

Session 1

Introduction: Why 2/1 Game Forcing? And When?

Why 2/1 Game Forcing?

In Standard American (SA), after a 2/1 response, a rebid of opener's suit, a raise of responder's suit, and 2NT are all non forcing.

1S	2C	1S	2C	1S	2C
2S	P?	3C	?	2NT	?

This can be a problem if opener has 16+

1S	2C
?	

1097654 AK3 AQ K9 (16)

AJ765 AK 73 A964 (16)

AJ7653 AK 7 A964 (16)

AJ765 AK3 Q7 A96 (18)

With the first hand, you can't bid 2S or 2NT as that can be passed, If you bid 3NT, you show 18-19, You have to jump to 3S, and partner (a) will be reluctant to bid 3NT without both red Kings, and/or (b) might bid 3NT with a hand that can make 6C. Even if responder has a spade fit and wants to invite slam, he can't bid 4S, but has to cue-bid, which sounds as if he/she doesn't like spades. Wouldn't it be nice to bid a forcing 2S with this hand?

With the 2nd hand, you can't raise partner as that can be passed, so you have to either underbid with 3C or jump to 4C bypassing 3NT, and of course finding partner with K Q954 AJ105 QJ43. With the 3rd hand, you have both problems at once. Would it be nice to bid a forcing 3C with the 2nd hand and a forcing 2S with the 3rd hand, bidding clubs at your next opportunity? With the last hand, you have to jump to 3NT, hiding your club fit and any slam exploration (6S? 6C? 6NT?) starts from there. Wouldn't it be nice to bid 2NT forcing with this hand, then 4C over partner's 3NT, knowing that partner's 2C bid promised at least an opening hand? .

1S	2H
?	

AQ765 AK3 K74 54 (16) Jump to 4H to show 16+

AJ765 AK3 K74 A4 (19) Jump to 4H . Now 19(!)

Here you'd just like to bid 3H forcing.

If opener does make a forcing rebid, responder may now have a problem if he has 13+, because a simple raise of opener's second suit, rebid of responder's suit or 2NT bid are all non-forcing.

1S 2C
2H ? 2NT, 3H, 3C all non-forcing

5(4) Q64 AK5(4) KQ1094 (14)

Here, responder has to either (a) jump to 3NT, in which case opener, with 6-4 or 5-5, cannot doesn't know if responder has either 2 spades or 3 hearts, or (b) bid 4th suit forcing, which will create problems for opener when he is 5-4 in the majors but doesn't have a diamond stopper (AKJ43 AQ93 42 86, or even worse, opener will have AQ763 AJ75 9 J86, and bid 4C, when 3NT is the best contract). Wouldn't it be nice to bid a forcing 2NT?

How about

1H 2C
2NT ?

AQ3 K2 54 AQJ986

3C is non-forcing (showing about 10 hcp) , so you have to bid 4C (Is that Gerber?), bypassing what may be your best contract (3NT). Opposite J942 AQJ75 K3 K5, 6NT is cold, but opposite K94 AJ975 KJ3 72, 6C could be down at trick 2 and 4NT could be down if the CK is offside. Wouldn't it be nice to bid a forcing 3C?

The problem with these situations is that you are trying to determine how high to play and in what suit (or NT) with the same bid, either opener's rebid or responder's rebid. As responder – the 2C bidder may only have 10 hcp, opener must often jump with 16 to establish a game forcing auction. And when opener doesn't jump, responder has to jump at his second turn to show an opening hand (13+)

Life is easier if responder's first bid is forcing to game (13+) In this case, all subsequent bids can be forcing and no one has to jump at their second bid. In fact, as we shall see, jumps show special hands that cannot be easily shown, if at all, in other ways.

In 2/1, an unpassed responder forces to game by bidding a new lower ranking suit at the 2-level. This promises an opening hand which, in turn requires that all of responder's invitational hands (10 – bad 12) are "stuffed into" a 1NT response that now shows 6- bad 12 points, rather than 6-bad 10. This 1NT bid ("Forcing No-Trump," or "F1NT") is forcing on opener for 1 round if responder is an unpassed hand. And it is the keystone of the 2/1 System. We will spend as much time discussing this bid (or more) than 2/1 auctions. In fact, the first two sessions are largely devoted to this bid

When is 2/1 game forcing?

