

# Essential Two Over One



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Two Over One is the most popular natural system of bidding used in North America by competitive ACBL players. There are two forms of 2/1. The first form is that a non-jump 2/1 bid by an unpassed hand with no interference from the opponents is an unconditional game forcing bid. The second form of 2/1 says that if the responder rebids their 2/1 suit, the game force is canceled and the responder has shown only invitation values.

Form 1, 2/1 is 100% GF

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣

South's 3♣ bid is unlimited and North must not pass until a game level contract has been reached.

Form 2, 2/1 is not 100% GF

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣

South's 3♣ bid is limited to an invitational only hand and North may pass the 3♣ bid.

Form 1, a pure 2/1 game forcing auction, is preferable over form 2. The second form will create some very awkward bidding situations in several circumstances, while the first form only has an awkward problem when the responder has an invitational hand with a six card suit that is lower ranking than the opening suit. In other words, it is less common to have a six card suit and invitational values when it is right to stop below game than it is to have a game forcing hand and, in many cases, one that can upgrade to a game force with a six card suit.

The 2/1 game forcing auctions are:

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	2♣

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♣

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	2♦

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♣

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♥

The requirements for a bid to be “2/1” game forcing is that neither you or partner have previously passed, either you or your partner has made a one level opening bid and the opening bid was not overcalled. As long as these requirements are met, any of the previously mentioned auctions are 100% game forcing. (We do not condone form 2 of 2/1.) This means that you cannot make one of these 2/1 bids unless you have a true game forcing hand. It is correct to bypass a four card major suit in order to make a 2/1 bid.

If you do not have a game forcing hand and you can make a natural bid of one of a suit, such a bid will be correct 99% of the time. (Nothing is 100%.) If you have support for partner’s suit, you may give your partner various raises that are not game forcing. These raises may be conventional, such as Inverted Minors or Bergen Raises, or they may be simple, natural raises. If you do not have a game forcing hand, cannot bid one of a suit naturally, nor do you have support for your partner’s opening suit, you may bid 1NT or 2NT over partner’s one of a minor opening. Both of these bids, over one of a minor, deny holding a four card or longer major, and show sign off values (10 or fewer hcp), or invitational values (10-12hcp) respectively. If partner has opened one of a major, you will be forced to bid 1NT over partner’s one of a major opening. This bid may include hands that are invitational or as weak as five points. This bid is called Forcing 1NT or Semi-Forcing 1NT.

### FORCING & SEMI-FORCING 1NT

1NT is natural, non-forcing

West	North	East	South
	1♣/♦	Pass	1NT

1NT is **NOT** natural

West	North	East	South
	1♥/♠	Pass	1NT

2NT is natural, invitational

West	North	East	South
	1♣/♦	Pass	1NT

1NT over a one of a major opening is either Forcing 1NT or Semi-Forcing 1NT. The difference between the two is evident in their titles. Over a Forcing 1NT, the opening bidder must rebid if the opponent has not interfered with the auction, no matter how poor their hand is. Over a Semi-Forcing 1NT, the opener may pass 1NT if

they hold a relatively balanced hand and values that would not accept any invitation to game. Forcing 1NT, as it was originally written, was able to contain hands that held game forcing values. That is not true today. Neither Forcing 1NT or Semi-Forcing 1NT may contain game forcing hands but both may contain invitational hands or a hand with as little as a bare Ace. There are advantages and disadvantages to playing either method. However, a Forcing 1NT bid completely gives up the option of playing in 1NT and this is something we are not willing to give up. The downside to playing Semi-Forcing 1NT is that you may end up playing in 1NT when you belonged in two of a major. We recommend playing 1NT over one of a major as Semi-Forcing, meaning the opening bidder may pass when they do not have a convenient rebid **AND**, they would decline any invitation to game.

Semi-Forcing 1NT will be bid over partner's one of a major when you do not have a game forcing hand and you have no other immediate bid available that can describe your non-game forcing hand. If partner chooses to bid over your Semi-Forcing 1NT, you have some options. Bidding a new suit at the two level, below partner's original suit, is natural and intended as sign off. You may take a preference to two of partner's major, which will often be made with only two cards, you may raise partner's second suit, or you may bid 2NT as invitational. If partner opens 1♠ and rebids 2♥ or 2♦, you need four Hearts or Diamonds to raise the suit. If partner rebids 2♣, you need five Clubs to raise to 3♣. You can show invitational values and a hand holding support for partner's opening major by jump rebidding three of the major.

