

## 2/1 Rebids & Continuations

While the majority of bidding in a 2/1 or 1N forcing auction is natural, it is important to remember what calls imply specifically in terms of strength/length of the hand/suits. There are a few “artificial” bids that will make more sense with a firm grasp of the other bids.

### 1. Impossible 2♠

Consider the auction

1♥ - 1N  
2♣

Opener has shown 5-4+ shape in the round suits, and responder has denied the ability to raise ♥s, bid ♠s, or game force. Responder’s problem is when he wants to raise ♣s. There is only one bid (3♣) to do this. Responder would like to raise with both

♠xxx ♥xx ♦KJx ♣AQxxx      and    ♠xxx ♥xx ♦KQxx ♣Kxxx

Clearly, the 3♣ bid is overworked. The two hand extremes are far apart, and may lead to inaccurate game bidding.

The solution is to allow responder’s 2♠ rebid show an invitational raise in opener’s minor after the following auctions:

1♥ - 1N      1♥ - 1N  
2♣            2♦

This treatment loses nothing, as responder has no need for a natural 2♠ rebid in this sequence – it is not a suit that either partner has, and they certainly don’t have a fit in ♠s.

### 2. The Copout Rebid

Responder encounters a rebid problem after some 2/1 sequences. Consider this situation:

1♠ - 2♣  
2♦ - ?      ♠xx ♥xxx ♦KJx ♣AKQxx

There’s no great rebid. Responder cannot rebid clubs without a six card suit, or raise diamonds without extra values, or rebid NT without a stopper, or rebid ♥s without a 4-card ♥ suit. Opener cannot raise ♠s either without three card support.

Thankfully, there is an unused bid that takes care of these hands: 2♠ (i.e. “raising” opener’s suit at the two level). This bid, called a punt or “copout”, shows a hand that cannot make any other descriptive bid.

The other auctions are listed below for completeness, but this rebid will only come up in a 2/1 auction where bidding opener's first suit at the two level is possible.

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

### 3. Responding with 4♠, game forcing values after a 1♥ opening.

This is an issue that requires partnership discussion, as responder can either bid 1♠ or make a 2/1. The majority of experts agree that

- With less than game forcing values, always show ♠s first
- With game forcing values and a balanced hand, show ♠s first
- With game forcing values or better, 4♠ and a decent 5+ card minor, make a 2/1 in the minor first (the bidding plan is to show ♠s later if a ♠ fit is possible).

The idea for this bidding style is that it is important to describe your hand as accurately as possible. There are several advantages to bidding the 2/1 first:

- A game force is set immediately. This not only simplifies future bidding, but it makes doubling an opponent's overcall for penalty much easier.
- Responder can easily suggest the length of both suits. This can become ambiguous in a 1/1 sequence (e.g. 1♥ - 1♠; 2♦ - 3♣).
- Opener can now consider where their partnerships tricks are coming from with greater accuracy.
- Responder will not always need to show the ♠ suit, which may pick up a lead advantage in 3N/4♥ contracts

Against this is the idea to always bid ♠s first. This has a couple of upsides:

- A possible ♠ fit is identified by opener immediately, which has some competitive advantages
- Responder gains short-term bidding space sometimes by staying at the one level and using Fourth Suit Forcing later.
- Responding at the one level encourages the opponents to be slightly more aggressive – in theory, responder can take advantage of this and respond 1♠ to “trap” the opponents into bidding too high.