

WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

# CONVENTIONS USEFUL WITH 2/1

Patty Tucker



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# **2/1 Game Force System (2/1)**

## **Introduction**

I was first introduced to 2/1 in the mid-to late 80's. The concepts, ideas and bidding theory were revolutionary. I read Max Hardy's original book in one sitting. Pouring over the pages, backtracking to track down an elusive passage that I felt pertained to a later idea. It didn't take long to realize that what he had put together was a collection of bids which formed a complete system built to solve the problem hands we all encountered; not just a description of the single bid ...2/1.

Through the years players have taken portions of the system to play in isolation, added new treatments and ideas and/or created new bids (or variations of the original bids) to add substance and versatility.

Taking a bid from the system to play in isolation, without adopting the complete system, is to your disadvantage. Learn the entire system. See how the bids work in concert. Bite the bullet, as you must with any new bid, and accept the bad boards you will get during your learning curve and then enjoy the new found freedom you will experience in playing 2/1.



## **Forcing NT**

## 1NT Forcing

1NT Forcing only applies after partner has opened 1♥ or 1♠ and right hand opponent passes. A bid of 1NT will show one of the following hands:

- A balanced hand with 6-12 points;
- An unbalanced hand with 6-12 points;
- A hand with a five card or longer suit but less than 13 points; or
- A hand that has 10-12 points and three card support for opener's major suit.

You will not have:

- Three or more cards in opener's major suit and 6-9 points;
- Four or more spades and six or more points (*if the opening bid was 1♥*);
- A good five card suit and 13 or more points; or
- Four or more cards in opener's major suit.

There are four mistakes commonly made when players begin to play Forcing NT.

The single biggest mistake is that responder will decide to bid their five-card suit, ignoring the fact that it is forcing to game. I'm not sure why this is so prevalent, but I believe it is because players have it

ingrained in their thinking that 1NT is weak. So the idea of making a weak bid when they have an invitational hand is so unnatural they can't make themselves do it . . . even when they know they should. ***Resist temptation. If you don't have a hand willing to play game if partner's hand doesn't "fit" with yours . . . bid 1NT!***

The second mistake is that responder will fail to raise partner to the two-level when they have a fit for the major. Responder expects the bidding to be more complex and forgets the simple things . . . like raising to the two-level. ***When you have 6-9 points and three or more cards in the major suit opened by partner, raise to the two-level.***

Next along the road to a bad result is that responders forget to bid 1♠ over 1♥ when they have four spades and six points. Somehow responder convinces himself that one of the bids shows a weaker hand than the other. No! After a 1♥ opening bid, 1NT and 1♠ promise **exactly** the same amount of points (6) at the initial bid. The only difference is that ***1NT denies four or more spades.***

Lastly, opening bidders convince themselves that responder has a fit when they bid 1NT. Since there is one time responder bids a forcing NT when he has a

fit with partner's major (exactly 3 trumps and 10-12 points) opener makes himself believe that is the hand responder holds when they bid 1NT. Not true! That hand occurs probably only 5 to 10% of the time. ***Don't expect partner to have a fit with your major when they bid a forcing NT.***

## Opener's response to 1NT Forcing is as follows:

- Rebid your major (2♥ or 2♠) with 6 or more cards in your suit and a minimum hand – 12 to 15 points;
- Jump Rebid your major (3♥ or 3♠) with 6 or more cards in your suit and 15 to 17 HCPs;
- After an opening 1♠ bid with 4+ hearts and 5+ spades:
  - Bid 2♥ with 12-17 points; or
  - Bid 3♥ with 18+ points.
- After an opening 1♠ or 1♥ bid with 5 cards in your major suit and 4+ in a minor suit, bid your minor:
  - Bid 2♦ or 2♣ with 12-17 points; or
  - Bid 3♦ or 3♣ with 18+ points.
- 2NT with only 5 cards in the suit opened and 17-19 HCPs;
- After an opening 1♥ bid with 5+ cards in hearts, 4+ cards in spades **and 15+ points**, bid 2♠. *With less than 15 points either rebid your heart suit or bid a 2+ card minor suit.*
- Bid 2♣/2♦ with only 5 cards in the suit opened and a minimum hand (you may have to bid a three-card suit).

There is a tendency among students to get “spooked” by Forcing NT. They squirm at the idea of having to bid a three-card suit. If you look closely you will find that, with the exception of the last bullet item, ***all the bids in the above list are the natural rebid you would have made as opener if you had been playing Standard American.***

## Responder's Second Bid:

Responder (the Forcing NT bidder) will then make his most natural bid based on Opener's rebid.