2/1 is game forcing when an unpassed hand makes a 2-level bid in a lower ranking new suit in an uncontested auction. 5 of the 6 auctions involve an opening bid of one of a major

1S	2C	1S	2D	1S	2H
1H	2C	1H	2D	1D	2C

(1D – 2C is a special case that will require a separate discussion)

Let's look at what this eliminates:

P 1 Major This can't be game forcing as responder has less than an opening hand
2 lower

1H/1S 2S/3S/4S no change in these meanings

1H/1S 2NT no change here, either. Jacoby 2NT or natural

1H/1S 3NT 13-15, 2-card support? 3-card support?

1C/1D 2NT natural, invitational or forcing, depending on agreement

1C/1D 2H/2S weak or strong jump shift

1H/1S 3C/3D or Bergen

It eliminates competitive auctions

1H (1S) 2C 10+ points. Forcing by UPH (who is unlimited) for one round, but not to game

1H (Dbl) 2D Likely weak (32 74 KQ10974 Q43)

But not all of them

1H (P) 2D (2S) Game force established with 2D, (2S) doesn't change this

Forcing 1NT (F1NT)

Let's look at when this applies:

1H 1NT 1S 1NT note that 1C – 1NT and 1D – 1NT are not F1NT

1H (X) 1NT not forcing (6-10)

1H (1S) 1NT not forcing (6-10)

Regarding responder's first bid:

- (1) Any hand responder bids 1NT with playing SA, he/she bids 1NT playing SA (showing 6 – bad 10), he/she bids 1NT playing 2/1. Similarly, any hand that responder would bid 1S with over 1H playing SA, he/she bids 1S with playing SA

Partner opens 1H

Kxx xx Axxx xxxx	bid 1NT
x xx AJxxxx Qxx	bid 1NT
Qxxx x AJxxx Qxx	bid 1S

(2) With an opening hand opposite an opening hand, responder makes the same first bid playing SA and 2/1

1H ?

KQx xx AQxx QJxx (14)	bid 2C
xx KQx AKxx QJxx (15)	bid 2C (unless your agreement with your partner is 3NT shows this)
x Kx AJxxxx AJx (13)	bid 2D
KQxx Qx AJxx Kxx (15)	bid 1S
KQxx x AJxxx Kxx (13)	bid 2D
x KQxx AJxxx Kxx (13)	bid 3S (splinter)

The only difference is with invitational hands (10-12) that you would have bid a new suit at the 2-level, you now bid 1NT with them.

1S ?

xx KJxx AQxxx xx	instead of 2D, bid 1FNT
x KJxx AQJx xxxx	instead of 2C, bid 1FNT
xxx KJxx AQxx xx	instead of 2D, bid 1FNT
AJxx KQJx xxx xx	bid 3S, invitational, 4+ trump, same as in SA
AJx KQx xxxx xx	This would be 2D in SA, In 2/1, bid 1NT (F1NT), then 3S

Aside on 2/1 with a Single Raise or Limit Raise in Partner's Suit

Because 1NT is forcing by an unpassed hand, that hand (responder's) can bid F1NT before showing support:

1H 3H 4-card limit raise, just like SA

1H 1NT 3-card limit raise

2C/2D 3H

Similarly, with a single raise, a direct raise can be played as constructive

1H 2H constructive raise (Kxx Kxx Kxxx xxx)

1H 1NT weak raise (Kxx Kxx xxxx xx)
2C/2D 2H

There are two advantages to doing this. First, partner knows you have a constructive hand when you raise, allowing him to know that a game try is more likely to be accepted. Second, the opponents might not balance in the second auction, thinking you do not have an 8-card fit.

The Opener's Response to F1NT

Opener's responses to F1NT can be divided into 2 categories:

- (1) Hands you would bid with even playing SA. You make the exact same bid playing 2/1.
- (2) Hands you would pass playing SA; there are only two
 - 5332 distribution 11-14 hcp
 - 4522 and 45(31) distribution, 11 – 15 hcp

Here you'll need to learn to bid 3- and even 2- card minor suits!

Hands you would Bid With Even Playing SA

What makes 2/1 easier is to remember that with any hand you would bid with over 1NT playing SA, you make the same bid over F1NT playing 2/1. These include all hands that are not 5332 with 11 – 14 hcp (or 45(13)) with 11 - bad 16 hcp

- Rebid a 6+ card major :

AJ8543 A4 K95 82 (12)	1S 1FNT 2S
AKJ854 AQ K95 82 (17)	1S 1FNT 3S

- Bid a 4+ side card suit

AJ854 A4 K953 82 (12)	1S 1FNT 2D
AQ854 A4 KQJ32 8 (15)	1S 1FNT 2D
AKJ85 AK4 K953 82 (18)	1S 1FNT 3D (2D? 6 losers)
AKJ85 AK4 K9532 8 (18)	1S 1FNT 3D

AK95 AKJ85 K95 2 (18) 1H 1FNT 2S at least good 16 - 17 hcp if 4-5

note that the new-suit non-jump bids have a very wide range: 11 - bad 18

- Raise to 2NT with 18 – 19 (or 17 and an excellent 5-card major (KQJ9x)).

