



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(427) 2/1 Bidding in Competition

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Level: 6 of 10 (2 of 6)

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General

In competitive auctions we do not play 2/1 Game Forcing, meaning that a 2-level response to a 1-level opening bid is not game forcing. 2-level 'freebids' in competitive auctions have a variety of different meanings based on the situation. It is important that we and partner are in agreement about the meanings of these 2-level responses. Here we look at a variety of different auctions and see how these bids have different meanings.

2-Level Freebids – Vs. Overcalls

When we open the bidding at the 1-level and LHO makes a simple overcall (at the 1-level or the 2-level) then if Responder bids a new suit at the 2-level (not a jump) this is a simple freebid showing a 5+card suit and 10+ points. This 2-level freebid is sometimes called "Five-and-Dime."

Example 1

♠ 843

♥ 95

♦ A76

♣ AQ954

1♥ 1♠ __?

Although Responder could not bid 2♣ if the opponent had passed (that would be a 2/1 GF bid), when the opponent makes an overcall, Responder can make a freebid at the 2-level. This shows a 5+card ♣ suit and 10+ points. It is forcing for one round!



2-Level Freebids – Vs. Weak Jump Overcalls

This 2-level freebid showing “Five-and-Dime” is also true when the opponents make a Weak Jump Overcall at the 2-level and Responder bids their suit at the 2-level.

Example 2

♠ AQ954

♥ 95

♦ KJ6

♣ J63

1♣ 2♥ ___?

Here Responder can bid 2♠ showing 5+card ♠ and 10+ points. This is forcing for one round, not to game.

Weak Jump Shifts in Competition

If Responder bids their long suit at the 2-level, but in order do so they jump, then this is not a freebid - it is a jump shift. Most partnerships play that 2-level jump shifts in competition are weak – showing a long suit and about 0-6 HCP.

Example 3

♠ QJ9543

♥ 9

♦ T86

♣ J63

1♣ 1♦ ___?

Here we can jump to 2♠ to show a 6+card ♠ suit and a very weak hand.

2-Level Freebids – Vs. Takeout Double

When we open the bidding at the 1-level and our LHO makes a takeout double, then a response of a new suit at the 2-level is non-forcing. If it is a jump into a new suit, it is a weak jump shift. If it is not a jump, then this new suit is natural and non-forcing.

Example 4

♠ J5

♥ Q8

♦ KJT854

♣ T63

1♠ X ___?

With this hand Responder bids 2♦. This is non-forcing and shows 5-9 HCP and a good 5+card suit (or more often a 6+card suit). It is similar to a 2♦ preemptive opening bid.



2-Level Freebids – Vs. 1NT Overcall

When we open the bidding and LHO makes a 1NT overcall, showing a balanced 15-18 points with a stopper in our suit, then Responder is rarely interested in game. Responder will normally want to just compete in the bidding when they have a long suit. Bidding a new suit in this situation is natural and non-forcing.

Example 5

♠ 5

♥ 983

♦ K54

♣ AJ9843

1♠ 1NT ___?

With this hand Responder bids 2♣. This is non-forcing and shows 5-9 HCP and a good 5+card suit (or more often a 6+card suit).

Competition in a 2/1 GF Auction

When we make a 2/1 GF response, we enter a game forcing auction. In that case, we must bid a game; we may not play in a partscore. There is one exception to this: when the opponents enter our auction, we can double the opponents for penalty instead of bidding a game.

Example 6

1♠ P 2♦ 2♥

X

This double is penalty and suggests that defending 2♥ doubled would be more profitable than bidding a game.

Conclusion

When Responder freely bids a new suit at the 2-level (not a jump shift), we use the vocabulary that it is a *Positive Freebid* if it is strong (and usually forcing) and we call it a *Negative Freebid* when it is competitive (and non-forcing). When the opponents make an overcall of a suit, Responder uses positive freebids. When the opponents compete with a takeout double or NT overcall, Responder's 2-level bids are negative freebids. When we are in a 2/1 GF auction and the opponents compete in the bidding, we are still in a game force. We must either double the opponents for penalty or bid some game. 2/1 GF is a clear system, but when the opponents interfere it can become far more complex.