South is invitational with  
4+♦/♥.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦/♥	Pass	3♦/♥

South is invitational with five  
or more Clubs.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♣

South is invitational.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣♦♥	Pass	2NT

South is signing off.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦/♥

The opening bidder needs four or more Hearts or Diamonds to rebid 2♥ or 2♦ over a Semi-Forcing NT, but is expected to have as few as only two Clubs for a 2♣ rebid. The exception to this is if the opening bid was 1♥ and the opening bidder holds exactly four Spades, five Hearts, three Diamonds, and one Club. With this hand, the opening bidder will pass 1NT Semi-Forcing if they would not accept an invitation to Hearts, or they will choose to bid either 2♣ or 2♦, if they do not have enough values to reverse into 2♠. We prefer being one card short of our four card expected length in Diamonds instead of having to bid 2♣ with a singleton, so we prefer 2♦ over 2♣ in this one, unique, scenario, allowing for only a three card Diamond suit. In any event, any 2♣ rebid by the opener, over 1NT, is announceable as could be short. 1NT Semi-Forcing is also announceable.

### THE 2/1 BID – LENGTH REQUIREMENTS

There are minimum length requirements for the 2/1 bid and these requirements are that a 2/1 bid in Hearts must contain five or more Hearts. A 2/1 bid in Diamonds must contain four or more Diamonds. A 2/1 bid in Clubs must contain three or more Clubs. A 2/1 minor suit bid does not deny holding a four card major suit but will typically deny holding a five card major unless the 2/1 bidder has a five card major and a six card minor with game forcing values.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♣

South is promising three or more Clubs. This does not deny holding four Hearts.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦

South is promising four or more Diamonds. This does not deny holding four Hearts.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♥

South is promising five or more Hearts.

An interesting hand and auction, when referring to minimum length requirements, is when the opening bid is 1♦ and the responder

holds exactly four Spades, four Hearts, three Diamonds, and two Clubs with a game forcing or better hand. I have always taught that it is correct to set up the game forcing auction first by making a 2/1 bid in 2♣, then searching for a four/four major suit fit later. This is the purpose of 2/1, to create slow and intelligent auction. However, I have recently been informed that this treatment is not General Convention Chart approved because any natural response to an opening bid must contain a minimum of three cards in the suit. The work around to this rule is to alert a 2♣, 2/1 bid, over 1♦ as artificial and game forcing which is General Convention Chart approved. However, treat it as a natural bid and continue the auction with natural bids. (The ACBL is a silly beast when it comes to legality and technicality.)

### RESPONDING TO A 2/1 BID

#### OPENER'S REBID

There are two schools of thought to consider when deciding on how the opener should rebid after a 2/1 response. The first rebids the originally opened suit only with six or more cards in that suit. The second school teaches that rebidding the originally opened suit does not imply extra length in the suit. The second school of thought uses the rebid as a waiting bid.

#### School 1

Rebidding a suit promises 6+

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠		

Promises 6+♠'s

#### School 2

Rebidding a suit may be waiting.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠		

Only promises 5♠'s

#### School 1

Opener's rebid of their own suit promises six or more cards, Rebidding 2NT does not promise stoppers in the unbid suits. Raising partner's minor suit 2/1 bid does not promise extras. Rebidding three of a lower ranking suit than the 2/1 response does not promise extra length or strength. If the opening bid was 1♥, the opener's rebid of 2♠ does not promise extra values.

### School 1

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♣		

North is promising 6+♠'s

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT		

North is not promising Club or Heart stoppers. North denies four Heart's

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣		

North is promising four Clubs, may be a minimal hand.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦		

North is promising four Diamonds, may be a minimal hand.

### School 2

Opener's rebid of their own suit does not promise six or more cards, Rebidding 2NT does promise stoppers in the unbid suits. Raising partner's minor suit 2/1 bid does promise extras. Rebidding three of a lower ranking suit than the 2/1 response does promise extra length or strength. If the opening bid was 1♥, the opener's rebid of 2♠ promises extra values. (15+hcp)

### School 2

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♣		

North is promising only 5♠'s.  
This is a default bid.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT		

North is promising stoppers.  
North denies four Hearts.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣		

North is promising four Clubs with extra values or shape. (5/5 works.)

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦		

North is promising four Diamonds with extra values.



As you can see, school 1 is much less restrictive on the opener's rebid after a 2/1 response while school 2 expects the opener's response to mean something. We prefer school 2 over 1, pun intended.

## SCHOOL TWO

### THE OPENER'S REBID

The opener's rebid of two of the opened suit after a 2/1 response is a waiting bid. This does not promise a sixth card in the major but serves as a temporizing bid when the opener does not have a four card suit at the two level they can show, does not have stoppers in the unbid suits, nor do they have extra values (15+hcp, or extra distribution, 5/5+) to bid a suit past the two level. If the opener does rebid 2NT, they are promising stoppers in both unbid suits. If the opener rebids any suit at the three level, they are promising extra strength or length. The following is used if the opening suit was one of either major. Two level rebids by the opener do not promise extra values.

#### THE 2NT REBID

The 2NT rebid promises stoppers in the unbid suits and it also has a split range. It shows either the minimum balanced hand, 11-14hcp, or 18+hcp. The responder will assume you have the weaker range until you show extra values by making a slam try later in the auction.

#### THE 3NT REBID

The 3NT rebid shows a good 15hcp to 17hcp. This fills in the gap of the 2NT rebid.