- If Opener rebids his opening major suit at the 2 level and Responder has 2 card support:
  - Less than 10 points – Pass; or
  - 10+ points, raise partner's major to the 3 level.
- If Opener rebids his opening major suit at the 3 level and Responder has 2 card support:
  - Less than 8 points – Pass; or
  - 8+ points raise partner's major to the 4 level.
- If Opener rebids his opening major suit at the 2 or 3 level and Responder has 10-12 points and 3 card support for the major suit opened, Responder should raise to 4♠/4♥.
- If Opener rebids any new suit at the two-level and Responder has 10-12 points and 3 card support for the major suit opened, Responder should raise to 3♠/3♥.
- If a 1♠ Opener rebids hearts at the two level and Responder has 4+ card support for hearts:
  - Less than 8/9 points – Pass; or
  - 9+ points raise hearts to the 3 level.

- If a major Opener rebids a minor suit at the two level and responder has 5+ card support and no fit in Opener's major suit:
  - Less than 9 points – Pass; or
  - 9+ points raise partner's minor suit.
- If Opener bids a minor suit at the two level and responder has 4 or less card support for the minor and 2 cards in Opener's major suit:
  - Less than 10 points – return to Opener's major suit at the 2 level; or
  - With 11-12 points consider if 2NT would be an acceptable bid.
- If Opener jumps in a new suit, this is a jump shift showing a game forcing hand and Responder **must** bid. Responder will make his most natural bid.
- If Opener jumps to 2NT showing 17-19 points, Responder will make his most natural bid (which may be Pass).
- If Opener makes any minimum bid and Responder has a six-card or longer suit of his own he may bid his suit at the lowest level (this is a non-forcing bid and opener is expected to pass).
- If Opener makes any minimum bid and Responder jumps to the three level in a new suit

it would show a good 6+ card suit with an invitational hand (~10-12 HCPs).

- If the opening bid was 1♥ and the rebid by opener was 2♠ - 2♠ is a reverse, promising 4+ spades and 15+ points, and is forcing one round. Responder should make his most natural bid.

# Forcing NT Summary

## Responder's first bid: What *Didn't* Change?

- If opener bids 1♣ or 1♦ – no responses have changed.
- If opener bids a major suit and you have:
  - A 6-9 point raise – bid 2♠/2♥; or
  - A 10-12 point raise with 4+ trumps - bid 3♠/3♥.
- 10 or less points and no fit with partner's major – bid 1NT.
- If opener bids 1♥ and you have 4+ spades and 6+ points – bid 1♠.

## Responder's first bid: What *Did* Change?

If opener bids 1♠/1♥:

- With three card support and 10-12 points, bid 1NT; or
- With less than 12+ points bid 1NT.

## Opener's first rebid: What *Did* Change?

After responder has bid a forcing NT, with only five cards in your opening major, a minimum hand and no second 4+ card suit:

- Bid your longest three card minor; or
- If you have two three card minors, bid clubs.

## Responder's first rebid: What *Did* Change?

- If responder has 3 cards and 10-12 points in the major opened, responder should:
  - Bid 3♠/3♥ after opener's 2 level bid of a new suit or 2 level bid in the opening major; or
  - Bid 4♠/4♥ after opener's bid of three of their major, a jump shift or a 2NT rebid.
- If opener has rebid a minor suit at the two-level and responder has less than five cards in the minor suit, responder should return to the original major opened with 2 cards in opener's suit.
- If opener has rebid at the two-level and responder has no fit for the suit(s) bid, (***Remember, that responder would have needed five cards in the minor suit to have a fit.***) responder may:
  - Bid a new suit of his own at the two-level with five cards in the suit;
  - Bid a new suit of his own at the three-level with six cards in the suit; or
  - Jump to the three-level in his own suit with 6+ cards and 10-11 points.

# Forcing NT

## Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

|           |                |            |
|-----------|----------------|------------|
|           | ♠ J 8 3        |            |
|           | ♥ A K J 10 7 5 |            |
|           | ♦ K 2          |            |
|           | ♣ A 2          |            |
| ♠ Q 6 2   |                | ♠ A 10 7 4 |
| ♥ 9 4 3   |                | ♥ Q 6      |
| ♦ Q 8 7 3 |                | ♦ 9 6 5 4  |
| ♣ J 9 5   |                | ♣ K 6 4    |
|           |                |            |
|           | ♠ K 9 5        |            |
|           | ♥ 8 2          |            |
|           | ♦ A J 10       |            |
|           | ♣ Q 10 8 7 3   |            |

| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|             | 1 ♥          | Pass        | 1 N          |
| Pass        | 3 ♥          | Pass        | 4 ♥          |
| Pass        | Pass         | Pass        |              |

1NT = A forcing NT, North must bid one more time.

