

THE 2/1 CONVENTION CARD

By Neil H Timm

The growth in Bridge Systems since the 1950s has revolutionized the game of Bridge. Today there are numerous systems used by the experts. For example, Graeme Williams on his Web site: www.gwilliamd.org.uk/systems/hdex.html discusses several.

As a new bridge player, which one should you learn? According to Bert Hall & Lynn Rose-Hall (1996), How the Experts win at Bridge, Jordan Press, the optimum system used by the top players in the world today is 2/1. However, the 2/1 approach includes many conventions as reviewed for example by Clarke Fairbrothers (2005), Partnership Agreements, Quiet Vision Publishing. Which ones should you learn?

As a guide to the utility of conventions, one must decide upon the effectiveness of the convention, how often it occurs, if it greatly improves your bidding, whether it compensates for the lose of a natural bid, and whether or not your partner understands and remembers it. What one is seeking is a number of conventions that meet these tests, blend together, and effectively handle a range of hands that come up most often. The critical variable in the development of the system is whether or not the conventions BLEND together. Don't play a convention because it is a "present day" gimmick. An overview of some 2/1 Commonly Used Agreements/Conventions follow.

Common Agreements/Conventions for 2/1

<p>Notrump Opening Bids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong 1NT (15-17) – System on over 2♣,X • 2NT (20-21) – Jacoby and Texas Transfers • Gambling 3NT • Stayman with Smolen • Transfers (2/4 Way) • Gambling 3NT • Texas Transfers • Interference over NT – Lebensohl 	<p>Major Suit Openings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-Card Majors • 1NT Forcing • “Bergen” Raises – Constructive Raises – Splinters – Jacoby 2NT/3NT – Preemptive Raises • Drury 2-Way 	<p>Minor Suit Openings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient Minor • Inverted Minors (13+) • Criss-Cross (10-12)
<p>Other Conventional Calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check Back Stayman – Better than New Minor Forcing • Fourth Suit Forcing • Weak Jump Shifts • Michaels 	<p>Special Doubles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative thru ∞ • Responsive thru ∞ • Rozencrantz to 2♠ • Support Dbl to 3♥ with Redoubles 	<p>Opening two Bids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2C Strong • 2D (Flannery/Mini-Roman/Mini-Roman) • 2H/2S Weak (5-10) • Ogust

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandwich NT • Unusual NT • Michaels • Hess Cue Bids • Game Try (LSGT/SSGT) • Western Cue • Wolf Sign-off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximal • Equal Level Conversion 	
<p>Slam Bidding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cue Bidding • Roman Key Card Blackwood (1430) with/without Kickback • Gerber over NT • Exclusion Key Card Blackwood • Grand Slam Force 	<p>Defensive Carding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Third from even, low from odd – Fourth best (MUD) – Attitude Primary – Coded 9s and 10s – Ace from AK – K/Q = Count • Signals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Upside down or Standard – Odd/Even – Suit Preference 	<p>Defense for Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over NT (common) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – D.O.N.T (or Meckwell) – Cappelletti (or Modified Cappelletti) – Transfers/Natural • Unusual Over Michaels • Unusual Over Unusual • Weak 2 Bids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lebensohl • Mathe over a Strong Club

Excluded from the convention card is the commonly used 2/1 Convention called Puppet Stayman. This has not been recommended for inclusion in the card because of the excellent Red Pencil article by Matthew Granovetter, [Bridge Today](#), (November, 2006 issue, pp. 2-3) which says sayonara to Puppet Stayman as a convention, a must read for Puppet Stayman advocates. Replace it with Muppet!