KQ954 KQ5 A92 A32 (18) 1S 1FNT 2NT
 K95 KQJ105 A92 A108 (17) 1S 1FNT 2NT too good to open 1NT

You do not raise to 2NT with a good 16 – 17 hand you could have opened 1NT but chose to open 1 of a major. Instead you temporize with 2 of a minor, then bid 2NT

- AKJ10543 8 AQ5 A84 (5 losers) 1S 1FNT 4H (splinter, as 3H would have been forcing)

Expert bid: Bid 4 of a lower ranking suit, an “auto-splinter”, a 5-loser hand with a self-sufficient suit and shortness in the bid suit. If you had 4 losers you would have opened 2C. Does not show hearts: a 3H rebid (jump shift) would show hearts and be game forcing

Aside: Opener’s Rebids with 6-4 Hands (6M – 4m and 6S-4H)

We’ve talked about rebidding a 6-card major over F1NT, and showing a (second) 4-card suit over F1NT. What if you have both? Consider a 4-card minor

AQ9543 K4 Q943 3 (11) bid 2S
 AQ9543 KJ KJ43 3 (14) bid 2S
 AKJ943 K4 AQ43 3 (17) bid 3S (good suit)
 AJ8543 AQ AQ43 3 (17) bid 2D! (you need PD to prefer to 2S w/2, then you’ll invite with 3S)
 A95432 AQ AQ4 43 (16) bid 2D!!! (for experts only; you need partner to have a doubleton spade)

With a 6-card major and a 4-card minor, rebid 2 of the major with minimum values (11-15).

With 16-18 and a good 6-card major, jump in the major; who cares if partner is short?

With 16-18 and a mediocre 6-card major, bid the 4-card minor.

With a good 18+ (good enough to jump shift) jump in the minor (duh!)

Let’s look at what you will do with these hands when partner (responder) bids again.

AQ9543 K4 Q943 3 (11)

1S 1FNT
 2S ?

2NT PD has 0-1 spades and 11 hcp. Bid 3D to show your 6-4 hand and min values. PD should pass

3S PD has 10-11 hcp with 2 spades or 3 small spades and very flat hand. Bid at teams, guess at MPs

AQ9543 KJ KJ43 3 (14)

2NT Bid 3NT. PD will pass 3D, remember? You’ve already shown 6 spades

3S Bid 4S

AJ8543 AQ AQ43 3 (17)

1S 1FNT
2D ?

2S bid 3S, invitational. PD has 2 spades (or 3 w/5-7 hcp), will pass with 5-7, bid game with 8-9
2NT bid 3S, forcing w/ extras, showing a 6th spade. With 11-15, you would have shown it with 2S bid
3D bid 3S. Again forcing, shows 6-4 (OK, maybe 6-3) with extras. PD can bid 3NT, 4S, 4D or 5D.

With 6 spades and 4 hearts, rebid 2H, regardless of your strength between 11-15 hcps unless your 6-card spade suit is very strong and/or your 4-card heart suit is very weak . A lot of judgment is needed here.

1S 1FNT
?

AJ9543 K743 K4 3 (11) Bid 2H

This is easy. The rebids may be a problem. If PD prefers to 2S, pass (easy). If he/she raises to 3H, bid game at teams, guess at MPs (your heart spots suck). If 3S (3-card limit raise), bid 4S (easy). 2NT is the problem, as PD may have doubleton spade and 3S will be right contract. But 3S is forcing! 3NT down 3 anyone? But wait, we have a convention for 1S – 1FNT; 2H – 2NT!! See **Appendix 2: Convention for Bidding After 1S-1FNT-2H-2NT with 6-4 or 5-5 in Majors**

AKJ1043 10743 A4 3 (12) Bid 2S

2S will play better than 2H if partner is weak with 1-3 (or 0-3) in the majors and probably better even if partner has 4 hearts. You're likely to be wrong only if partner has 5 decent hearts (QJxxx) and 0 - 1 spade. If you bid 2S and partner invites with 2NT, now you can bid 3H to show this hand (not-forcing, as with decent values (and decent hearts) you would have bid 2H at your second turn)

AKJ954 KQ43 54 3 (13)

Bid 2H. If PD bids 2S, raise to 3S. If pd bids 2NT, bid 3S (forcing; see **Appendix 2**). If PD has a singleton spade, your (spade) suit quality gives you a good chance at 3NT.