3♥ = 6+ hearts and 15+ to 17 points.

4♥ = I think we can make game.

## Forcing NT

### Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

|           |   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|-----------|---|-------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|
|           |   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♠ 8 4 3   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♥ 7 3   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♦ K J 10 8 3  |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♣ K 6 5   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
| ♠ A 9     |   | ♠ K Q J 7 6 |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
| ♥ Q 9 6 2 |   | ♥ A K 8 4   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
| ♦ 9 6 5 2 |   | ♦ 4         |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
| ♣ 10 3 2  |   | ♣ A J 4     |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | <div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 100px; height: 100px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> |             | N |  | W |  | E |  | S |  |  |  |
|           | N   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
| W         |   | E           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | S   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♠ 10 5 2  |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♥ J 10 5  |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♦ A Q 7   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |
|           | ♣ Q 9 8 7   |             |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |

| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|             |              | 1 ♠         | Pass         |
| 1 N         | Pass         | 3 ♥         | Pass         |
| 4 ♥         | Pass         | Pass        | Pass         |

1NT = 1NT Forcing.

3♥ = 4+ hearts and 18+ points. A game-forcing jump shift.

4♥ = I have a heart fit.

## Forcing NT

### Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>♠ K 6 3<br/>♥ Q 10<br/>♦ J 7 6 4 2<br/>♣ A Q 10</p> | <p>♠ J 9 8 2<br/>♥ 9 8<br/>♦ Q 10<br/>♣ K 8 6 5 3</p> | <p>♠ Q 5<br/>♥ J 6 3 2<br/>♦ A K 8 5 3<br/>♣ 9 2</p> | <p>♠ A 10 7 4<br/>♥ A K 7 5 4<br/>♦ 9<br/>♣ J 7 4</p> |
|--|---|--|---|

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      |       |      | 1 ♥   |
| Pass | 1 ♠   | Pass | 2 ♠   |
| Pass | Pass  | Pass |       |

1♠ = 4+ spades and 6+ points. ***(Remember: North does not bid 1N since he has four spades.)***

2♠ = Four spades and 12-14 points.

# Forcing NT

## Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

|             |           |  |             |
|-------------|-----------|--|-------------|
|             | ♠ K 9 2   |  |             |
|             | ♥ 10 6 2  |  |             |
|             | ♦ 8 7 6   |  |             |
|             | ♣ A 8 5 2 |  |             |
| ♠ 10 7 6    |           |  | ♠ Q 4 3     |
| ♥ A Q 8 4 3 |           |  | ♥ J 7       |
| ♦ J 10 9    |           |  | ♦ K Q 4     |
| ♣ K Q       |           |  | ♣ J 7 6 4 3 |
|             |           |  |             |
|             | ♠ A J 8 5 |  |             |
|             | ♥ K 9 5   |  |             |
|             | ♦ A 5 3 2 |  |             |
|             | ♣ 10 9    |  |             |

| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 ♥         | Pass         | 1 N         | Pass         |
| 2 ♦         | Pass         | 2 ♥         | Pass         |
| Pass        | Pass         |             |              |

1NT = Forcing NT.

2♦ = I do not have six hearts, I have at least 3 diamonds.

2♥ = I prefer hearts.

## Forcing NT

### Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

|           |   |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|-----------|--|
|           | ♠ 10 9 2  |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | ♥ A K 10 7 2  |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | ♦ A 9 5 4   |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | ♣ 2   |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
| ♠ K 4 3   | <div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 100%;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> |           | N |  | W |  | E |  | S |  | ♠ A Q J 7 |  |
|           | N   |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
| W         |   | E         |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | S   |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
| ♥ Q J 5 4 |   | ♥ 9 8 6   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
| ♦ Q 7 6   |   | ♦ J 8 3 2 |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
| ♣ A 5 4   |   | ♣ 9 8     |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | ♠ 8 6 5   |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | ♥ 3   |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | ♦ K 10  |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |
|           | ♣ K Q J 10 7 6 3  |           |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |           |  |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 1 ♥   | Pass | 1 N   |
| Pass | 2 ♦   | Pass | 3 ♣   |
| Pass | Pass  | Pass |       |

1NT = 1NT Forcing.

