

# Two-Way New Minor Forcing with Wolff Modified

## By Neil H Timm

Playing the 2/1 Game Force System, one makes a 1-level bid with 11/12-19 points. Playing 2/1 with the strong notrump convention, one opens 1NT with 15-17 HCP and balanced distributions (4332, 4333, or 5322 when 5-3 in the majors) or with the semi-balanced distributions (2336 long minor or 2445 no major suit length) and no singleton or void. However, if one cannot open 1NT (15-17 HCP), a one-level minor suit bid is made without a 5-card major.

The opening bidder may now have a minimum hand with 11/12-14 points, an intermediate hand with 15-17 points or a strong hand with 18+ points. And partner may have 0-5/6 points (very weak), 6-9 points (weak), 10-12 points (invitational), or 13+ points (strong-game going 2/1 hand).

Not having a 5-card major, the opening bidder will now open the bidding of one of a minor, usually a 3-card suit (the convenient minor).

Note some players may use a short club (0-2), which may be played as forcing (e.g. Montreal Relay or Walsh Club Conventions) or as non-forcing (e.g. Kennedy Club). Playing a short club, the bid of one diamond is usually of length four and does not require an alert. The **1♣ bid** must be **announced** as short if **non-forcing** and **alerted if forcing**.

### Non-Forcing Responses to Minor Opening

After opening one of a minor (1♣/1♦) and partner bids a major, a re-bid of 1NT (by the opener shows a minimum or intermediate hand (11/12-14 points or 15-17 points). A new suit by responder (after opener bids 1NT) is **non-forcing**; it is only forcing over suit bids. It shows a two-suited hand which partner may pass if he prefers the second suit. A re-bid of responder's own suit is also non-forcing after 1NT, showing a 5-card major. For example:

1♣ - 1♥ - 1NT - 2♥/2♠/3♣ (non-forcing to-play)

1♣ - 1♠ - 1NT - 2♠/2♥/3♣ (non-forcing to-play)

1♦ - 1♥ - 1NT - 2♥/2♠/3♦ (non-forcing to-play)

1♦ - 1♠ - 1NT - 2♠/2♥/3♦ (non-forcing to-play)

With a minimum hand, opener will usually pass; however with 15-17 points (an intermediate hand), opener may make a reverse 2-level bid (1♣-1♥/1♠-2♦, 1♣-1♠-2♥, or 1♦-1♠-2♥) or make a jump re-bid. The bid of 2NT by opener shows 18+ points. What if responder bids 2NT over opener's 1NT bid? **It is NOT invitational, but conventional.**

### 1m-1M-1NT-2NT\* (Conventional NOT Natural)

2NT\* is a relay to 3♣, that's how you sign off in clubs, then over 3♣

Pass = Clubs

3♦ = 5 of my major, 4 of partners minor, doubleton

3♥ = 5 of my major, 4 of partners minor, singleton/void

3♠ = 4 of my major, 5 of partners minor, doubleton

3NT = 4 of my major, 5 of partners minor, singleton/void

When partner opens one of a minor and responder has a 5- card major and bids 1♥/1♠, what convention does one use to invite game, or force to game, without jumping to the 3-level in the major?

There are several commonly used “club” conventions one may learn playing the 2/1 Game Force System:

- (1) New Minor Forcing (NMF)
- (2) Checkback Stayman
- (3) Two-Way New Minor Forcing (also called Two-Way Checkback Stayman)
- (4) The X-Y-Z Convention (also simply called Two-Way Checkback)

The X-Y-Z convention is more sophisticated and I will discuss it in a future “Bridge Bit”. Of course other conventions are employed to address the problem, for example in England the Crowhurst convention is popular.

**While many club members may want to learn either NMF or Checkback Stayman both have severe drawbacks. The conventions DO NOT distinguish between invitational and game-forcing hands, and the NMF Convention takes up too much bidding space. So do not spend your time learning two conventions.**

A convention you should learn is Two-Way New Minor Forcing (2-Way NMF is marked in RED on your Convention Card, as is New Minor Forcing Convention due to their popularity). A very good brief introduction is provided by Larry Cohen at <http://www.larryco.com/BridgeArticles/ArticlePrint.aspx?articleID=549>.

