

An Introduction to the Ambiguous Diamond & Strong Club 2/1 System

By Neil H. Timm

The ACBL allows one to open any hand **1♣ with near average strength**: a hand with 8HCP or a hand that meets the Rule of 17 = HCP + cards in the two longest suits (e.g., 6-5 hand with 6HCP – 6+11=17; 8-4/7-5/6-6 hands with 5HCP- 5+12=17; 8-5 hand with 4HCP – 4+13=17; excluded is 7222 hands since 7+9=16). The one club bid is used by many players who play Precision, a transfer club or weak club system.

If the bid is artificial or short (0-2) and forcing, it must be alerted and described, but not if it is a natural club bid with 3+ clubs. If it is a short club and semi-forcing/forcing it must be announced and described (e.g., may be short and the expected number of clubs per agreement).

Hand strengths provided by the ACBL as of April 4, 2022.

- a. “Weak”: A hand that contains less than Near Average Strength.
- b. “Near Average Strength”: A hand that has at least 8 HCP or meets the “Rule of 17”.
- c. “Average Strength”: A hand that has at least 10 HCP or meets the “Rule of 19”.
- d. “Strong”: A hand that contains:
 - i. at least 15 HCP; or
 - ii. at least 14 HCP and meets the “Rule of 24”.
 - iii. at least 5 Control Points and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.
- e. “Very Strong”: A hand that contains:
 - i. at least 20 HCP; or
 - ii. at least 14 HCP and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.
 - iii. at least 5 Control Points and is within one trick of game assuming suits break evenly among the other hands.

Playing 2/1, SA, Precision, or Acol the system must have an average hand when opening a major: a hand with **10HCP or meets the Rule if 19** = HCP + the length of the two longest suits = 19; yes, very much like the rule of 20!

The 1♦ bid may be natural or short with at **least average strength**.

With this information, how may bridge players modify their 2/1 system to capitalize on these definitions playing the New Conventions: Basic +, Open, and Open +?

Redefine the meaning of 1♣* as strong strength (18+) and 1♦* with average strength (10-17) and may be short (at most 2) with no 5-card major and may have clubs; and allow the 1♥/1♠ bid to

remain a 5-card suit and to meet the rule of average strength rule with a limit of 17 (10-17). Yes, a Hybrid 2/1-like System with a shorted major suit range.

What about the bid of 1NT? Some may choose to keep 15-17 (e.g., a strong NT since it contains the value if 15); however, to get into the bidding the ACBL allows a minimum of 10HCP (10-12) with a balanced hand (e.g., 4333, 4432, 5333, 54♦/♣22) for the bid of 1NT*.

These suggests are motivated by Neil Timm “The Optimal Modified 2/1-Club System” (2022), Jon Greenspan “Green Club System” (May 2022-Notes), Jack Hawthorne “Transfer-Oriented Pinpoint Precision (TOP3) (2021) and discussions with several club members in the Villages and Ocala Duplicate Bridge Clubs.

To implement the new approach requires some definitions.

Quick Tricks or controls A=2 and K=1

- AK = 2 quick tricks or 3 controls
- AQ = 1.5 quick tricks or 2 controls
- A = 1 quick trick or 2 controls
- KQ = 1 quick trick or 1 control
- Kx = 0.5 quick tricks or 1 control

The bid of 1♣* = 18+ HCP with 5 or more controls or any hand with 4 losers or less.

The suit bids of 1♦/1♥/1♠ have 10-17HCP with 3+ controls and 5-6 losers. Were the 1♦* bid is ambiguous with 0-2 diamonds and 1♥/1♠=5+ major suit.

All 1 step bids by partner=responder over 1♦/1♥/1♠ are unlimited GF 15+ bids:

1♦*-1♥*

1♥-1♠*

1♠ - 1NT*

The opening bid of 1NT*=10-12 semi-balanced any 5332 hand 2245 with both minors and 6322 with a 6-card minor – NEVER balanced 4333/4432 hands, why? Too dangerous – these hands are opened 1♦*.

2♣* is 10-12HCP with both majors.

2♦*/2♥* with 10-12HCP are transfer bids to a 5-card major and a 4+card minor (5M-4m).

2♠*is 10-12HCP and 64/46 in the minors (6m5m).

2NT* is 10-12HCP and 55 in the minors (5m-5m).

3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ with 10-12HCP and 6/7-card suit.

3NT* GAMBLING with solid 7+ minor suit (AKQxxxx).

4♣*/4♦* transfer to the major (NAMYATS) with 8.5-9 tricks & slam interest.

4♥/4♠ natural preemptive 10-12HCP with 8-card suit & no slam interest.

4NT Unusual 6m5m or 6M5M suits with 3 losers.