AKJ954 KQ43 K4 3 (16)

Tough, 4 loser hand. 3S risks missing heart suit, 2H might be passed. Maybe you should have considered 3H at second turn, risking getting too high if PD bids 3NT.

AKJ1094 J543 AK 3 (16)

Bid 3S. Weak heart suit means partner will need 5-card support. Could be very wrong (if he has it).

The Hands Opener Would have Passed with Playing SA: Bidding with Minimum 5332, 4522 and 45(31) Hands Over F1NT

We know that opener responds to a F1NT in exactly the same way he/she would have bid over a “normal” 1NT. But the F1NT bid requires that opener bid with the 11 – 14 hcp 5332, 4531, and 4522 hands that he would pass with playing SA. He must be prepared to bid a 3-card minor. And if 4522, a 2-card club suit!

1S 1FNT
?

AJ653 K105 95 A84 (12)	bid 2C
AJ653 K105 954 A8 (12)	bid 2D bid longest minor, suit quality doesn't matter
AJ653 Q5 K105 A84 (14)	bid 2C with 2 3-card minors, bid 2C
AKQ53 Q5 K105 954 (14)	bid 2C (see above)
K1052 AJ653 A8 95 (12)	bid 2C (!)
KQ105 AKJ65 A8 95 (17)	Good enough to bid 2S

With 3-3 in the minors, bid 2C. You should do this even if your diamonds are stronger. This allows

- Responder to assume you are more likely to have 4 diamonds when you bid them; you will only have a 3-card diamond suit when you are (35)32 or 4531.
- Responder to play in his 6-card minor at the 2-level. If responder has 9 Q42 KJ10954 643, it doesn't matter what minor you rebid, you will play 2D. But if you rebid 2D with AJ653 95 AQJ 954, you'll feel foolish playing in your 3-3 fit opposite 9 Q42 643 K98754.

Never ever rebid 2H with a three card suit. It promises four or more hearts:

AJ653 AQJ 432 32	Bid 2D
AJ653 9543 AQJ2	Bid 2H. Hope partner doesn't have 9 86 K10954 A872

Note that opener may have to bid a 2-card club suit after opening 1H: when he is 4522. C'est la vie. Do not worry about this possibility when you are responder, it will just disturb you. But over a 1S opening, opener will always have at least 3 clubs for his rebid.

Reponder's Rebid After a F1NT.

Introduction

We have seen that opener's bidding over F1NT only changes (compared to SA and a 6-B10 NT) when opener holds a minimum balanced hand that he would pass with playing SA. Responder's rebid's can differ from SA in two general ways:

- Playing 2/1, responder can hold invitational hands that he would have bid at the 2-level with playing SA. When responder holds these hands, you will often see bidding sequences in 2/1 that are rare, if not impossible in SA. For example:

1S	1NT	1S	1 NT
2C	3S	2S	4D

These are impossible in SA but not uncommon in 2/1

- Playing SA,

1S	1NT
2C	

promises a 4-card suit, in 2/1 it is a 3-card suit. In many situations, responder will bid here when he would pass playing SA.

Opener Rebids 2 of a Minor

Opener has bid 1H or 1S, responder has bid F1NT and opener has rebid 2C or 2D (4 cases).

1S	1FNT
2C	?

Responder will only have one of two hands with three –card support here, a weak hand (5-7 hcp, not good enough for a constructive raise) or an invitational one (3-card limit raise). With the first, correct to 2S, with the second (K54 A854 K854 54), jump to 3S.

...and Responder Bids a New Suit

1S	1FNT	1S	1FNT	1H	1FNT
2C	2D	2C	2H	2D	3C

A new suit (non – jump) says "I have a weak hand (6 – bad10), and would rather play in my suit rather than yours. This is exactly the same as in SA

Sometimes this decision is easy, sometimes not:

1S	1FNT
2D	?

6 KJ10854 K9 5432 6 good hearts, no fit for partner's suits
 6 KJ4 1095 QJ9875 not so clear if partner may have 3 diamonds. I pass at SA, bid 3C in 2/1
 6 KJ4 1095 Q75432 now I pass
 65 KJ 109 Q965432 spades or clubs. Does vulnerability matter?
 64 K87654 K95 Q5 hearts or spades?
 6 K109654 K965 105 hearts or pass? Easy to pass playing SA

The difference between 2/1 and SA is that, if partner may have a 3-card minor, you should be more likely to bid your suit:

6 KQJ94 J76 Q754 Bid 2H even playing SA, your heart suit is good.
 6 K9432 J76 Q754 Pass playing SA, guess playing 2/1. I bid 2H.
 6 K9432 J7 Q7542 2H. No better choice
 64 K9432 J76 Q75 2S.
 64 KQJ94 J76 Q75 2H. 2S. 2H. 2S.