### **Two-Way New Minor Forcing (2WNMF)**

Responder uses the Two-Way New Minor Forcing (2WNMF) Convention when opener bids 1NT after opening with a minor with a 5-card major. It requires at 10-12 points (game-invitational strength); otherwise responder may just rebid his major or show a second suit. The bidding sequence follows.

<b>Opener</b>	<b>Responder</b>
1♣	1♥/1♠
1NT	2♣*(2WNMF)

<b>Opener</b>	<b>Responder</b>
1♦	1♥/1♠
1NT	2♣*(2WNMF)

**Note: This convention is not used with less than 10 points, it is off by a passed hand and usually off over interference, the only exception is if the opponents bid 1♦ over opener's bid of 1♣ or double a 1-level club bid.**

Responder with game-invitational values (10 -12 points) and a 5-card major makes the forcing bid of 2♣\*. Because the club bid is artificial, it must be alerted (hence the asterisk). The bid is asking opener if he has 3-card support for the major suit bid (with 4-card support, opener would have supported the major). With support and minimal values, opener bids the major and with 15+ points jumps in the major.

If the opener doesn't have 3-card support, his first obligation is to show 4-cards in the other major. If he has neither of the above, he bids 2♦. What does this mean? The bids follow in some detail for each minor and major suit bid.

### Club Opening

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣*(2WNMF)
?	

- 2♦ - no support for the major minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♥ - 3-card support, minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♠ - no support (4 Spades), intermediate (15+ points) – (4333)
- 2NT - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3334)
- 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♣
- 3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) (3244/2245)
- 3♥ - 3-card support and intermediate values (15+ points)

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣*(2WNMF)
?	

- 2♦ - no support for the major minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♥ - no support (4 Hearts), minimum (11/12-14 points) –(3433)
- 2♠ - 3- card support (not 4 Hearts), minimum (11-12-14 points)
- 2NT - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3334)
- 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♣
- 3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) (3244/2245)
- 3♥ - 4 Hearts may have 3-card support for spades, intermediate values (15+ points)
- 3♠ - 3-card support without 4 Hearts, intermediate values (15+ points)

## Diamond Opening

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1NT	2♣*(2WNMF)
?	

- 2♦ - no support for the major minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♥ - 3-card support, minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♠ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (4333)
- 2NT- no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3343)
- 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (2254)
- 3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♦
- 3♥ - 3-card support and intermediate values (15+ points)

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣*(2WNMF)
?	

- 2♦ - no support for the major minimum (11-12-14 points)
- 2♥ - no support (4 Hearts), minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♠ - 3- card support (not 4 Hearts), minimum (11-12-14 points)
- 2NT- no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3343)
- 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (2254)
- 3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♦
- 3♥ - 4 Hearts may have 3-card support for spades, intermediate values (15+ points)
- 3♠ - 3-card support without 4 Hearts, intermediate values (15+ points)

**When one has 13+ points (game - invitational values) as responder, the 2♣\* bid is replaced with the bid of 2♦\* and now is game-forcing with a 5+ card major.**

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥/1♠
1NT	2♦*(2WNMF - GF)

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥/1♠
1NT	2♦*(2WNMF - GF)

Because the bid is again artificial, it must be alerted (hence the asterisk). The bid is asking opener if he has 3-card support for the major suit bid (with 4-card support, opener

would support the major). With support and minimal values, opener bids the major and with 15+ points jumps in the major. Again if opener doesn't have 3-card support, his first obligation is to show 4-cards in the other major. If he has neither of the above, he bids 2NT. The responses for the forcing sequence are similar to the non-forcing 2♣\* bids.

### Club Opening

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♦*(2WNMF - GF)
?	

