

What is your 2/1 agreement?

By Neil H. Timm

Playing 2/1 most pairs agree that 1♥ -2♦/2♣ is a Game Force bid. However, what is your agreement about opener's rebids in an uncontested auction?

Is the bid of 2♠ a reverse? Does 2♥ promise a 6/5 card suit? What does 2NT or 3♣/3♦ show?

There is no universal agreement playing 2/1; hence opener's re-bids must be discussed. For example, Bergen, Lawrence, Hardy, among others have suggested "can" responses/suggestions!

Because many pairs play Bergen or Reverse Bergen, the commonly used responses for the sequence are:

1♥ - 2♣ -?

- 2♥ Shows a 6-card suit
- 2♠ Not a reverse – not extra values just a 4-card suit
- 2NT Shows 5-3-3-2 and says nothing about stoppers
- 3♦ Shows diamonds and no extras
- 3♥ Solid suit slam interest
- 4♥ To play

Yes, very simple responses and easily finds an 8-card fit in the major with only two. The bid of 3NT provides no information to the opponents, but often wrong sides the contract. However, the bid of 2♠ and 3♦ are ambiguous with a range of 11 or 16+ and 3NT may be a disaster!

Can the responses be improved? Yes, there is a convention called the John Schuler Shift, from San Diego, California. It goes:

1♥ - 2♣ -?

- 2♥ A waiting bid shows a 5-card suit, likely 5-3-3-2
- 2♠ Is a reverse or shows a 6-4 hand
- 2NT* Artificial shows 6+hearts with stoppers
- 3♦ Shows 5-5 with extras or without extras shows 5-4 or 6-5 shape
- 3♥ Slam interest
- 4♥ To play

This tip is based upon the work by Andrew Gumpertz on Bridge Winners, use the links:

<https://bridgewinners.com/article/view/building-a-better-21-structure-the-troublesome-2m-rebid/>
<https://bridgewinners.com/article/view/building-a-better-21-structure-the-schuler-shift/>

When one opens 1♥ and partner responds 1♠, does partner show 4 or 5 spades? Most playing 2/1 with a strong 1NT=15-17 agree that it shows 6+points and 4+spades.

Opener's next bids:

1NT	Likely 5332 with 11/12 – 15 points
2♣/2♦	5/4 with 11/12-14/15 points
2♥	11/12 – 17 points
2NT	Balanced 18-19 points (may have spades)

With this uncertainty regarding spades, rebids by responder become complicated.

1♥-1♠-1NT, rebids:

- 2♥ - Doubleton heart, maybe 5-spades and minor shortness.
- 2♠ - Weak hand, usually with 6+ spades (though it could be an exceptionally weak hand)
- 2NT - Invitational values, likely exactly 4 spades and 2 hearts.
- 3NT - Game forcing values, likely exactly 4 spades and 2 hearts.
- 2m – Natural and non-forcing,
- 3♥ - 3-card heart support, invitational values.
- Pass – weak hand.

1♥-1♠-2m:

- Pass - A weak hand with 3/4-card support for the minor and likely a singleton or void in hearts.
- 2♥ - A weak hand heart doubleton heart doubleton
- 2♠ - Shows 6 spades or better
- 2NT - Balanced, invitational.
- 3m - 4-card support for the minor with invitational values.
- 3S♠: 6+ spades, invitational values
- The fourth suit at the cheapest level is Game forcing.

1♥ -1♠- 2♥

- 2♠ - A weak hand with 6-spades and a void in hearts
- 2NT - Natural, invitational.
- 3m - Natural and game forcing.
- 3♥ - Invitational with 3-hearts.

Is there a better option? Yes 1♥ - 1♠ = 5+ spades and 1NT denies 5-spades. Then the bids are:

1♠ 5-spades NOT 4 (no alert required even if you play Flannery)

Opener responses

1NT=3/4-spades with 11-12 points

2♣* no fit 13-15
2♦* no fit 16-17
2♥ - shows 6-hearts 11-21 points
2♠- shows 4+spades 11-21points
2NT* - shows no fit semi-balanced 18-19

1NT*	0-9 Semi-Forcing
2♣	13+ with clubs
2♦	13+ with diamonds
2♥	8-10, 3 card support (constructive)
2NT*	13+ with 4 Trumps
3♣*	13+ with 3 trumps & 4+ clubs
3♦*	13+ with 3 trumps & 4+ diamonds
3♥*	0-6 weak with 4+trumps
3♠*/4m*	13+ Splinters `
3NT	13-15 2+ hearts
4M	weak with 4+trumps