Choosing between Passing and Correcting Back to Opener's Major.

If you have 2-card support for partner's major, you should have 5 clubs to pass 2C, 4 or 5 diamonds to pass. Partner is more likely to have 3 clubs (not 4) for a 2C bid than 3 diamonds (not 4) for a 2D bid.

1H 1FNT
 2C ?

Q82 64 A943 9543 bid 2H. Yes, partner may have 4 clubs, but 2H should score as well.
 982 64 A943 Q543 bid 2H.
 98 64 A943 Q5432 OK, we're passing now

1H 1FNT
 2D ?

Q82 64 A943 9543 Pass. Partner has 4 diamonds unless he/she is 3532 or 4531
 A82 Q4 Q943 9543 Bid 2H. If partner invites game in hearts or NT, you will accept.

1S 1FNT Partner promises 4+ hearts here.
 2H ?

82 643 Q943 A954 Pass. Why? You don't really want to hear another bid from PD
 82 643 KQ43 A954 Bid 2S. Why? Because you do.

Choosing between Raising Partner's Minor, Inviting with 2NT or Passing.

1S 1FNT 8 643 KQ432 AQ5
 2D ?

This is an easy 3D at 2/1 or SA, you have 11 hcp, 5-card support (note: shortness in partner's spades is not an asset). But what if we change it just a little?

8 643 KQ432 A75 Only 9 hcp. But partner could have 17. Raise or pass?
 8 6432 KQ43 A752 Only 4 diamonds, partner could have 3. Raise or pass?
 82 K43 Q432 AJ52 Raise, pass, bid 2NT? What if the CJ is the C7?

Opener can have a 3-card or 5-card minor, 11 hcp or 17 hcp. This wide range means that responder's 2nd bid can frequently be well-reasoned and hopeful, but "unfortunate;" you want to make the bid that is "most likely to be right" or perhaps "least likely to be a horrible disaster." (joke). Some things to consider when you are making this decision.

- How good is my holding in opener's minor? Strive to raise with 5-cards headed by the A or K. The most likely game is 3NT, a 5-card suit means another trick.
- Do I have a high honor (AK or Q) in opener's major. Strive to bid with one; this could solidify his/her 5-card suit.
- How good is the texture of my suits? With Q843 I might not even have a stopper for NT. With QJ92, I very well may have 2 stoppers.

The Impossible 2S Bid

Because of the high end of 1M – 1FNT; 2m (up to 17 hcp), it is often correct to invite game on some pretty light hands. When partner has opened 1H (but not 1S), responder can distinguish between sound invitational raises (11 hcp) and weaker, distributional ones (8-9 hcp), by making an "impossible" rebid of 2S. It is (should be) easy to remember what this bid means as your F1NT denied 4+ spades. The ability to make this bid allows you to raise partner's minor with lighter hands after he/she opens 1H.

1H F1NT
 2C ?

K64 9 9854 AQJ54 2S. The 5th club is very valuable for NT
 K64 94 985 AJ542 3C. Make the C2 the D2 and you bid 2H

Opener's Rebids After a Raise or 2NT

1S 1FNT
 2C 3C 9-11
 ?

With a minimum hand, opener passes. It is only with 14 and at least a high honor or two in clubs that opener considers bidding on with a balanced hand.

K10875 K75 AJ KJ3 3NT. Partner should have 5 clubs, the suit will be a source of tricks.

With an unbalanced hand and extra values, opener can bid a new suit. Responder should assume this shows a stopper, and is looking for a stopper in the 4th suit to play 3NT.

AQJ75 K75 7 AQ432

1S 1FNT
2C 2NT semi-balanced 10-11
?

When the opening bid is 1H, opener should be more careful about bidding onward over a raise of his second suit, as responder could have bid (impossible) 2S to show a near-opening hand.

1H 1FNT
2C 3C

K75 K10875 AJ KJ3 Pass. Responder might have something like Q82 64 K86 A9874

Over 2NT, opener will frequently pass or raise to 3NT (no problem). But what does he have when he does/doesn't?

1S 1FNT
2C 2NT
?

