

TWO OVER ONE – Session 1

By Baloney Bill, alias Dr. Dirt

Over the past several months we have been bidding using the Standard American System, one that has been used for decades by many bridge players. Other systems exist, including the 2/1 (Two Over One) system, which has become very popular. The 2/1 System enables you to tell partner, who has opened the bidding, that your combined values should produce a game. All you need to get started is to learn is 3 specific bids. These particular bids have different meanings than you learned in the Standard American System.

Here they are. When you, as responder to partner's opening bid, bid a new suit at the 2-level, without jumping, then you guarantee partner that you have an opening hand and that game values are held by your partnership. Examples:

- Partner opens one spade. You bid two clubs, or two diamonds, or two hearts.
- Partner opens one heart. You bid two clubs, or two diamonds.
- Partner opens one diamond. You bid two clubs.
- What if partner opens a club? Sorry, you can't use 2/1 to show your opening values, because all you can do is to rebid your clubs at the two level (not a new suit) or bid another suit at the two level (that's jumping).
- There are only SIX POSSIBLE AUCTIONS that constitute a Two Over One auction (see the top three bullets). In each of these auctions, responder promises to have 4+ cards in the suit bid; the exception is the 1S – 1H auction where responder must possess _____ hearts.

What's this business about jumping? Well, if partner opens a heart and you bid two spades (a two-level bid), that's a jump bid, because you could have bid one spade. But WHAT IF I HAVE GAME VALUES AND WANT TO LET PARTNER KNOW RIGHT AWAY – can't I bid two spades???

Nope (please check this response) _____

What if partner opens one club, and I HAVE GAME VALUES AND WANT TO LET PARTNER KNOW RIGHT AWAY – CAN'T I BID A DIFFERENT SUIT AT THE TWO-LEVEL TO LET PARTNER KNOW. Nope _____

Will you ever let us know what I can do under the previous two circumstances? Yes _____ But not today.

Please know also that --- in the 2/1 system --- if you can respond to partner's opening bid at the one level, you must do so. For example, partner opens one diamond, and you hold this hand (S,H,D,C): A Q x x 10 x x xx A K Q x
If you bid 2 C, partner knows you have game-going values, but you can bid one spade, so do that instead.

Here's another difference between Standard American and 2/1. Suppose partner opens one spade and you hold this hand: x x A K x K J x x x x Q 10 Your response? _____ If partner bids 2 spades after your response, you can bid 3 diamonds; this bid is forcing, unlike in Standard American, where only if you bid a new suit is it forcing. You have already created a game force by your initial 2/1 response; partner will not pass.

In Standard American, if partner opened a spade and you bid 2 diamonds, you would only need 10 points to do so!

Lastly, for this session, if the LHO of your partner, who has opened the bidding, competes, then you revert to Standard American bidding. So, everything you have learned previously is still wonderful information to remember, just in case...

Let's end this initial 2/1 discussion with an example auction: 1H – P – 2C – P – 2H – P – 3NT

- Is the two-club response to the one heart opening bid game forcing? _____
- How many points does the two-club responder need to have? _____
- Playing Standard American, how many points would responder have needed to bid two clubs? _____
- How many spades does responder have? _____ Does responder have a diamond stopper? _____ Spade? _____

References:

1. Barbara Seagram; Undated. Barbara Seagram's Cheat Sheet, TWO OVER ONE. bseagram@uniserve.com
2. Larry Cohen; 1 Jan 2001. Two Over One Game Forcing Part 1.
3. Baloney Bill's malfunctioning brain