#### REBIDDING THREE OF A MINOR (NOT A JUMP)

Rebidding three of either minor, whether or not a raise of partner's suit, shows extra length (5/5+), or extra strength (15+hcp). Raising a 2♣ 2/1 bid should always promise five card support.

#### JUMP REBIDDING A NEW SUIT

When the opener makes a single level jump into any new suit lower than three of their major, this shows a hand that is 5/5+ in the two suits with a good suit quality.

## JUMP REBIDDING THREE OF THE MAJOR

Jumping to three of the opened major suit shows a solid (AKQJ) six card or longer suit, and asks partner to show their first Ace or King, up the line. It sets that major suit as trump.

## JUMP REBIDDING FOUR OF THE MAJOR

This shows a long, broken major suit (not solid), that was slightly too strong to open four of the major. In other words, this bid shows a hand that has a four of a major, preemptive opening bid, with an extra Ace or King. It's show about 12-14hcp.

## REBIDDING AFTER A 1♦/2♣, 2/1 AUCTION

The opener's rebid after in this auction does not follow the same rules as would apply if the opening was one of a major. Bidding two of any suit higher does not promise extra values or distribution. Bidding 2NT or 3NT shows the same point count as if the opening bid had been a major but they do not promise stoppers in the unbid suits.

### THE RESPONDER'S REBID

The responder's rebid is much less restrictive than the opener's rebid. The 2NT and 3NT rebids are the same ranges as the opener's No Trump rebids. 2NT is the split range 12-14hcp or 18+, and a jump to 3NT shows 15-17hcp. Both No Trump rebids deny three card support for an opening major suit, if applicable, and they deny four cards in a major suit higher than opener's rebid. 1♠/2♣ - 2♦/2NT denies four Hearts. 1♠/2♣ - 2♠/2NT does not deny four Hearts. The opening bidder would have shown a four card Heart suit over the 2/1 bidder's 2♣, had they held four Hearts, so you will not need to show that you have four Hearts.

## REBIDDING PARTNER'S MAJOR SUIT

Rebidding in partner's opening major suit at the cheapest level promises three card support and may have a minimal game forcing hand. The common practice of jumping to four of partner's major suit to show a minimal game forcing hand is garbage. (I would use stronger language if I thought no one would complain.) The purpose of 2/1 is to have slow, intelligent, auctions. Jumping multiple levels in the auction to show weak holdings will preempt the opening bidder

when they have a strong hand. If this used to be your practice, please stop doing this. Jumping to three of partner's major suit, when possible, shows a strong, three card, supporting hand. This asks partner to start cue bidding.

#### BIDDING ANY NEW SUIT

Bidding a new at the cheapest level when only two suits have been bid is natural and asking partner for a further description of their hand. Bidding the fourth suit, when three suits have already been bid, is artificial and asks partner to bid No Trump if they can stop the fourth suit.

#### DEALING WITH INTERFERENCE AFTER A 2/1 AUCTION

If the opponents have the audacity to interfere after your 2/1 auction, bidding is relatively straight forward. Any and all doubles by either opener or responder are penalty oriented. Continuing the auction with any suit bid is natural, as is bidding any level of No Trump. Cue bidding the opponent's overcall shows a strong supporting hand for partner's suit while making a direct raise shows a potentially minimal hand but with good support. If the opponents make a takeout double over the 2/1 response, a redouble by the opener suggests setting up penalty oriented doubles of anything the opponents bid after that.

Passing after interference of a 2/1 auction is forcing. Since 2/1 is a game forcing bid, you and partner are not allowed to pass out an auction below game. This includes when the opponents make an overcall in your auction. You will either find a game contract or you will double the opponents for penalty. When the opening bidder makes a forcing pass over the opponent's interference after a 2/1 bid, this tells their partner they have no clear bid available. This means that they do not have a sixth card in their opening suit to show, they cannot set up a penalty auction, and they do not have good stoppers in the opponent's suit to make an appropriate No Trump bid.

Over a forcing pass, the responder can double for penalties, bid any suit naturally, bid any appropriate level of No Trump if they have good stoppers, or cue bid the opponent's suit asking the opening bidder to bid No Trump if they can help stop the suit. (This cue bid, asking for help stopping the opponent's suit, only works when the cue bid can be made at the three level. Four level cue bids are a different beast entirely.)

### Hand 1

West	North	East	South
—	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♦	Pass	3N	All pass
North			
♠JT962			
♥T94			
♦KT43			
♣4			
West		East	
♠Q7		♠AK5	
♥J		♥K8652	
♦AQ76		♦852	
♣KQT932		♣A8	
South			
♠843			
♥AQ73			
♦J9			
♣J765			

East rebids 2♥ as nothing else fits. West should rebid 3♦ as the most natural description of the hand. East with two sure stoppers in the fourth suit has a clear 3NT bid which ends the auction.

South will probably lead the ♠8. The percentage play for winning five♣ tricks is to play the ♣A and then finesse the Jack by playing towards the Ten. This nets five Club tricks whenever the ♣J is singleton and when it is on-side along with one, two or three spot cards.