- 2♥ - 3-card support, minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♠ - no support (4 Spades), intermediate (15+ points) – (4333)
- 2NT - no support for the major minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♣
- 3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) (3244/2245)
- 3♥ - 3-card support and intermediate values (15+ points)
- 3NT- no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3334)

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♦*(2WNMF - GF)
?	

- 2♥ - no support (4 Hearts), minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♠ - 3- card support (not 4 Hearts), minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2NT- no support, minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♣
- 3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) (3244/2245)
- 3♥ - 4 Hearts may have 3-card support for spades, intermediate values (15+ points)
- 3♠ - 3-card support without 4 Hearts, intermediate values (15+ points)
- 3NT- no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3343)

### Diamond Opening

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1NT	2♦*(2WNMF- GF)
?	

- 2♥ - 3-card support, minimum (11/12-14 points)
- 2♠ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (4333)
- 2NT- no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3334)
- 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (2254)

3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♦  
 3♥ - 3-card support and intermediate values (15+ points)  
 3NT- no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3343)

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♦*(2NMF - GF)
?	

2♥ - no support (4 Hearts), minimum (11/12-14 points)  
 2♠ - 3- card support (not 4 Hearts), minimum (11-12-14 points)  
 2NT - no support for the major minimum (11/12-14 points)  
 3♣ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (2254)  
 3♦ - no support, intermediate (15+ points) 5♦  
 3♥ - 4 Hearts may have 3-card support for spades, intermediate values (15+ points)  
 3♠ - 3-card support without 4 Hearts, intermediate values (15+ points)  
 3NT- no support, intermediate (15+ points) – (3343)

I have tried to provide all the bidding combinations, showing shape and points, when using 2WNMF, for several example hands see the 12-page pdf on the web by pasting the following link into your web browser.

[www.lajollabridge.com/LJUnit/Education/2-WayNewMinorForcing.pdf](http://www.lajollabridge.com/LJUnit/Education/2-WayNewMinorForcing.pdf)

### **Wolff Signoff Convention Modified (WSOM)**

We have reviewed the case where the opening bidder has 11/12-17 points. We now look at the Wolff Signoff Convention (WSOM) when the opener bids 2NT=18+ points. I have modified WSO to address the 5-2, 4-2, 5-3, 4-4, 6-5, 5-5, 5-6, 4-6, and 6-4 majors suit distributions.

**Wolff Signoff Modified** - After opener makes a strong 2NT rebid, the Wolff Signoff is a responder method normally used by responder to warn the strong opener of sub-game values; in the normal situation, the opener is instructed to pass (opener promises 2-3 cards in responders major suit when rebidding 2NT). The theory behind the convention assumes that openers 2NT rebid is restricting openers values to 18-19 HCP, thus responder is now the captain and places the contract. When used in conjunction with Major Suit Checkback, responder has the tools to force to game/slam and to signoff at the 3 level or (4 level if signing off in clubs).

**Note: The WSOM convention is off by a passed hand and usually off over interference. Not playing the WSOM, but NMF, the bid of 3♣\* is NMF!**

We are using the WSOM convention when Opener bids a minor, it may also be used when Opener bids a major at the 1-level, or when the Opener bids 2NT over any 1-level bid by responder (e.g. 1♥-1♠-2NT, 1♦-1♥/1♠-2NT, or 1♣-1♦/1♥/1♠-2NT).

### Non-forcing bids over Opener's 2NT bid

After 1♣/1♦-1M

2NT – (Pass/3NT/4M) – Sign-off Bids (5-7 Points)

For example

Pass with ♠74 ♥K108743 ♦ J432 ♣7 or ♠AJ72 ♥863♦106 ♣876

3NT with ♠J743 ♥ K986 ♦ Q72 ♣J105

4♠ with ♠AJ1062 ♥J65 ♦1086 ♣7

With a huge hand opener may use Gerber or RKCB to investigate slam.