AKJ954 9 A5 K543 (15)	3S, a minimum for the bid. Forcing. We covered this
AJ954 9 A5 K9543 (12)	3C. You have no interest in playing 2NT, 3NT. Responder should pass.
AJ954 9 A5 KQ543 (14)	3NT. Don't bid 3C just to show 5-5, partner can't "divine" your 14 hcp.
AJ954 K104 Q5 KJ9 (14)	Bid 3H on the way to 3NT. <u>You have already denied 4 hearts.</u> Forcing
AJ954 K104 95 KJ9 (12)	Pass. 3H would be forcing. The downside of playing 2/1
AJ954 1042 A5 KQ9 (14)	3H? 3NT? Probably 3NT, your hearts suck and you have diamond help.
AJ954 1052 5 AKQ9 (14)	Probably 3H. Your diamond sucks.
AJ954 5 KQ2 AK94 (17)	3D. Rare. Just shy of jump shift. Nice opposite K2 J1043 A10854 QJ2.

Responder's Rebid After Opener Shows Extra Values over F1NT

Opener jumps in his own suit

1S 1FNT
3S ?

This is no different than SA; responder will pass, raise or bid 3NT 99.9% of the time. Opener is limited to 18, responder has no more than 12. A new suit is a cue bid in support of spades, not an alternative place to play, showing a near opener with a good spade holding (3-card limit raise or honor doubleton).

Q32 A9862 7 A1084 Bid 4C. Partner may have AKJ943 (KQ3) 643 (K3) and will cue-bid 4H in reply
 - Q32 954 KQJ10743 Pass. 4C may be a better contract than 3S, but you have no way to stop there.

1S 1FNT
 2NT ?

Opener has a balanced 18-19.

1S 1FNT
 3D ?

Opener is all but unlimited (not enough to open 2C).

The Opponents Compete Over Our Forcing NT

We noted earlier that F1NT no longer applies if LHO bids (Dbl or 1S) over our 1M opening (we also learned that, if the opponents compete after we begin with 1M – 2L, we are in a GF auction even if the opponents enter the auction after responder bids). What changes if opener's RHO comes in after the F1NT?

1S F1NT (2C/2D/2H)
 ?

2S good six card suit 12 – 15. Not strong enough to jump to 3S
 new suit probably 5-5 and maybe minimum, but at 2-level may be 5-4 or 6-4 with non min

Dbl Takeout, generally showing 5431 distribution; only promising 3 hearts over 2m

Opener's strength will depend a bit on the vulnerability and whether he/she may be forcing partner to bid at the 3-level. Compare the following 2 auctions

1S 1FNT (2C) 1H 1FNT (2S)
 Dbl Dbl

1S (P) 1FNT (2D)
 ?

AJ543 AJ3 5 KQ95 Dbl. Do something intelligent, I can tolerate anything
 KQ543 AK108 5 K94 2H slightly better than Dbl, especially VUL
 KJ543 A543 6 KQ9 Dbl better, might pass VUL

Do not confuse this Dbl with a Dbl if the opponents compete in a 2/1 auction, which is for penalty. For example:

1S (P) 2C (2D/2H)
 Dbl

(DOUBLE!). This is for penalty, and you should only pull it if you are all but certain there is a better place to play. The Over F1NT, if opener wants to Dbl for penalty, he/she can only pass and hope PD balances with a Dbl.

1S (P) 1FNT (2C)

A10843 K5 94 AQ98 pass and hope partner doubles.

PD will double with 8-9 points or more and uncertainty about where to play:

1S (P) F1NT (2C)
 P (P) ?

Q4 AJ93 KJ43 82 Dbl. I have a good hand and can sit for anything you choose to do.

After

1S (P) F1NT 2sg
 Dbl (P) ?

Responder bids his best suit, but he can convert the Dbl for penalty with a good holding in the opponent's suit. Remember, however, that you are sitting "under" the opponent, so your trump holding should be very good or your high card points should compensate for it.

1S (P) F1NT 2C
 Dbl (P) ?

Q4 Q84 8543 KJ7 Bid 2S. If there is an entry to dummy, you may only take one trick
 7 K84 J432 KQ94 Pass. You might make 3NT, you might not. They won't make 2C.

Bonus Material: Semi-Forcing NT by a Passed Hand over 1 Major Openings

You pick up 5(4) AJ54 K954 K95(4) in 1st or 2nd seat and pass and partner opens 1S. RHO passes and it is your call. ??

If you play 1NT as 6-10, you have no choice but to jump to 2NT, even with the singleton spade (remember, you cannot bid 2H over 1S with only a 4-card suit). All sorts of things can go wrong here.

- Partner opened light, passes and you go down
- Partner is 5422 with a minimum and 109xx in hearts and decides to pass; you miss your 4-4 heart fit
- Partner has a six-card suit and a decent hand and jumps to 4S, but you have a singleton and you go down.