It loses to playing for the drop when the ♣J is offside doubleton or tripleton. There is no reason on the auction or the play of the hand to make East think South is short in Clubs nor is it better to have South on lead than North, so taking the percentage play is clearly correct.

If South chooses to lead the ♦J, an aggressive but reasonable choice, East should duck the lead and, probably also duck the ♦9 on trick 2.

Things to remember from this Hand

Playing 2/1, there is no reason for East to bid 2NT over 2♣ without stoppers in each of the unbid suits. Take it slowly when unsure of the final destination.

Hand 2

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT!	All Pass	
North			
♠AT9			
♥K85			
♦KT964			
♣T9			
West		East	
♠QJ2		♠8763	
♥62		♥AT4	
♦QJ3		♦872	
♣KJ743		♣A65	
South			
♠K54			
♥QJ973			
♦A5			
♣Q82			

South opens 1♥ and, if West passes, North will respond with a semi-forcing 1NT. South with a balanced minimum which would pass a limit jump raise should pass 1NT.

If West balances with a double on the second round, North can bid 2♥ to show their three card limit raise hand.

East will probably lead either a high Spade or a low Club. On either lead, North should end up with seven tricks.

If West balances with a double, South should end up in 3♥ for a good score North-South.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

The 1NT response to a major is semi-forcing. Open should pass it only with a balanced or semi-balanced hand which would have passed a three card limit jump raise. While occasionally, as on this hand, if the opponent’s pass you out in 1NT you would do better in the major, but you gain much more often than you lose. Also, when playing 1NT would be a “loser,” the opponents might balance.

### Hand 3

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
North			
♠J83			
♥K65			
♦T86			
♣J653			
West			East
♠K6			♠AQ42
♥AQ72			♥T83
♦KJ74			♦Q52
♣T97			♣AQ4
South			
♠T975			
♥J94			
♦A93			
♣K82			

With West opening 1♦, East is correct to respond with a 2/1 2♣ bid before showing the four card Spade suit. A 4/4 Spade fit can still be found later in the auction. West's rebid of 2♥ promises four Hearts but does not show extra values. No two level rebid by the opener or responder shows extra values after a 2/1 auction. East now rebids 2♠ to see if there is a 4/4 Spade fit. (It is possible that West has a 4432 distribution.) When West rebids 2NT, denying a Spade fit, East

has an easy bid of 3NT.

North does not have a good lead available with E/W bidding all four suits naturally so will probably lead the ♣3, fourth from longest and strongest. (With no good lead available, it is usually best to lead through one of the dummy's suits.) West should call for a low Club off dummy and now three Spades, one Heart, three Diamonds, and two Clubs should be routine.

### Things to remember from this Hand

A 2/1 bid should be made before showing a four card major.

After a 2/1 response, no rebid at the two level promises extras.

Hand 4

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♣	2♦
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
<p>North</p> <p>♠J</p> <p>♥T98</p> <p>♦874</p> <p>♣JT7532</p>			
<p>West</p> <p>♠K942</p> <p>♥KQ753</p> <p>♦J52</p> <p>♣A</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠AT83</p> <p>♥A4</p> <p>♦93</p> <p>♣KQ984</p>	
<p>South</p> <p>♠Q765</p> <p>♥J62</p> <p>♦AKQT6</p> <p>♣6</p>			

The 2♣ bid is game forcing, of course. When the opponents interfere in your game forcing auction, you will either bid a game or double the opponents. West has a fairly minimum hand with no obvious fit for partner and passes to hear what partner has to say. East makes a natural rebid and the obvious game contract is reached.

After winning the Diamond lead, South might play the ♣6 back. A ruff, however, might

well cost a natural trump trick. Whatever South chooses, the cards are lying well for declarer.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

In game forcing auctions, your side cannot allow the opponents to play undoubled. This means your doubles are for penalties and, if partner has a bid coming, you can pass to hear their opinion. West could have simply bid 2♠ over 2♦ since it is unlikely partner has a penalty double given West’s Diamond holding, but there appears to be no strong reason to be declarer, so allowing partner maximum room makes sense.

### Hand 5

West	North	East	South																																																												
—	1♥	Pass	2♣																																																												
2♥	2NT	Pass	3♣																																																												
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥																																																												
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣																																																												
Pass	6♣	All Pass																																																													
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">North</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♠K64</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♥KJT75</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♦A6</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♣QT6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">West</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">East</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♠AT832</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">♠95</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♥6</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">♥98432</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♦KQJ42</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">♦T753</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">♣53</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">♣J4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♠QJ7</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♥AQ</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♦98</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">♣AK9872</td> </tr> </table>				North				♠K64				♥KJT75				♦A6				♣QT6				West		East		♠AT832		♠95		♥6		♥98432		♦KQJ42		♦T753		♣53		♣J4		South				♠QJ7				♥AQ				♦98				♣AK9872			
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West has made the correct decision to enter the auction with a Michael's Cue Bid. North has both of the opponent's suits stopped but has no interest in penalizing the opponents, especially at this vulnerability. North 2NT promises stoppers in both of the opponent's suits. South continues the auction naturally with a still game forcing 3♣ bid. North knows that South is interested in slam if there is a good Club fit because if South was not interested in slam, they

