**(9) 2/1 Game Forcing: Modern Bridge Standard**

*Updated: March 2010 © Robert S. Todd*

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**Introduction to 2/1 Game Forcing Bids**

Two Over One Game Forcing bids are the core of a modern approach to bidding. The primary idea is that when partner opens at the 1-level and we bid a new suit at the two level (not including jump shifts), this is a game forcing bid – meaning neither Opener nor Responder can pass below game. This allows both players to confidently describe their hands – knowing that all of their bids are forcing and they won’t get “dropped” before reaching game.

*2/1 GF Bids*

1♠ - 2♣

1♠ - 2♦

1♠ - 2♥

1♥ - 2♦

1♥ - 2♣

1♦ - 2♣

These are all the 2/1 Game forcing bids.

After our auction begins with a 2/1 Game Forcing bid we change our perspective on the rest of the auction. We know that we are going to bid game, so we want to focus on a few new questions:

* Which game are we going to play – 4 Major, 3N, or 5 minor?
* Are we going beyond game (to slam?)

**Basics of 1N Forcing**

In *Standard American* bidding we respond 1N to 1-Major with 6-9 HCP and bid at the 2-Level with 10+ HCP. Now that we play 2/1 bids as Game Forcing (showing 12+ HCP) we have to figure out what to do with the 10-11 HCP hands that we used to respond with at the 2-Level. These hands are not good enough to respond with at the 2-level - so we will have to bid 1N with them as well. This new “wide ranging” 1N response (6-9 or 10-11 HCP) is called *1N Forcing.* Using 1N Forcing we expect Opener to bid after our 1N response (thus the name 1N Forcing) and we further describe our hand with our second bid.

*Note: It is also possible to play* 1N Semi-Forcing*, which is similar to 1N Forcing except that the Opener can pass 1N with a balanced minimum (12-13 HCP) opening bid.*

**Responding to 1♠**

When we make a 2/1 GF bid we generally want to have a 5c suit to bid at the 2-level. But when we don’t have a 5-card suit and we have 12+ HCP we still want to make a GF bid. To solve this problem we lessen our requirements for a 2/1 in a minor. We can bid 2-minor with only a 4-card suit, but bidding 2♥ promises a 5-card suit.

*Note: This is a good general rule in all of bridge – “If you are going to lie, lie in a minor!”*

1♠ - 2♣ usually 4+card ♣ suit, 12+ HCP

1♠ - 2♦ 4+card ♦ suit, 12+ HCP

1♠ - 2♥ 5+card ♥ suit, 12+ HCP

*Note: With 3-4-3-3 and 12+ HCP we have to lie and bid 2♣ (though we know we are going to play in ♠ since we have at least a 5-3 fit.)*

**Responding to 1♥**

When we have a Game Forcing hand (12+ HCP) we strive to make a 2/1 bid as often as possible. If we have a 4-card ♠ suit and a 4-card minor we will choose to make the 2/1 GF bid (bid the minor instead of responding 1♠.) Once we have established a GF auction we will be able to find a 4-4♠ fit if we have one.

One hand where we don’t make a 2/1 GF bid even when we have 12+ HCP is when we have a 5+c♠ suit. We must respond 1♠ to a 1♥ opening bid and subsequently make forcing bids in order to try to find our ♠ fit. Making a 2/1 bid into another suit will make it hard to find a ♠ fit because partner will never think that we have a 5-card ♠ suit.

**When Don’t We Make a 2/1 GF Bid with a GF Hand?**

There are only a few hands where we have 12+ HCP and do not make a 2/1 GF bid. These are hands that can be described in one call or have other conventional tools available. Some examples of these hands are *Jacoby 2N, Splinters, or 3N – choice of game bids.*