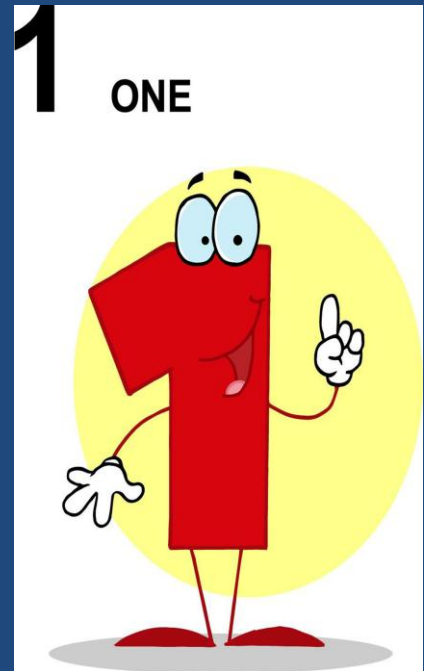


# Larry Teaches



Over



# Game Forcing

*By Larry Cohen*

Larry Teaches 2 Over 1 GF

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## Introduction

Did any of you play bridge in the 1960's? You don't have to admit it. Back then, there was a move to switch from strong two-level opening bids to weak-twos. There was resistance at first, but eventually, everyone succumbed.

Now, we face the same situation with the move from "Standard" to "Two-Over-One Game Forcing" [2/1 GF]. Two-over-one game forcing is by far the superior and easier system. Even for beginners, I recommend 2/1 GF. Most bridge teachers agree with me.

In Standard if your partner opens 1♠ and you respond 2♦ it is natural and 10+ high card points. I can't figure out why the fathers of our game defined the two-over-one response as 10+ points. That number leaves you in no-man's land: If opener has a minimum (12 or 13), and responder has 10+, then she knows the partnership has 22+ (or 23+). What good is that? All it does is cause confusion as to whether or not game should be reached. It is also hard to know if/when any player can pass below game.

In the superior system of 2/1 GF the response of 2♦ to 1♠ is still natural, but promises an opening bid (13+). Now we have two opening bids facing each other and will not stop until we find our game (or slam).

In its simplest terms, the "system" described as 2-over-1 game forcing refers to the following 6 bids:

1♦ → 2♣, 1♥ → 2♣, 1♥ → 2♦, 1♠ → 2♣, 1♠ → 2♦, 1♠ → 2♥

**Note:** Our opponents must pass or the system is off. Also, our opening bid can't come in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> seat.

In this workbook, we will examine those six auctions in depth. We also will explore the 1NT response (which some of you may already think of as “the forcing notrump”). For clarity, I will always refer to the opener as “she” and the responder as “he.” Hopefully, this won’t result in any complaints about political correctness.

Little by little, I expect everyone to change to 2/1 GF. A few teachers might refuse to teach it, but I suspect that is because they don’t want the work of having to switch all of their lesson notes and deals. For players, not switching because “my friends don’t play it” is not a good excuse. That kind of thinking is what had some holdouts still using strong two-level opening bids decades after their expiration date (this may refer to both the bids and the bidders). Don’t get left in the dust.

It is my hope that you, dear reader, will join the party and convert to the newer and better way. You don’t have to necessarily study and memorize every page in this book. In fact, you can start playing 2/1 GF right away—just read the first chapter or two and you are on your way.

## When is 2/1 in Effect?

Now that we've committed to playing a 2/1 GF system, let's make sure we are in an auction that fits the bill. There are only 6 possible "2/1" auctions—all of which were listed in the introduction. Any other response on the 2-level would be either a raise, or a jump-shift (for example 1♥-2♥ is a raise, 1♥-2♠ is a jump-shift and 1♥-2NT is either natural or a conventional Jacoby 2NT raise).

Here is a checklist of auctions that do **NOT** qualify as 2/1 GF auctions.

1) A 1♣ opening. After a 1♣ opening, use what you already use. A 1NT response is natural and usually 6-10 or maybe 8-11. Your choice. Any other response on the 1-level is natural and, of course, forcing 1-round. A raise to 2♣ is natural (you can use inverted minors if you like-but that has nothing to do with 2/1 GF). Any other responses to 1♣ are jumps and must be defined by your partnership as either WEAK or STRONG. Again, your choice. Make sure you know what a 2NT response means (11-12...or maybe 13+, forcing). Discuss 3-level responses, too. Make sure you and your partner **both** agree on these definitions. Just to repeat: After a 1♣ opening there is no such thing as 2/1 GF.

2) A response to 1♦ other than 2♣. If the opening bid is 1♦, the only game forcing Response is 2♣. I recommend playing 1♦-2♣ as 100% GF. This auction will be examined in detail later in the booklet. A 1NT response to 1♦ is simply 6-10. It is *not* a forcing (or semi-forcing) notrump. I recommend a 2NT response to show 11-12 balanced, invitational (no 4-card major). Any 2-level response to 1♦ in a major

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