would have simply raised to 3NT with game only values. North has good support for Clubs and quick controls of the opponent's suits. This is enough for North to raise to 4♣. Freely bypassing 3NT, or pulling 3NT to four of a minor is always a forcing bid looking for slam. South's 4♥ bid is a cue bid, showing first or second round Heart control, denying first or second round Diamond control. This is all North needs to know to bid RKC 3014. South's 5♣ response shows three or zero key cards. South cannot have zero key cards for the auction so North, missing only one key card, raises to 6♣. 12 tricks will be routine in Clubs, Hearts, and No Trump. Kudos to anyone bidding 6NT.

### Things to remember from this Hand

Freely bypassing 3NT to bid four of a minor is a slam try.



Hand 6

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
North ♠85 ♥AQT3 ♦QJ9 ♣KT72			
West		East	
♠KQ943		♠7	
♥8752		♥KJ96	
♦854		♦K7632	
♣9		♣Q54	
South ♠AJT62 ♥4 ♦AT ♣AJ863			

North’s hand is either a minimum game force or a maximum semi-forcing 1NT. We like the excellent spot cards combined with higher honors. South raises Clubs to show the 5/5 distribution. Raising a 2/1 2♣ response to 3♣ will almost always show five card support. South has a great hand to support a club slam if North is so inclined. North is not so inclined. Holding a minimum balanced hand with stoppers in the unbid suits, a sign off at 3NT

is obvious. If East finds a Spade or Diamond lead, North is going to need to guess well to make the hand. Even if guessed perfectly, their score will probably be below average. On the more likely Heart lead, there are nine tricks for declarer at a minimum.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

Opener does not raise responder’s minor just because they hold four card support. With a semi-balanced minimum, rebid your suit. This is a neutral rebid; not a denial of support. With a four card major, bid it rather than supporting partner’s minor.

When opening leader starts with dummy’s known long suit, it usually means one of two things. Either their hand is weak and they are trying to find partner with length and strength behind dummy or they have honors in the other suits the auction indicates might be a good lead and are afraid to give up a trick by picking the wrong one to lead. Keep this in mind when declarer.

### Hand 7

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♠
Pass	5NT	All Pass	
North			
♠QJ9			
♥QJ5			
♦KQJ8			
♣QJ8			
West		East	
♠653		♠72	
♥T943		♥A82	
♦953		♦T762	
♣A74		♣6532	
South			
♠AKT84			
♥K76			
♦A4			
♣KT9			

South's jump to 3NT over the 2♦ 2/1 bid shows the in-between No Trump hand. A 2NT rebid shows either 11-14hcp or 18+. A jump to 3NT fills in the gap. South is showing 15-17hcp with a hand that they elected not to open with 1NT. (This 17hcp hand is too good to open 1NT.) North must show three card support for partner's major by bidding 4♠ over 3NT. Knowing that there is a fit, South can explore slam by bidding 4NT RKC 3014. North's 5♣ response shows three or

zero key cards. With South having three key cards, and there only being five key cards, North must have zero. Disappointed, South signs off in 5♠ which North corrects to 5NT. Regardless of the lead, 11 tricks will be automatic.

### Things to remember from this Hand

2NT and 3NT rebids have specific hcp associations over a 2/1 bid. 2NT is 11-14hcp or 18+. 3NT fills in the gap.

Hand 8

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♦	All pass
North ♠T95432 ♥KQ3 ♦ ♣T763			
West			East
♠KQ7			♠A6
♥AJT84			♥92
♦KJ53			♦AQ9876
♣8			♣KQ5
South ♠J8 ♥765 ♦T42 ♣AJ942			

This is a tough slam to reach and it is likely the majority of pairs will end up in 3NT making with a few overtricks. On the second round, East’s 3♠ is either stopper showing or a cue bid. From West’s point of view, if it is merely stopper showing, the partnership will lack Club stoppers (East would not bid 3♠ to show a stopper if holding a stopper in the fourth suit also). 4♦ is a waiting bid. Here it shows an inability to cue bid Hearts.

Playing in 6♦, declarer

needs to be careful on a Heart lead and count the tricks. Only one Club ruff is needed, so all the trumps should be drawn before pitching a low Heart on the third Spade.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

Opener’s raise of partner’s minor shows extra values. Discuss with partner what 4NT means on this type of auction. (The bald co-author thinks it should be natural.)

When declaring, do not take unnecessary risks. If you count your winners on this hand, you will see there is no reason to take any risks at all in the play.

If South has listened to the auction, it certainly sounds as if Hearts is the weak spot, so a Heart lead would probably be many experts’ choice.