CARDING

Leads vs. suits: 3rd& 5th (A from A/K)

vs. NT: attitude (Boston); Rev Smith Echo; Foster Echo; Trump Suit Preference
UDCA: primary signal to partner lead=attitude; K asks for count and Q asks for attitude

Suit Preference when obvious

OVER OPPONENTS 1NT BID: Direct seat Modified Blooman (transfers into a 6-card suit)
with X=Capp

Balance seat with X=Capp and Natural bids

Over opponents 1♣* Precision bid: 1-level transfers into a 6-card suit with X=Capp (below)

Do we really need yet another bidding system? YES! Highlights follow.

Even though the bid of 1♣* occurs <5% of the time it is better than opening a strong 1NT=15-17.

What is needed is a GF system that is available for the remaining 1-level bids like 2/1 with a shorter bidding range (10-17).

Except for the bid of 1♣*, subsequent 1st step bids are GF bids where the 2nd step bids are transfer bids and NOT GF bids. However, a transfer into opener's suit (e.g., 1♥-2♦* and 1♠-2♥* shows a singleton/void) – no fit bids.

Preemptive 2-level bids have intermediate value (10-12HCP) and show 2-suited hands that are 5M-4m (2♣*) or major transfers (2♦*/2♥*)/5m-5m (2NT*)/6m4m (2♠*).

Except for 4m transfer bids, 4M bids and 3-level suit bids are natural bids; but 4NT shows an unusual 2-suited minor suit hand.

Why adopt this new approach to 2/1?

(a) It employs transfer bids.

(b) It avoids the use of 2NT=20-21 balanced bid

- (c) There is no need for the strong 2♣ 2/1 bid.
- (d) Weak 2-level bids always show 2-suited hands.
- (e) Drury is not needed.
- (f) The 1NT=10-12 structure shows a semi-balanced hand.
- (g) No need for Jacoby 2NT*.

SUMMARY of OPENING BIDS

1♣* = 18+ HCP with 5 or more controls or any hand with 4 losers or less (may have less than 18+ pts) and may have a 5+H/D/C suit.

**1♥/1♠ with 10-17HCP, balanced 5M332 patter with 5/6 losers
 1NT 10-12HCP and no 4M major
 1♥/1♠ 13-17HCP**

1♦* bid is the most often used with (a) hands with <18HCP, (b) all unbalanced hands with 0-2D or 7+D/C, or (c) balanced 4M major suit hands. Yes, a 10-17HCP hand that cannot be opened 1♣/1♥/1♠/1NT.

2-level bids are Two-suited Bids with 5/6 losers

3-level suit bids are single suited with 7+ losers

4-level bids are transfers/natural/2-suited

Approximate Frequency of Opening Bids

1♣* ~ 4 18+HCP
 1♦* ~30 10-17HCP ambiguous all-inclusive/catch-all bid
 1M ~11 10-17HCP 5+ card major
 1NT ~ 4 10-12 semi-balance excluding balanced 4432/4333 hands
 2X ~14 10-12 two-suited hands: 5M-5M/5M-4m/5m-5m/6m4m
 Pass ~36 <10HCP
 99%

Other Principles of the New System

Negative Free Bids over Interference through 3♦ with < 10 pts

Transfer Bids by Responder after a Take-out X over 1♦* or 1M-X

Lebensohl and escape sequences are not needed over 1NT=10-12 openings

1NT* Overcall - A take-out bid that requires 10-15/16 HCP and 3-cards in all unbid suits and 4-card support for an unbid major with no exceptions. With 16+ X and bid.

The optimal points (to ensure a success rate between 50-55%) for game in NT is 26 points, for a

game in a major 27 points, for a minor 33 points for a slam in a suit 33 points and for a slam in NT 34 points. If you have **one less point the success rate is around 45%**).

Let's look at example playing Precision or 2/1 from the Bidding Box, June 2022 and compare it with the new proposed approach.

EXAMPLE

West	East
♠K9432	♠A8
♥A10763	♥K8
♦AK5	♦76
♣ -	♣AQJ10942

Playing Precision with 16+ HCP

West	East
	2♣ 11-15
2NT	3NT
4♦	5♣
Pass	

Playing 2/1 using HCP hand evaluation,

West	East
	1♣ 11-21
1♠	2♣
2♥	3♣
3NT	4♣
5♣	Pass

Some may play in 3NT!

Using the new approach!

West	East
	1♦* (10-17)
1♥* GF	1NT* T to C
2♣	2♥
2♠	3♠
4♦	5♣
6♣	Pass

Playing the Optimal Modified 2/1-Club and OPC hand evaluation.

West	East
	1♣* 18+
2♦ 0-7 or 13+	3♣
3♠	4♣
4♠	4NT
5♥	6♣
Pass	Pass