♦** to show support for partner's diamonds. You can show the extra heart on the next turn.

### EXAMPLE

Suppose you opened **1♠** with:

♠ A K T 7 6	♥ 9 5	♦ A Q	♣ 9 7 6 4
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What is the appropriate rebid after partner:

- **Responded 2♥**: Rebid **2NT** to describe a balanced hand with a stopper in either clubs or diamonds (or both). This hand is not strong enough to show the weak club suit at the three level.

## RESPONDER'S REPLY TO OPENER'S REBID

Because opener's rebid should provide a good description of opener's hand, responder should be able to decide on the appropriate strain. Responder's priorities are:

- **Agree on a trump suit (if not already decided):**

If opener rebid the opening suit to show extra length:

- ✓ Raise an opening major with two-card support ( $6 + 2 = 8$ ).
- ✓ Raise an opening minor with three-card support ( $5 + 3 = 8$ ).

If opener rebid a new suit to show at least four cards:

- ✓ Raise an opening major with three-card support ( $5 + 3 = 8$ ).
- ✓ Raise the new suit with four-card support ( $4 + 4 = 8$ ).

An eight-card major suit fit is often a better strain than a nine-card minor suit fit.

- **Rebid a six-card or longer suit.**

If opener did not support responder's suit, responder can rebid the suit to show extra length.

- **Bid no trump if there is no major suit fit.**

Responder must have stoppers in any unbid suit(s).

*Even if there is a minor suit fit, a no trump game (nine tricks) is usually better than a minor suit game (eleven tricks).*

- **Bid a fourth suit.**

If all else fails, bid the fourth suit to ask opener for more information.

*Opener must realize that **either** responder has a genuine two suited hand **or** responder had no other useful bid.*

## EXAMPLE

Consider the following *2-Over-1* auction. What is your reply for each of these hands?

2-OVER-1 AUCTION				SOUTH HAND 1	SOUTH HAND 2	SOUTH HAND 3
North	East	South	West			
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	♠ Q 3	♠ K Q 3	♠ 7 3
2♥	Pass	??		♥ T 7 5 4	♥ A 7	♥ 8
				♦ A Q 6 4	♦ A Q T 9 3 2	♦ A K Q 9 3
				♣ A Q 5	♣ 8 3	♣ A K J 9 6

- **Hand 1:** Rebid 3♥ to show the eight-card heart fit.
- **Hand 2:** Rebid 2♠ to show the major suit trump fit. That takes priority over showing the extra length in a minor suit.
- **Hand 3:** Rebid 3♣, the fourth suit. Partner must remember that *either* you have a good club suit *or* you had no other useful bid. You can clarify your shape by bidding clubs on the next round.

**EXAMPLE**

Consider the following *2-Over-1* auction. What is your reply for each of these hands?

2-OVER-1 AUCTION				HAND 4	HAND 5	HAND 6
West	North	East	South	♠ K 9 7	♠ 8 4	♠ 9 8 3
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣	♥ J 4	♥ K 5	♥ K 6
Pass	2♦	Pass	??	♦ Q T 4	♦ A 7 6	♦ A Q 7
				♣ A K T 9 8	♣ A J T 8 6 5	♣ K J 9 8 2

- **Hand 4:** Rebid **2NT** to show the balanced hand with a stopper in spades, the unbid suit, and deny three-card heart support, and four-card diamond support.
- **Hand 5:** Rebid **3♣** to show the extra length and deny three-card heart support and four-card diamond support.
- **Hand 6:** Rebid **2♠**, the fourth suit, to deny three-card heart support and four-card diamond support. Without a stopper in spades, you can not bid no trump.

**PRINCIPLE OF FAST ARRIVAL**

When making a bid that signals agreement on a trump fit, responder should use the:

**Principle of Fast Arrival**

When a partnership that is committed to a game has found a trump fit:

- ✓ Bidding quickly to game shows no interest in slam.
- ✓ Bidding slowly to game shows an interest in slam.

Although fast arrival can be used by opener, responder is usually the first to have a chance to apply this principle.

**EXAMPLE**

Consider the following *2-Over-1* auctions:

RESPONDER FAST ARRIVAL				RESPONDER SLOW ARRIVAL				OPENER FAST ARRIVAL			
North	East	South	West	North	East	South	West	North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	4♠		2♦	Pass	2♠		4♥			

- *Left Auction:* Responder's jump to **4♠** is *fast arrival* that describes a hand with minimal strength, three-card spade support, and no interest in slam. An opener with extra strength can continue the auction.

- *Middle Auction:* Responder's cheap rebid of **2♠** is *slow arrival* that describes a hand with extra strength (or shape), three-card spade support, and an interest in slam.
- *Right Auction:* Opener's jump to **4♥** is *fast arrival* that describes a hand with minimal strength, three-card heart support, and no interest in slam. A responder with extra strength can continue the auction.

## COMPLETING THE AUCTION

Once there has been agreement on a trump suit below the game level, the bid of another suit is a control-showing bid with an interest in slam. This topic will be covered in detail in the third week of the course.

EXAMPLE 1				EXAMPLE 2				EXAMPLE 3			
♠ A J 8 6 4 ♥ K Q 7 6 ♦ 5 3 ♣ Q 7				♠ Q 6 5 ♥ Q 4 ♦ 6 4 ♣ A K Q J 9 5				♠ A K J 8 2 ♥ 9 8 4 2 ♦ 4 2 ♣ A 5			
North	East	South	West	South	West	North	East	West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
♠ K Q T 7 ♥ 5 2 ♦ T 8 ♣ A K J 5 2				♠ K J 7 ♥ A K T 8 5 ♦ Q 5 2 ♣ 4 3				♠ 5 3 ♥ A K 7 6 ♦ A J 5 ♣ K 7 6 3			

### EXAMPLE 1

- ✓ South **2♣** → show excellent five-card club suit instead of Jacoby **2NT**
- ✓ North **4♠** → no extra strength (fast arrival).

### EXAMPLE 2

- ✓ South **2NT** → balanced with stopper in diamonds or spades.
- ✓ South **3NT** → prefer no trump with no extra strength (fast arrival).

### EXAMPLE 3

- ✓ South **2♣** → can not bid hearts with only four.
- ✓ North **4♥** → no extra strength (fast arrival).