Hand 9

West	North	East	South
—	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
North			
♠T9			
♥95			
♦KJ762			
♣T843			
West		East	
♠72		♠AKJ64	
♥82		♥AKQ74	
♦AQT98		♦53	
♣AK75		♣2	
South			
♠Q853			
♥JT63			
♦4			
♣QJ96			

East's single jump rebid at the three level after a 2/1 auction into a lower ranking suit from what was opened shows a 5/5 hand with **GOOD** suit quality. It shows slam interest if a fit is found. West knows that a slam may be possible but the lack of a fit is a dire warning. Hands with no fit play considerably worse than hands with a fit. Without a fit, West is correct to lay low and bid 3NT. East has no extras for what they have shown already and will pass 3NT. If West

had a third card in a major or East has a sixth Spade, this auction would almost certainly end at the six level.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

A single level jump at the three level, in a 2/1 auction, by the opener into a lower ranking suit than what was opened, promises 5/5 with **GOOD** quality suits.

Do not bid the same values twice. East showed a strong 5-5 hand with the jump to 3♥. To bid over 3NT would show an even stronger (in high cards or distribution) hand,

Misfit hands should lay low.

Hand 10

West	North	East	South
—	—	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	All Pass
North			
♠K7543			
♥4			
♦T632			
♣854			
West		East	
♠J92		♠QT6	
♥T8		♥AKQJ975	
♦KQJ95		♦A	
♣AKQ		♣JT	
	South		
	♠A8		
	♥632		
	♦874		
	♣97632		

East jump rebids to set trumps and ask for cue bidding. West cue bids Clubs which also denies a control in Spades since the suit was skipped. Despite their 33HCP, East-West stay safely at the four level.

If South understands the bidding, the ♠Ace is the obvious lead. In any case, the hand will play very quickly with declarer either happily claiming 13 tricks or unhappily claiming 10.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

Being able to start cue bidding at a low level combined with cue bidding both first and second round controls “up the line” is frequently very useful. The only negative can be seen on this hand: the opponents, if they are paying attention, will also have knowledge of the control situation. However, this does often make a difference. On this hand, for example, the ♠Ace lead stands out.

If South does not lead the Spade Ace, it can only mean that South did not understand the auction. There is no excuse for this as before South leads, they should ask questions about the bidding. The answer to “What does 4♣ show?” should let you know that West has neither the Ace nor the King of Spades. This combined with West’s immediate signoff should clue you in.

### Hand 11

West	North	East	South						
—	—	—	1♥						
Pass	2♣	2♦	Pass						
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥						
Pass	4♥	All Pass							
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p style="text-align: center;">West</p> <p>♠J764</p> <p>♥92</p> <p>♦T54</p> <p>♣T953</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p style="text-align: center;">East</p> <p>♠A5</p> <p>♥Q53</p> <p>♦KQJ876</p> <p>♣86</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"> <p style="text-align: center;">North</p> <p>♠K932</p> <p>♥T74</p> <p>♦A3</p> <p>♣AQ74</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"> <p style="text-align: center;">South</p> <p>♠QT8</p> <p>♥AKJ86</p> <p>♦92</p> <p>♣KJ2</p> </td> </tr> </table>				<p style="text-align: center;">West</p> <p>♠J764</p> <p>♥92</p> <p>♦T54</p> <p>♣T953</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">East</p> <p>♠A5</p> <p>♥Q53</p> <p>♦KQJ876</p> <p>♣86</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">North</p> <p>♠K932</p> <p>♥T74</p> <p>♦A3</p> <p>♣AQ74</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">South</p> <p>♠QT8</p> <p>♥AKJ86</p> <p>♦92</p> <p>♣KJ2</p>	
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East has interfered over N/S's 2/1 auction.

South may pass freely when they have no clear bid to make. This is a 100% forcing pass because North's 2♣ bid is 100% game forcing. If South chooses to double the 2♦ interference that would be a penalty double; all bids are natural. North continues the auction naturally by showing three card Heart support. South doesn't have anything to do other than to rebid 3♥. Jumping to 4♥ would be wrong as South does not know

how strong how strong North's 2/1 bid is. Typically, there is no jumping in 2/1 with weak hands. This jumping around is something that has become common place, for whatever reason, but needs to stop. The only jumps in a 2/1 auction are to show extra distribution or extra strength. North, with a minimum hand and no slam interest, raises to 4♥, ending the auction.

West will lead the ♦4 which will be won in the North. The Heart Queen should then be finessed through East. East rates to have the majority of the outstanding values for their 2♦ call. Once the ♥Q has been finessed and two more rounds of Hearts played, four Clubs will be played creating a pitch for South's losing Diamond. If the declarer guesses the ♠J correctly, 12 tricks will be made.

#### **Things to remember from this Hand**

There is no need to jump the auction with minimum hands in a 2/1 auction. Passes are forcing after interference in a 2/1 auction.

Hand 12

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1NT!	Pass
2NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
North			
♠J6432			
♥QJ4			
♦KJ3			
♣J9			
West			East
♠K7			♠Q98
♥AKT87			♥53
♦AQ6			♦T72
♣Q53			♣A8742
South			
♠AT5			
♥962			
♦9854			
♣KT6			

Opener’s 2NT rebid is quite similar to the same bid over a Standard American 1NT response. South is close to bidding 3NT, but at match points pushing to sub-par games does not pay off in the long run.

