

Basics of 2-over-1—Part 2

Raising partner's major

Here's a summary of your bidding options when you have 3+-card support for partner's opening bid of 1H or 1S.

With a balanced hand:

- 3+ trumps & 5-10 pts. = Make a direct raise (1H-2H). (Some partners play this 8-10)
- 4+ trumps & 10-12 support pts. = Make a direct limit raise (1H-3H).
- 3 trumps & 10-11 pts. = Use the **Forcing Notrump** convention, then jump to 3 of partner's suit.
- 3 trumps & 12-13 pts. = Make a 2-over-1, then jump to game in partner's suit -- 1H-2C-2NT-4H.
You can also use this approach when you have 4 trumps and you want to emphasize values in a strong side suit. Be aware, though, that if you use this "delayed" raise, it will be almost impossible to convince partner that you have more than 3 trumps.
- 3 trumps & 14+ pts. = Make a 2-over-1, then make a minimum rebid in partner's suit -- 1H-2C-2NT-3H.
- 3 trumps & 15-17 pts. in a 4-3-3-3 hand (where the 4-card suit is a minor) = Respond 3NT. This use of 3NT is a special treatment that is not standard; it's a point for discussion with your partner.
- 4+ trumps & 13+ support pts. = Make a forcing raise (**Jacoby 2NT**).

With an unbalanced hand (singleton or void):

- 3+ trumps & 5-10 pts. = Make a direct raise (1H-2H).
- 4+ trumps & 10-12 support pts. = Make a direct limit raise (1H-3H).
- 3 trumps & 10-11 pts. = Use the **Forcing Notrump** convention, then jump to 3 of partner's suit.
- 3 trumps & 12-13 pts. = Make a 2-over-1 bid in a new suit. If partner shows a minimum (by rebidding 2 of his suit or 2NT), jump to game in partner's suit.
- 3 trumps & 14+ pts. = Make a 2-over-1, then make a minimum rebid in partner's suit (1S-2C-2NT-3S).
Or if partner rebids his suit, you can show your raise and singleton with a **splinter bid** (1S-2C-2S-4D).
- 4+ trumps & 13+ support pts. = Make an immediate splinter bid.

Follow-up auctions

Opener's second bid:

One of the common misconceptions about 2-over-1 auctions is that after the forcing-to-game response, neither partner has to jump to show extra values. This is only half right. The general guideline is that responder does not jump with strong hands, but opener may.

In most 2-over-1 auctions, responder is the "captain" because he has more information about opener's hand than opener has about his. When responder has a strong hand, he chooses forcing, low-level rebids to give opener maximum room to provide information. Responder tends to be the "asker" and opener is the "teller".

If opener bids weak and strong hands the same way, responder will never be able to make an intelligent decision about how high to bid. For this reason, it's important for opener to communicate his strength as early as possible in the auction. To do this, opener makes **value bids** that show whether or not he has a minimum hand -- he bids less with less, and more with more.

- To show a minimum: Make a **low-level rebid** in your suit or notrump (1H-2C-**2H** or **2NT**).
- To show extra values: Make a **jump** (1H-2C-**3H** or **3NT**), a reverse bid (1H-2C-**2S**) or any bid at the 3-level (1H-2D-**3C**, **3D**).
- To show 18+ balanced: Rebid 2NT, then show your extra strength later (1H-2C-**2NT**-**3NT**-**4NT**).
- Other new-suit bids at the 2-level (1S-2C-**2D** or **2H**) are natural, but don't define your strength.

Suppose, for example, that you open 1S with ♠AKJ1087 ♥A62 ♦KJ8 ♣7 and partner responds 2C. If you follow the "never-jump" rule and rebid just 2S, you've kept the auction low, but you've concealed your strength. It's worth using up an extra level of bidding if it accurately describes your hand, so you should make the value bid (3S) with this hand.

Note, though, that you can take advantage of the low-level rebid when you have a hard-to-describe hand such as ♠AJ6543 ♥AK2 ♦KJ8 ♣7. Since you don't want to over-emphasize such a weak spade suit, you can rebid 2S with this hand and then show your extra values later.

After 1H by you – 2D by partner, here are the meanings for your second bid:

- Rebid of your major (**2H**) = Minimum (12-14 pts.). This may be only 5-card suit if your hand is unsuitable for 2NT (weakness in an unbid suit) or a new-suit rebid.
- **2S** = Extra values (15+ pts.) and a 4-card suit.
- **2NT** = Balanced minimum (12-14 pts.) with stoppers in unbid suits **OR** 18+ balanced.
- Non-jump bid of 3 of a new suit (**3C**) = Extra values (15+ pts.) and a 4+-card suit.
- Raise of partner's suit (**3D**) = Extra values (16+ playing points) with support (4+ cards).
- 3 of your major (**3H**) = Extra values (14-15+ pts.) and a strong 6+-card suit.
- **3NT** = Extra values (15-17 pts.) with balanced distribution.
- Jump in a new suit (**3S** or **4C**) = Extra values, good support and a singleton in the suit bid (splinter).
- Jump to game in your major (**4H**) = Minimum (11-13 pts.) with a long, solid suit.
- **4NT** = **Keycard Blackwood** for partner's suit.