

Simple or Constructive Raises

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Playing 2/1 when partner opens one of a major (1M), how is a simple response of 2M defined?

Responder's First Bid playing the "2/1 Bidding System" depends on the author of the book you may read that discusses it. THERE IS NO STANDARD APPROACH. The 2/1 System is more complex than it seems!

A very nice review is provided by Karen Walker on her bridge site: <https://kwbridge.com/>

Some authors only require 6+ fit points to make a simple fit bid raise with at least 3-card support. However, authors who discuss or teach the 2/1 bidding responses may define the response space in more detail:

To define the fit bid response space, one may divide the response space into three regions: (I) - 0-6, 7-12, and 13+ called minimal, invitational, and game force.

Others expand the three regions to four: (II) - 0-6; 7-9; 10-12; 13+ called minimal, invitational minus/semi-constructive, invitational plus/limit raise, and game force.

While others define the four regions as: (III) - 0-7; 8-10; 10-12; 13+ called minimal, constructive, limit raise, and game force.

For regions (I) and (II), the bid of 1NT is defined as 1NT=7-12HCP; however, for (III) it is has only 5-9HCP range!

While many pairs claim they play the 2/1 Bidding System with 5-card majors, they fail to discuss their **fit bid response space**.

For example, in (I) and (II) the constructive bid is not undefined and in (III) the bidding range for the bid is 8-10.

Furthermore, the agreed upon "fit response space" effects the bidding range of partner's response bid of 1NT (e.g., 7-12 or 5-9!

What does all this mean?

Today most 2/1 pairs accept that the 1NT response to the bid of 1M defines a response range of 7-12HCP and that a simple raise is made with 6+fit points.

However, this is NOT the case for pairs that play "constructive raises" since the bid is an attempt to narrow the range for the bid of 1NT from 7-12 to 5-9 (or 6-9 a carry-over from the OLD Standard American Bidding System).

In a nutshell if you play the 2/1 Game Force Bidding System, we now assume the following:
A non-jump, new suit bid by responder at the 2-level to a major is **forcing to game** and shows

- (a) 13+ fit points
- (b) 5+cards for a 2♥ response
- (c) 4+cards for a 2♣/2♦ response
- (d) a 1NT* response denies a fit and shows 7-12HCP

The bid of 1NT* may be forcing or non-forcing by agreement and denies 3-card support for the major suit bid. Why the difference? If the opening bidder has a minimum 11/12HCP hand the semi-forcing agreement allows the opening bidder to pass; this is not the case if the partnership plays the 1NT* bid as forcing.

The above discussion of **constructive raises only applies to the opening 1-level bid of a major suit.**

Additional IMPORANT POINTS TO Remember

A 2/1 bid never applies when opening 1♣; MOST authors of the 2/1 Bidding System treat 2-level responses to opening 1-level bids:

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

and game-forcing; however, some treat the response of 2♣ to 1♦ as semi-game forcing if clubs are rebid (see the first line on the ACBL Convention Card where you see the square “Game Forcing Except When Suit is Rebid”).

Finally, the responses to the bid of 1NT to the opening bids of 1♣/1♦ are also treated differently by many authors who discuss the “2/1 Bidding System” so they should be discussed and agreed upon.

Some define the 1NT response to 1♣ as **1NT=8-10HCP NOT 6-9HCP** with no 4-card major. Why? It allows responder without a 4-card major to use the bid of 1♦ as a waiting bid so that the opener with the stronger hand may bid and play the contract in 1NT. However, the response of 1NT to the opening bid of 1♦ is normally defined as 6-9HCP and denies a 4-card major.

For additional comments and variations the regarding 2/1 Bidding System, click on the site:

<https://kwbridge.com/2over1.htm>