

2/1 Game Force

The main difference between Standard America and 2/1 Game Force is the meaning of 2-level responses to partner's opening bid of 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠.

- In Standard American, a 2-level response to partner's opening bid of 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ promises 10+ points and is *not* forcing to game.
- In 2/1, a 2-level response to partner's opening bid of 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ promises an opening hand or better and is forcing to game.

Note: Game level is defined as 3NT or 4 of a suit. If your trump suit is a major, the 4-level will get you to game. If your trump suit is a minor, you are *not* forced go to 5♣s or 5♦s.

The main advantage of the 2-over-1 system is that both partners know early in the auction that they're going to game, so they have more options and more bidding space to find their best contract.

The main disadvantage of 2/1 is that there's no easy way to show invitational hands of 10-11 points. To describe those hands, you must also use the Forcing NT convention, which we'll cover next week.

In a nutshell:

- 2-over-1 is used when partner opens 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ in first or second seat *and* the next player passes. Any 2-level **non-jump** bid by responder shows an opening hand. These are the only 2/1 GF auctions:

1♦ - 2♣ 1♥ - 2♣ 1♥ - 2♦ 1♠ - 2♣ 1♠ - 2♦ 1♠ - 2♥

- "Game Force" means 12+ points, or any hand you would have opened *or* any hand that's worth 12+ points because of a fit for partner's suit.

- Responder must have at least a 4-card suit to bid a minor at the 2 level. Responder must have 5 hearts to bid hearts at the 2 level.
- The 2-over-1 system doesn't affect the meanings of most other bids. One-level responses (1♥-1♠) and raises of partner's suit have the same meaning as in standard bidding.
- **Do not** bypass a 4-card major to bid a 4-card minor at the 2 level just to show your partner you have an opening hand. You can show partner your strength in future bids.
- **Do** bypass a 4-card major to bid a 5-card (or longer) minor at the 2 level if you have an opening hand. Show the major at your next turn to bid.
- 2-over-1 is **off** when opener is in 3rd or 4th seat. A responder who's a passed hand can't force to game.
- 2-over-1 is **off** when responder's RHO makes an overcall. After an intervening overcall, responder's new-suit bid shows a long suit and decent values, but it isn't forcing to game.
- 2-over-1 is **off** when responder's RHO doubles. The only strong bid over an opponent's double is redouble, showing 10+HCPs.

Using 2/1, your priorities as responder when holding a 12+-point hand are:

1. If partner opens a major, make the appropriate raise if you can.
2. If you can't raise partner's 1♥ bid, bid 1♠ with a 4-card spade suit and no 5-card minor.
3. If you can't raise partner's 1♥ bid, or bid 1♠, bid a 4-card or longer minor.
4. If partner opens 1♠, bid 2♥s with a 5-card or longer heart suit.
5. If you can't raise partner's 1♠ bid, and you don't have a 5+-card heart suit, bid a 4-card or longer minor.
6. If partner opens 1♦, and you don't have a 5-card major, bid a 5-card or longer club suit.
7. If partner opens 1♦, and you don't have a 5-card or longer club suit, bid a 4-card major suit if you have one.

With all other hands -- 6-11 points without support for opener's major suit *OR* 10-11 points with 3-card support for opener's major suit -- respond with a Forcing NT.

Quick Quiz

What do you bid when your partner opens 1H and you have:

♠Q10	♥J987	♦A7	♣J1098
♠K1098	♥109	♦AJ	♣KQ876
♠K1098	♥J9	♦AJ76	♣KJ8

What do you bid when your partner opens 1S and you have:

♠J	♥QJ952	♦AJ	♣KQ854
♠J	♥KJ109	♦A876	♣KQ8
♠Q1098	♥J9	♦AJ76	♣KQ8

What do you bid when your partner opens 1D and you have:

♠Q10	♥QJ952	♦A6	♣KQ87
♠KQ10	♥KJ9	♦J107	♣K1087
♠Q1098	♥J9	♦AJ76	♣KQ87