

Fast Arrival or Picture bids?

By Neil H. Timm

Playing the 2/1 Game Force system, suppose the bidding goes 1♠ - 2♣; 2♠ - 4♠. What does the game bid mean?

Using the principle of “fast-arrival” some may interpret the bid as “I am not interested in bidding on;” since if I were, I would have bid 3♠. Or, does it show a specific holding?

Some bridge experts agree that it should show a specific holding called a “picture bid”. The bid of 4♠ would show that partner’s high card points are in clubs and spades with no controls or shortness in the unbid suits.

This concept was considered by Eric Rodwell in his March/April 2008 Two-Over-One article called the “Principle of Fast Arrival” on the site [/www.betterbridge.com/articles/Two-Over-One/09-200803.pdf](http://www.betterbridge.com/articles/Two-Over-One/09-200803.pdf).

Fast Arrival does not rule out the possibility of slam when partner has extra values. Let’s look at Rodwell’s first example.

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| WEST | EAST |
| ♠ K Q 8 7 6 4 3 | ♠ A J 2 |
| ♥ K 3 | ♥ A Q J 6 2 |
| ♦ A 9 | ♦ 8 4 2 |
| ♣ K 7 | ♣ 9 5 |

| | |
|------|------|
| WEST | EAST |
| 1♠ | 2♥ |
| 2♠ | 4♠ |
| 4NT | 5♥ |
| 6♠ | Pass |

With a minimum for the 2/1 response, East jumps to game over the 2♠ rebid. That doesn’t deter West from going to slam once East shows a fit for spades, along with enough strength for a 2/1 game forcing response. East’s jump to game is called a picture bid. It paints a nice picture of his hand: a minimum opening bid with most of the high cards in hearts and spades with no controls in diamonds or clubs. With extra values, or high cards in clubs and diamonds, East could raise to 3♥. With shortness in clubs or diamonds, East could make a *splinter* jump to 4♣ or 4♦

Both partners can use the bid. Sometimes the opener may take a fast route to game: We look at Rodwell’s second example.

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| WEST | EAST |
| ♠ A K J 7 5 | ♠ 8 2 |

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| ♥ K J 6 2 | ♥ A Q 10 7 4 |
| ♦ 8 4 | ♦ K Q 6 |
| ♣ 9 8 | ♣ Q 7 4 |

WEST EAST

| | |
|----|------|
| 1♠ | 2♥ |
| 4♥ | Pass |

West likes East's 2♥ response, but has a minimum opening bid with no help outside of hearts and spades. West quickly takes the partnership to game. East knows that opener could have simply raised to 3♥ to leave more room for slam exploration West's jump to game is again a picture bid. It paints a nice picture of the West hand: a minimum opening bid with most of the high cards in hearts and spades.

Playing the 2/1 game force system, a jump to the four level in an agreed upon suit may not mean stop. You must discuss this with your partner.

The picture bid may also be played with Jacoby 2NT. The bidding sequence: 1♠ - 2NT - 4♠ show a huge hand and 3♠ become invitational. The bids are as follows.

- 3♣, 3♦ or 3♥ = Singleton or void in that suit.
- 3♠ = good 14+ HCP with extra length in spades, no singleton.
- 3NT = 15-18 pts., balanced (no singleton or void).
- 4♣, 4♦, 4♥ = Decent 5-card side suit (QJxxx or better).
- 4♠ = 19+ HCP with slam interest.

Without the concept of picture bids, most partnerships playing Jacoby use the bid of 4♠ and no slam interest. Then the bid of 3♠ is either semi- strong of real strong. Then additional bids are employed to describe your hands giving more information to the opponents!

The picture bids **ARE NOW THE SAME AS JACOBY**, recall that these bids were:

Jacoby 2NT* Responses by Opener

| Rebids by Opener | Suit Length | Bergen Points |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 3 (new suit)* | Singleton/Void | 12+ |
| 3 (major suit opened)* | 5/6+ in major | 18+ |
| 3NT* | (5-3-3-2) balanced | 15-17 |
| 4 (new suit)* | 4+ card suit | 12+ to 17 |

4 (major suit opened)

5+ major

12+ to 14