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This Week in Bridge

(371) 2/1 GF Auctions: Opener's Rebids

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Level: 5 of 10 (2 of 6)

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General Approach

In a 2/1 GF auction we know that our side is going to game. That helps make the rest of the auction go more smoothly, as we know that we cannot pass or be passed below game. But we still have a lot of things to figure out. We need to determine if we have a Major suit fit, a minor suit fit, stoppers for 3NT, and if we have enough extra values to make slam a possibility. With so much still to determine, that means that we need to make sure we have good agreements about the length and strength meanings of each of the rebids. Let's start by take a look in detail at the Opener's rebids and come to good agreements about the meaning of these bids.

Opener's Rebid

Let's do a quick overview of Opener's rebid options in 2/1 GF auction that starts with a 1-Major Opening. Here is a summary of basic agreements we should have about the Opener's rebids:

- 2NT shows a balanced hand with stoppers in both of the unbid suits.
- Raising Responder's suit shows 4+card support if it is a minor.
- Raising Responder's suit shows 3+card support if it is a Major (Hearts, since 1♠ – 2♥ is the only such auction).
- Rebidding our suit usually shows a 6-card suit. But Opener can choose to rebid their suit with only a 5-card suit if they have a minimum hand (2-Major Waiting).
- Rebidding a new suit at the 2-level shows a 4+card suit and does not promise extra values.
- Rebidding a new suit at the 3-level shows a 4+card suit and shows extra values (at least 3 points more than a minimum opening bid).



No Reverses after 2/1 GF Auction

When we open 1♥, partner will often make a 2/1 Game Forcing bid into a minor. In this case, we might still have a 4-4 ♠ fit. If Opener has 4-card ♠ and 5-card ♥, they can bid their ♠ suit naturally and not show any extra values (no longer a reverse). This allows us to easily find our 4-4 ♠ fit without either player needing to have extra values.

Example 4

1♥ 2♣

2♠

This does not show “reverse values” since we are in a 2/1 GF Auction.

Note: As we will see later, rebidding a new suit at the 3-level, is different and promises extra values.

2-Major Rebids – “2M Waiting”

We can rebid 2-Major (the suit we opened) when we have a 6+card Major suit. But there are also some classic problem hands that have no good rebid playing the methods we have previously discussed.

Example 5

1♠ 2♦

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♠ AQJ93

♥ 954

♦ AJ

♣ J93

Here we have no second suit to rebid and no stoppers in the unbid suits (2NT would show stoppers in both ♥ and ♣). These are classic problem rebid hands. The way that we solve them is by adjusting our agreements about the meaning of a 2♠ rebid (rebidding our opening suit) - allowing us to rebid 2-Major as a “waiting bid”, not promising a 6th card. Here we rebid 2♠ and wait to see what partner does next.

Here is another example of a hand where we would rebid 2-Major Waiting.

Example 6

♠ KQ743

♥ A92

♦ 864

♣ A7

1♠ 2♣

2♠

Notice that most of the time when we have a balanced hand and no great stoppers in the unbid suits we are going to have a decent to good 5-card suit to rebid.



3-Level Shows Extra Values (3L+)

Once we have decided to use 2-Major as a “waiting bid”, not promising a 6-card suit, then we can adjust some of our other agreements to improve our 2/1 GF follow up bidding. One way that is very helpful is to require our 3-level rebids of a new suit to promise extra values (about 3+points more than a minimum opening bid). We can do this because we have can use our 2-Major Waiting rebid when we have the shape for a 3-level rebid, but not enough values to do so.

Example 7

♠ KQT94

♥ A4

♦ 43

♣ AQ65

1♠ 2♦

3♣

Here we have a good hand, so we rebid 3♣. This shows at least 5-4 distribution and extra values (about 14+ points). We can make this rebid with a variety of different shapes: 5-4, 5-5, even 6-4 or more distribution.

But if we have the same distribution but fewer values, we use our 2-Major Waiting bid (2♠ in this auction) and then later show our second suit.

Example 8

♠ KQT94

♥ J4

♦ 43

♣ AQ65

1♠ 2♦

2♠ 2NT

3♣

With this bidding sequence we have shown at least 5-4 shape and usually minimum values.

Conclusion

Though a 2/1 GF response from partner has created a game forcing auction, and simplified some of your rebidding choices, it has not solved all of our problems. It is important for us to be on the same page with partner about the shape, strength, and stopper-showing meaning of each of your rebids. Most of Opener’s rebids are natural, but by introducing 2-Major Waiting (and 3-Level Extra Values), you create some more sophistication for your side and make it easier to show stoppers, play a NT contract from the proper side, and to show or deny extra values while you are “patterning out” your hand. Make sure you work on these rebids with your partner and improve your 2/1 GF bidding.