Suppose, however, you agree to play 1NT showing 6 – bad 12, just like you do over 1M openings in 1st and 2nd seat. (The only difference here is that you deny 3+ card support for opener's major; never hide support for opener's major for even one bid when you are a passed hand. You cannot distinguish between a weak raise and a constructive raise, and yes, you should play Drury to show a limit raise.)

P 1S
?

Q9 AJ54 KJ54 954

Bid 1NT. If opener passes, he/she will have a balanced 12-13 and you will be in the right contract. If partner bids 2C, invite with 2NT. If partner bids 2D, invite with 3D (Don't worry about partner having only 3 diamonds; if he does he is 5332 with 14 HCP and you can either play 3NT or, if in your 4-3 diamond suit, partner can rough a club in the short hand). If partner bids 2 of a major, invite with a raise.

Opener says "semi-forcing" (this means that you can have up to a bad 12 hcp for your 1NT bid) and passes with any 5332 minimum hand. With extra values and/or shape, opener bids naturally. If partner has opened a light balanced hand, or has a full opener but would not accept a 2NT invitation to game, he/she will pass and you will be playing in a more comfortable 1NT!

Again, if the opponent's bid (double or 1S) over our major opening, 1NT is back to a normal 6 – bad 10. With the good 10 – bad 12, redouble or, over 1S jump to 2NT if you have (a) stopper(s) in spades. With 10 – bad 12 and heart support, you can bid 2NT with 4 hearts (Jordan 2NT), with 3-card support you can (a) bid Drury (2C) if you have agreed with partner that Drury is still on in this sequence, or (b), redouble and bid hearts at the cheapest level at your next opportunity.

P (P) 1H (Dbl)

?

Constructive Raises

As opener must bid over F1NT, responder does not have to raise to 2M with all 6 – 9 (bad 10) hands. With a hand that would not accept any game try (e.g., 1H – 2H – 3C), you can bid F1NT, then support opener's major:

1S 1NT(F) K93 932 Q954 J53
2C 2S

Partner will think you have a doubleton and cool his jets, not inviting game where he/she might otherwise do so.

Questions when Deciding to Play 2/1.

This is an ongoing list of questions that we will be adding to as the classes progress. Some of the questions here won't be discussed until later classes, don't worry we will get to them.

These are divided into (C) casual (partnership desk pickups), (S) serious (1 hour conversations), and (O) obsessive-compulsive (e-mail exchanges, for experts). Note that answers to some questions determine the answers to other questions.

(C) Do you open all 12 point hands? This is not strictly a 2/1 question, but one you should ask a pick-up partner, as the answer will determine whether you force to game or invite on in-between hands.

(C) Is 2/1 GF/4m (or, if responder rebids his suit at the 3-level, can opener pass? For example, 1H – 2C; 2H – 3C. This is the "which box do you check?" (GF vs. GF unless suit rebid) question.

- If opener can pass a rebid of responder's suit, are there bids by opener that establish a game force? 1S – 2C - ? I suggest that 2NT and 3C both establish a game force

(C) Is 1D – 2C (by an unpassed hand in an uncontested auction) game forcing? Recommendation: None, but playing this as GF simplifies things. If you play this as GF, you need a way to show an invitational hand (10-12) with long clubs; one way to do this is to play 1D – 3C as natural and invitational (non-forcing)

- If opener can pass a rebid of responder's suit, are there bids by opener that establish a game force? 1D – 2C - ? I suggest that 2NT and 3C both establish a game force

(C) Is 1NT by a passed hand over 1H or 1S forcing (6-bad 12), **semi-forcing (6- bad 12, but can be passed)**, or 6-bad 10? Recommendation: semi-forcing

(C) Do you play constructive raises by an unpassed hand (1M – 2M shows 8-bad 10, bid F1NT with less).
Recommendation: Yes (write this in Major Openings section of convention card)

(C) Does a rebid of opener's suit after a 2/1 response promise 6 trump? For example, 1S – 2H; 2S? If the answer is an unqualified "yes," be prepared for a long afternoon. Most reasonable people will reply "I will rebid a (decent) 5-card major if I don't like my other choices."

(S) – (O) Are jump shifts by opener after a 2/1 response natural (5-5 with extras) or splinters? For example, 1S – 2C; 3D. Recommendation: none

(C) – (S) What does opener have to have to raise responder new suit at the 2-level? 4 trump? Better than a minimum?

(S) Do you play serious or frivolous 3NT?