2♦ = I do not have six hearts, I have at least three diamonds and 12-17 HCPs.

3♣ = I want to play clubs. ***(Remember, after a bid of 1NT Forcing and a minimum response by opener, bidding a new suit at the lowest level is a wish to play that suit.)***

## Forcing NT

### Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

|              |           |             |  |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|--|
|              | ♠ Q 8 6 5 |             |  |
|              | ♥ 10 5    |             |  |
|              | ♦ A 9 7 3 |             |  |
|              | ♣ 8 5 2   |             |  |
| ♠ A 4 3      | N         | ♠ K 10      |  |
| ♥ 7 3        | W         | ♥ A K 9 8 4 |  |
| ♦ J 10 8     | E         | ♦ Q 5 4     |  |
| ♣ A J 10 9 6 | S         | ♣ Q 7 4     |  |
|              | ♠ J 9 7 2 |             |  |
|              | ♥ Q J 6 2 |             |  |
|              | ♦ K 6 2   |             |  |
|              | ♣ K 3     |             |  |

| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|             |              | 1 ♥         | Pass         |
| 1 N         | Pass         | 2 ♣         | Pass         |
| 2 ♠         | Pass         | 3 N         | Pass         |
| Pass        | Pass         |             |              |

1NT = Forcing NT.

2♣ = I don't have six hearts, I have at least 3♣.

2♠ = I have 10-12 points in support of clubs.

3N = I think we can make game in NT

# Forcing NT

## Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

|             |   |               |              |
|-------------|---|---------------|--------------|
|             | ♠ 6   |               |              |
|             | ♥ 7 2   |               |              |
|             | ♦ A 9 8 7 3   |               |              |
|             | ♣ A 9 8 3 2   |               |              |
| ♠ K J 10 3  | <div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;">             N<br/>W     E<br/>S           </div> | ♠ A Q 8 7 5 4 |              |
| ♥ 10 9 8 3  |   | ♥ Q 5         |              |
| ♦ Q 10      |   | ♦ 6 4         |              |
| ♣ K Q 5     |   | ♣ J 10 6      |              |
|             | ♠ 9 2   |               |              |
|             | ♥ A K J 6 4   |               |              |
|             | ♦ K J 5 2   |               |              |
|             | ♣ 7 4   |               |              |
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i>  | <i>East</i>   | <i>South</i> |
|             |   |               | 1 ♥          |
| Pass        | 1 N   | Pass          | 2 ♦          |
| Pass        | 3 ♦   | Pass          | Pass         |
| Pass        |   |               |              |

1NT = Forcing NT.

2♦ = I do not have 6 hearts, I have at least 3 diamonds.

3♦ = I have a distributional limit raise in diamonds.

## Forcing NT

### Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

|          |  |         |          |
|----------|--|---------|----------|
|          |  | ♠ QJ7   |          |
|          |  | ♥ J54   |          |
|          |  | ♦ QJ5   |          |
|          |  | ♣ K954  |          |
| ♠ AK1042 |  |         | ♠ 86     |
| ♥ A87    |  |         | ♥ KQ1063 |
| ♦ AK64   |  |         | ♦ 93     |
| ♣ 7      |  |         | ♣ J632   |
|          |  |         |          |
|          |  | ♠ 953   |          |
|          |  | ♥ 92    |          |
|          |  | ♦ 10872 |          |
|          |  | ♣ AQ108 |          |

| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 ♠         | Pass         | 1 N         | Pass         |
| 3 ♦         | Pass         | 3 ♥         | Pass         |
| 4 ♥         | Pass         | Pass        | Pass         |

1NT = Forcing NT.

3♦ = A jump shift, game forcing (18+) and at least four diamonds.

3♥ = I have five hearts.

4♥ = We have a heart fit.

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Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic bidding’ will only get them so far. To improve it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and to play against them. Each of the books in this series covers a number of useful conventions, explaining them carefully along with numerous examples and quizzes to help the reader understand what is being learned.

Included in this book: Forcing NT, Inverted Minors, Two-Way Checkback, Fourth Suit Forcing and 2/1 Review Hands.



**PATTY TUCKER** (Dunwoody, Georgia) is an ABTA Master Bridge Teacher and co-founder of Whirlwind Bridge and Atlanta Junior Bridge. Her success at the bridge table culminated in her victory in the 2000 Baldwin Flight A North American Open Pairs with long-time bridge partner Kevin Collins. Patty and Kevin were married in 2006.