Bridge Theory for the Practitioners

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39.   2/1 Game Force for a Serious Partnership, Part II

The reason 2/1 GF is such a strong and successful system is not because it helps you to bid games. You can bid games very well playing Standard American system or practically any other system for that purpose. The success of 2/1 GF comes from its help with accurate slam bidding. In this context several issues we need to keep in mind:

1) Accurate slam bidding is not bidding "six of the last three makeable slams". Staying out of bad slams is as important as bidding the pushy yet makeable slams.

2) Accurate bidding of minor suit games or slams is what sets the world class players apart from just the good players. In these kind of hands, players who do not have a sophisticated bidding system often plays in 3NT either going down when 5-minor makes or making 3N when a minor suit slam makes as well. Recognition of this fact prompted C. C. Wei to design his Precision bidding system in the late sixties [1].

3) Bidding slams when both hands are of similar value such as 16-16 is difficult in any system. An elaborate 2/1 GF system can provide a lot of help with these hands.

   How do we design our 2/1 GF system then? We will focus on three major issues related to *value and shape*.

   - We will establish quickly whether *each hand* is in the "slam zone" or not. We will break the hands into three value categories: 12-14 (minimum), 15-17 (mid-size) and 18-19 (strong). If both partners agree that the hands are not in the slam zone we will not even probe for slam. In this context, we will use *the principle of fast arrival to game* as a guideline.

   - We will "right-side" the NT contract. This will be done by avoiding re-bidding NT just because one has a balanced hand.

   - We will probe for minor suit slams. This will be done first, by avoiding a rebid of 3N with a jump unless we want to convey a very special shape of the hand. Just having 18-19 count and a balanced hand is not a good reason to jump to 3N. This takes away a lot of room and probing for minor suit slams becomes very difficult.

Second, we will design a special Key Card auction for minors with an exit policy to play in NT. This particular structure has been designed by Elizabeth Jankord and I want to give her full credit for this part.

Without further ado then let us get to business of designing our first 2/1 sequence. This will be the 1S – 2H sequence.

1S   **2H**
                         (2H over 1S promises 12+ hcps and 5+ Hs; denies 4+S)

I. Opener's Rebid after 1S – 2H

A. If Opener has 3+ Hs

- 4H = 3+ Hs; no slam interest; 12-14 hcps. Using the principle of fast arrival to game.

- 3H = 3+ Hs; slam interest; 15+ hcps
  Responder signs off to 4H with a minimum hand again using the principle of fast arrival to game; or, cue bids. Our Cue bid structure is Italian style i.e. we will cue bid controls up the line starting with the lowest ranking suits: Ace, King, Singleton, or void (AKSV) starting from the lowest ranking suit.

  For example, after 1S – 2H – 3H
  4H = sign off; I do not see slam unless you have a monster over there.

  3S = AKSV in S. Slam interest.

  3N = minimum 5332 hand; choice of game (COG). Very useful in both MP and IMP.

  4C = AKSV in C and denying a S control (i.e. AKSV) as S was the lowest ranking suit and we did not bid 3S.

  4D = AKSV in D and denying S and C controls (i.e. AKSV) as S was the lowest ranking suit and we did not bid 3S or 4C. Sounds like 22 holding in S and C so must have lots of Ds.

B. If Opener does not have 3+ Hs

- 2S = **does NOT guarantee 6+ Ss --- several possibilities (this is the style that Mike Lawrence [2] has introduced in contrast to the style of Max Hardy [3] who would bid 2N with any minimum balanced hand) as listed below:**
    - Exactly 5Ss; not suitable to rebid 2N; may be minimum may be bigger
    - Might have a side 4 card suit if minimum 12-14
    - Might have 6+ Ss. A 3S rebid is special (see below).

    All these hands would rebid 2S after 1H – 2H

    AJxxx   Kx   xx   AJxx   --- min hand, not suitable to rebid 2N

    AQxxx   x   Kxxx   Axx   --- min hand hence 3D is not a system bid

    AQxxx   AK   xxx   AJx   --- Not suitable to rebid 2N; if NT is bid from
                                              partner's side this hand will bid 4N as a
                                              quantitative slam try.

    AQxxxx   x   AKx   xxx   --- min hand with 6 Ss This hand with bid S again
                                              to show 6 Cards

    AQxxxx   x   AKx   AJx   --- although not a min hand; does not pass the
                                              system bid requirement for bidding an immediate
                                              3S (see below)

- 2N = either 12-14 or 17-19 stoppers in every suit. NT right sided.
    Note the sequence below:
    1S   2H
    2N   3N
    Pass = I have the weaker variety
    4N = I have the bigger hand variety and this is quantitative invite to 6N.

- 3S = 6+ Ss; Solid suit AKQxxx; and some extras 16+ hcp. Trump is set.

- 3C/3D =   a) Either a 5+ card suit; any strength or
             b) 4-card suit and 16+hcps. With minimum hand and an exact 4-card
                suit start with a rebid of 2S.

II. Responder's second bid: General Guidelines

- 3H = 6+ Hs

- 4S = min hand with 3 Ss

- 3S by responder shows slam interest with 3 Ss over opener's rebid of 2S/2N/3C/3D

- 3N = Min hand 12-15 with 5 Hs; denies 3S

- 2N = Balanced 16-19; denies 3S

- 4C or 4D over opener's 3C or 3D is KC ask in the minor suit (this will be discussed later).

References

 [1] See Chapter 1 of "Precision Today" by David Berkowitz and Brent Manley

[2] Mike Lawrence's Workbook on the Two Over One System.

[3] Advanced Bridge Bidding for the 21st Century by Max Hardy.