After 1♣/1♦-1M

2NT – 3♣\* (WSOM – 8-12 Points)

The artificial 3♣\* bid shows a weak hand, generally with at least five cards in responder's bid major (may be 6-4 or 5-5). With three-card support for the major, opener bids that suit at the three-level. Without three-card support, opener is required to rebid 3♦\*, artificial (only 2-card support for the bid major). All of responder's subsequent bids over 3♦\* are natural signoffs. **Major must have 5+cards – Never 4 (with 4 bid 3♦'s)**. I have used the to club bid to show more distributional hands with less points. The three-diamond bid is used with flatter hands, less distribution.

After 1♣/1♦-1M

2NT – 3♣\*

3♦\*

**Sign-Off** Pass 3♦ with diamonds or bid 4♣ with clubs or 4♥/4♠ spades with 6.  
Over the 4-level major suit bid, opener may use RKCB with a huge hand

**3M** To play in responders bid 5/6-card major (responder bids same major)

**3OM** 6-4 in majors (6M and 4OM)

**3NT** 5-5 in the majors (responder bid 1♠)

**4NT** Quantitative (assumes 18-19 range)

**Game forcing or slam invitational bids over 2NT (3♦/3♥/3♠) 13+ Points**

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	1♥/1♠
2NT	3♦*(game force)
	3M = 6-cards in bid major and 4-cards in other (6-4)
	3OM = 6-cards in bid major and 5-cards in other major (6-5)
	3NT = to play
	4♣/4♦ - Minorwood for bid minor
	4NT - Quantitative

The bid of 3♦\* by Responder is also asking Opener if he has 3-card support for the bid major or 4-card fit for the UNBID major. He shows a fit by bidding 3M. This is a major suit checkback bid, it promises **4/5-cards in the bid major, flatter and more points.**

Lets look at the bids.

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	1♥ (4♥/5♥ and may have 4♠)
2NT	3♦*
3♥ =	3- card support for bid major may have 4 spades Responder may bid 3♠ if he has 4 spades (4-4 fit better than 5-3)
3♠ =	no support for hearts, has 4 spades
3NT =	no support for hearts and not 4 spades – to play

**Notice that responder is 4-4 or 4-5 in the majors or has only 5 hearts.**

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦	1♠ (5♠ and may have 4♥)
2NT	3♦*
3♥ =	4 hearts, may have 3-spades Responder will bid 4♥ with 4 hearts; otherwise, he will bid 3♠
3♠ =	3-card support for bid major and <b>denies</b> 4 hearts
3NT =	no support for hearts and not 4 spades – to play

**Notice that responder is 5-4 in the majors or has only 5 spades.**

Examples (opponents passing):

1♣/1♦-1♥-2NT-pass (responder has 0-7 points)

1m-1♥-2NT-3♣-3♥ (responder showing 6 hearts)

1m-1♥-2NT-3♣-3♦-3♠ (responder 4-6 in majors) and [3NT, responder is 5-5 in majors]



1♦-1♥-2NT-3♣-3♦ (responder may pass with diamonds and showing 6 hearts)

1m-1♥-2NT-3♦-3♥ (opener has 3 hearts and may have 4 spades)

1m-1♠-2NT-3♦-3♠ (opener has 3 spades and denies 6 hearts)

1m-1♠-2NT-3♣-3♦-3♥ (responder 6-4 in spades and hearts)

1m-1♥-2NT-3♦-3NT (opener denies a fit not 3 hearts or 4 spades)

1m-1♥-2NT-3NT (to play)

1m-1♥-2NT-3♥ (responder has 4 spades and 6 hearts)

1m-1♥-2NT-3♠ (responder 5 spades and 6 hearts)

The Two-way NMF Convention with the Wolff Signoff convention allows one to differentiate between invitational and forcing responses and to immediately agree on trumps. Responder is able to show their partner a double fit and show a particular singleton in order to avoid playing 3NT incorrectly and to find a potential slam. There is very little downside to this convention and it is more effective than the perhaps more “popular” New Minor Forcing (NMF) or Checkback Stayman Conventions.