Assuming South leads a Diamond, declarer should duck in dummy and North will win the trick with the Jack. A spade will usually be returned and East should duck it. If South wins this with the Ace,

declarer is in great shape. If South inserts the Ten, West will win with the ♠K and should lead a small Heart against average defenders who might make a helpful return. Against expert defenders that is unlikely to work, so lead the AK on the off-chance the QJ is now doubleton (which will hold your Heart losers to one.)

**Things to remember from this Hand**

The 2NT rebid is invitational but not forcing. Your partnership need to agree what is forcing, invitational, or a sign off over the 2NT rebid. Is 3♦ a sign off? Forcing? A transfer? If your partnership has not discussed this, it is better to pass or bid 3NT.

As the play is likely to go, East will have only one entry to their hand. Playing a Club from Dummy to your Ace so that you can finesse towards the ♥T will not work against a good defender sitting South who will know you have no entry to take a second finesse and will therefore always cover with ♥QJx or QJ9x.

Hand 13

West	North	East	South
—	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
North			
♠AQ73			
♥54			
♦KJ87			
♣K75			
West			East
♠K9			♠T652
♥QT982			♥K6
♦A32			♦T654
♣832			♣J94
South			
♠J84			
♥AJ73			
♦Q9			
♣AQT6			

South's creates a 2/1 game forcing auction by bidding 2♣. It would be incorrect to show four Hearts before making the 2/1 bid. North's 2♠ shows four Spades, denies four Hearts, and does not promise extra values. South 2NT bid denies holding four Spades, promises a stopper in Hearts, and has the same split range that is associated to what the opener's rebid of 2NT would be, 11-14hcp or 18+. North has no other bid to make and raises to 3NT.

If North had a fourth Club, they could have shown it over 2NT.

West will lead the ♥T and South will have to play the hand carefully from there. The play will vary table to table but the important combination here is the ♠AQ73 opposite ♠J84. It is right to play this combination by playing low to the Queen, and when it holds, cashing the Ace. This will net three tricks whenever the ♠K is onside doubleton or Spades break 3/3. Playing the ♠J to the AQ73 would net two, and only two, tricks in any situation. Alternatively, you can play low to the ♠J. This would cater to ♠Kx offside.



Hand 14

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦!
Pass	3NT	All pass	

  

North	
♠—	
♥KJ642	
♦KJ8	
♣KQ872	
West	East
♠Q852	♠K743
♥985	♥AT3
♦A96	♦QT54
♣T53	♣94
South	
♠AJT96	
♥Q7	
♦732	
♣AJ6	

Opener treats partners 2♥ response somewhat differently than a response of 2 of a minor. No extra strength is required to raise Hearts, so opener’s 2♠ or 2NT rebid denies three or more Hearts. South’s 3♦ is 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing also known as “Do something intelligent, Partner.” South could rebid 3♥ instead but with such a balanced, minimum hand, hopes that partner can bid 3NT. If not, South can bid 4♥ next round.

With all the suits splitting so nicely, 3NT should make. As the cards lie, the alternative contracts of 4♥ and 5♣ both fail if North does not guess the Diamonds correctly.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

1♠—2♥ is a bit different than 1♠—2 of a minor. Over 2♥, opener will raise freely with a minimum and three card support. This because the 2♥ response shows a minimum length of five and 4 of a major is a good or the best contract much more frequently than 5 of a minor.

Both North and South had some close decisions to make on this hand (3♦ or 3♥? Bidding 3NT or 4♣?) It is impossible to always get the right. Often, even if you could see your partner’s hand, you still would not know the best scoring contract. On this hand 3NT rather than 4♣ is clearly the percentage answer, particularly at match points. 3♦ rather than 3♥ is not so obviously a better choice.

### Hand 15

West	North	East	South																																													
—	—	—	Pass																																													
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass																																													
2♦	Pass	3♠	Pass																																													
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass																																													
4♠	All Pass																																															
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This auction is fairly straight forward. East has made a 2/1 bid then made a single level jump in West's opened major. This shows exactly three card support with extra values. West cue bids 4♣ to show first or second round Club control. East cue bids 4♥ to show first or second round control of Hearts. East bypassed 4♦, this denies first or second round Diamond Control. West knows this and signs off in 4♠.

11 tricks will be routine on this hand regardless of the lead.

### Things to remember from this Hand

A single jump to three of partner's major shows extra values with exactly three card support.

Bypassing a cue bid denies first or second round control of that suit.

