



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(83) Bypassing 4-card Suits**

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Level: 3

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#### **General**

2/1 Game Forcing auctions have lots of advantages over standard auctions – Fast Arrival, Cuebids, Splinters, etc... We want to get into 2/1 Game Forcing auctions as often as possible – unless it is going to make our life too difficult to do so. Here, we will discuss ways to get into 2/1 Game Forcing auctions (when to do so and when not to) and how it may help us. Specifically, we will look at auctions where we can choose to make a 2/1 Game Force instead of responding in another suit (cheaply and naturally – by bypassing a 4-card Major.)

#### **1♥ Opening Bids**

When partner opens 1♥ and we have a 5-card ♠ suit we will bid 1♠ on almost every hand (unless we have 4+card ♥ and plan to just raise ♥.) But when we have a 4-card ♠ suit and a game forcing hand we have a choice between bidding 1♠ or making a 2/1 GF bid into 2-minor. Let's look at some examples.

#### **4-3-3-3**

With a 4-3-3-3 hand we know we have a ♥ fit, so sometimes it can be easiest to look for the ♠ fit (4-4 fits are generally better than 5-3 fits.) But with most hands the auction will be easier if we start with a 2/1 GF. We will usually have a 4-card minor to make a 2/1 GF into, but in this specific case we should bid 2♣ on a 3-card suit in order to create a 2/1 GF.

*Note: If we bypass our 4c ♠ suit it becomes our responsibility to show our 4-card suit later. Opener will not go out of their way to show their suit, expecting us not to have one.*

#### **4-card ♠ with 4+card Minor**

*Example Distribution: 4-2-3-4*

In this case it is an excellent idea to start the auction with a 2/1 GF into 2♣. Since Opener has shown 5+♥, the rest of the auction reveals itself naturally – Opener bids their suits or Notrump. It is clear in these auctions that we search for a Major suit fit first, minor suit fit second, and Notrump with a balanced hand after that. Once again, Responder must show their 4c ♠ suit if they bypass it.



*Example Auction with 4-2-3-4 Distribution*

1♥    2♣  
2♥    2♠  
2NT   3NT

**1♦ - 2♣ Auctions**

When it comes to bidding the minor suits, these auctions become far more complex. We want to think of this auction as more like an inverted minors auction (that happens to be game forcing) than we do like a 2/1 GF auction. The reason for this is that 1♦ - 2♣ auctions become complex. The meaning of the bids becomes muddled – it is not clear if we are showing stoppers or showing actual Major suits. To clarify and fix this problem we agree not to bypass our 4-card Majors in this particular auction. Thus, 1♦ - 2♣ denies a 4-card Major just like 1♦ - 2♦\* does.

**Conclusion**

In modern bridge there are times to show our 4-card Major and times when it is easier to bypass them. This can be complicated, but the general rule is that we bypass these Majors only to make our life and future bidding simpler. Having a good understanding of these 2/1 auctions (as well as other auctions, like Walsh Style bidding) makes things with partner go more smoothly – we will both be thinking the same way and focusing on the same goals together.