(S) What is 1M – 3NT? This is important as, if it promises a balanced hand with 3-card support (which some people play), your 1S – 2m auctions promise 4-card suits (e.g., 2434 over 1S). Otherwise you may have a 3-card suit (3433) over 1S

(S) – (O): Is a F1NT response limited to a bad 12 hcp? Partnerships can agree to bid F1NT, then 3NT for example, to show balanced 13-15 hands

Appendix 1: Choosing to Bid 1S rather than Raising with Support for Hearts

Suppose you pick up Q10xx(x) Kxx xxx Kx(x) and hear partner open 1H. Do not even think about bidding 1S. If you later bid 2H, partner will think you have a doubleton. Worse, the opponents might bid before you have a chance to bid again, and partner will have no idea that you have support:

1H	(P)	1S	(2D)	
P				I have a minimum with only 2 spades (no raise or support dbl)
	(3D)	?		You're screwed, as 3H sounds like a limit raise
	(4D)			You're really screwed.

So when can you bid 1S with support?

- When you have a very weak hand with an excellent 5-card spade suit (KQ10xx xxx Jxx xx); with a weaker spade suit or a better hand (KQ10xx Qxx xxx xx) you should bid F1NT. This is slowing partner down by implying you have a doubleton. (Even here you might not want to do this unless your LHO is VUL and/or has already passed; keep in mind the fact that you will not be able to bid 3H later if the opponents compete). You need a 5-card suit because partner may raise with 3-card support and you can't afford to play in a 7-card spade fit when you already

know you have 8 hearts. And you need a good suit as the only reason you're bidding 1S is to get a spade lead if LHO overcalls and buys the contract.

- When you have 3-card support for hearts and invitational values and a spade suit that is a source of tricks, so that partner can evaluate their hand after your invitation. (KQJxx Axx Jxx xx). Bid 1S, then invite with 3H. Keep in mind that, at unfavorable vulnerability (you are VUL, the opponents are not), the opponents may find a sacrifice. There is no harm in bidding 1S instead of 1NT (then 3H), as, if the opponents are going to jump in with a bid and preempt your auction, they can do it just as easily over 1S as 1FNT
- With a 4-card limit raise, always bid 3H immediately, even with KQJxx Axxx xx xx. This is because if you bid 1S, then 3H, (a) partner will never believe you have 4 hearts (it shows 3), and (b) the ability of the opponents to preempt your auction is much greater over 1S than 3H. The last thing you want to see is

1H (P) 1S 2D/3D
 P 4D/5D shit!

Appendix 2: Convention for Bidding After 1S-1FNT-2H-2NT with 6-4 or 5-5 in Majors

You pick up an opening hand with 5 spades and 5 hearts or 6 spades and 4 hearts. You open 1S and hear partner bid 1FNT. You bid 2H and partner invites with 2NT (invitational).

- AK9432 K543 94 4 you want to bid 3S and have partner pass
- AK9432 K543 A4 4 you want to bid 3S and have partner bid 3NT or 4S
- AK943 KJ543 94 4 you want to bid 3H and have partner pass (or correct to 3S)
- AK943 KJ543 A4 4 you want to bid 3H and have partner bid 3NT or 4H

Problem: while you can describe your shape with a 3H or 3S bid, you cannot describe your strength. And while, if you are strong, you could describe both by jumping to 4H or 4S, you miss 3NT when it is the right contract (for example, when partner has 1 spade and 2 hearts).

Solution: Play opener's 3H and 3S as forcing, showing good 5-5 and 6-4 hands respectively. With the weak hands, opener bids 3C, requiring responder to bid 3D. Opener then bids 3H or 3S to show the weak hands:

1S 1NT
 2H 2NT (inv)
 3H/3S forcing 5-5 or 6-4

1S 1NT
 2H 2NT
 3C 3D (required)
 3H/3S minimum (non-forcing) 5-5 or 6-4

Appendix 3: Pass or Correct?

The auction begins 1S – 1NT; 2H and you hold 85 853 Q943 A943? Or 85 853 KQ43 A943? What do you do? If partner has 6-4, you want to bid 2S. If partner is 5-5, you want to pass. If partner is 5-4, it probably doesn't matter. It's a guess. Or is it?

Think about how this auction might develop if you correct to 2S. If partner passes, you play 2S and hope that partner is not 5-5. But what if partner bids again, inviting game?

3S 6-4, extras
 3H 5-5, extras
 2NT 5422(?)

With 85 853 KQ43 A943, you will accept partner's invitation, raising his bid to game. With 85 853 Q943 A943 you will pass. If you pass, you might be in a better contract than 2H (2NT? 3S?), but you might not.