Hand 16

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
4NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass
North			
♠K54			
♥942			
♦862			
♣T865			
West		East	
♠AJ7		♠Q862	
♥AKJ87		♥Q6	
♦J9		♦AQT3	
♣KQ7		♣A32	
South			
♠T93			
♥T53			
♦K754			
♣J94			

East does not show the four card Spade suit before making a 2/1 bid. This is so a slow, intelligent, and forcing auction can be established. Major suit fits can always be found later in the auction. West's 2NT rebid is the familiar split range of 11-14hcp or 18+. East, with nothing else to say, raises to 3NT. West now shows the big hand, 18+hcp, by continuing with 4NT. With 14hcp, East will go right to 6NT. It's possible that there are only 32hcp

between the two hands and that 6NT cannot make, but 6NT should be odds on.

Most North's will find the ♣5 lead and 12 tricks will be routine even with both the Spade and Diamond King offside. The Diamond suit will always be able to create two pitches for West's Spades.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

2NT, by either the opener or responder, always has a split range. With the bigger hand, the player can bid 4NT over 3NT to show a balanced 18+hcp or bid any suit over 3NT to show the extra values.

### Hand 17

West	North	East	South
—	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

  

<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p style="text-align: center;">West</p> <p>♠T9</p> <p>♥AK32</p> <p>♦T7652</p> <p>♣J8</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p style="text-align: center;">East</p> <p>♠762</p> <p>♥QT76</p> <p>♦84</p> <p>♣T742</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p style="text-align: center;">West</p> <p>♠T9</p> <p>♥AK32</p> <p>♦T7652</p> <p>♣J8</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">East</p> <p>♠762</p> <p>♥QT76</p> <p>♦84</p> <p>♣T742</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p style="text-align: center;">North</p> <p>♠AKQJ843</p> <p>♥9</p> <p>♦AJ</p> <p>♣Q65</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p style="text-align: center;">South</p> <p>♠5</p> <p>♥J854</p> <p>♦KQ93</p> <p>♣AK93</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p style="text-align: center;">North</p> <p>♠AKQJ843</p> <p>♥9</p> <p>♦AJ</p> <p>♣Q65</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">South</p> <p>♠5</p> <p>♥J854</p> <p>♦KQ93</p> <p>♣AK93</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">North</p> <p>♠AKQJ843</p> <p>♥9</p> <p>♦AJ</p> <p>♣Q65</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">South</p> <p>♠5</p> <p>♥J854</p> <p>♦KQ93</p> <p>♣AK93</p>				

Do not open the North hand with a preempt (and that includes Namyats). Why preempt when you nothing to fear? North's jump rebid in the opened suit shows a solid suit of at least six cards. It sets trumps and asks partner to cue bid their cheapest control. The jump rebid neither denies nor promises extra strength.

Notice that South's 4♣ bid would also have been made if the Clubs were headed by the King. 4♠ denied a control in Hearts, so North knows there is no

chance for a grand. It is hard to construct a 2/1 response that would not make 6♠ a good contract and if North wanted to be flashy, they could simply jump there. However, there really is no reason for North not to bid Roman Key Card (of course, holding the KQ of trumps, vanilla Blackwood would work as well here).

If East does not find a Heart lead, declarer takes all the tricks.

### Things to remember from this Hand

Jump rebidding your suit after partner makes a 2/1 bid shows a solid suit, sets trumps and demands a cue bid. "Sets trumps" means that the hand will be played in this suit or in No Trump.

East should find the Heart lead as it is the best chance to set up a trick quickly. Partner might have the ♥K and an Ace somewhere.

Hand 18

West	North	East	South
—	—	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT	All Pass		
<p>North</p> <p>♠T65</p> <p>♥853</p> <p>♦J75</p> <p>♣K875</p>			
West		East	
♠AKJ3		♠7	
♥T96		♥AK742	
♦T86		♦AQ32	
♣AQ3		♣J62	
<p>South</p> <p>♠Q9842</p> <p>♥QJ</p> <p>♦K94</p> <p>♣T94</p>			

West creates a game force instead of showing the four card Spade suit. It is always (99%) best to set up the game force before showing a four card major(s). East shows a four card or longer Diamond suit with the 2♦ rebid and West reveals the Heart fit on their second bid. East has some options on this hand. East could bid 3♠ as a Splinter bid, showing a singleton or void in Spades, setting Hearts as trump or bid 3♣ showing the rest of their distribution.

Always pick the bid that

best describes distribution. The 3♣ rebid shows exactly 1-5-4-3 or 0-5-4-4 distribution while the 3♠ Splinter bid could be made with either of those distributions or with six Hearts and four Diamonds, or a 5/5 hand. With lots of wastage in Spades, West bids 3NT. East knows they have shown their distribution accurately and West would not bid 3NT unless they had multiple stoppers in the Spade suit. East passes 3NT, trusting their partner.

The play will vary wildly on this hand. Some declarers will bang down the AK of Hearts and finesse the Spade. Some will finesse Hearts twice losing to both the doubleton QJ. Both approaches have merit.

**Things to remember from this Hand**

With a lot of wastage in partner’s short suit, it is usually best to play in No Trump as they will, usually, take the same number of tricks.

Well, “That’s all folks.” We here at BridgeCentric hope you have enjoyed your time with us and we will see you again real soon.

Good luck!

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