

Hello Former Students,

Beginning Jan. 18 (Fri mornings from 9:30 until 12:00) we're starting a series of classes on the 2/1 system. There will be 4 classes Jan. 18 and 25, Feb. 1 and 8, and a special class (party) on Feb 22. Notice that we are skipping Feb. 15. We have plans to attend the Hilton Head Regional that week. Besides that will give you a week to absorb all that you have learned before the grand finale Feb. 22.

The format will be similar to the last series of lessons. We'll have more focused handouts because the material for this class is much narrower than "competitive bidding." The most important things we'll try to master are:

the basics of 2/1. when does it apply? what do you need for a 2/1? opener's rebids. responder's rebids. searching for the the right game. looking for slam. the nuances of a 2/1 system. semi-forcing notrump.

We're going to be looking at the 2/1 system when the opponents don't interfere, i.e. constructive bidding. This is perhaps the easiest and most fun part of bidding since many slam sequences originate here. We'll get into some slam methods.

We won't have time to cover everything that I would like in only 5 weeks, but we will attempt to **master** the areas that we do cover. Using a convention that you don't thoroughly understand is not as effective as just keeping it simple. But if you have better tools and know how to use them, you will outdistance the simple is better group in the long run.

When people think of 2/1 they usually think of more than just that one specific sequence where responder bids a new suit at the 2 level in response to his partner's opening bid. They think of a lot of the gadgets that people who play 2/1 also tend to play. Most of these are optional. We will include a few that are closely related, but our primary goal will be to master the 2/1 itself and the semi-forcing notrump that is played in conjunction with the game-forcing 2/1.

This class is not for beginners. Everyone is welcome to attend, but the people who will benefit the most are the more serious players who really want to improve their game.

We will have preduplicated hands that we will all play at the same time and discuss afterwards. There will be handrecords and analysis of these hands available after the class. Some of the hands will be there to test your bidding skill using the methods we will be learning, but there will be defensive and play aspects as well.

By learning to bid well you can stay in the game, but you also need to "take your tricks" so we will throw in a few lessons on this via the hands that we play.

Since this is primarily a bidding course, we will devote some time to bidding practice. And, of course, I get to talk some too. I really enjoyed the last series of classes,

and I learned a lot - some of which should be helpful this time. As usual, your suggestions are welcome and encouraged.

Let's look at a 2/1 sequence to see if we are on the same page. You hold **AKxxx KQxx xxx x** and open the bidding with 1S. Partner responds 2C. You are playing that this forces to game. Some play that you can get out below game if partner rebids his suit, i.e. 3C. That is not the way I like to play. You rebid 2H; so far, we should be in complete agreement. Now partner jumps to 4D.

1S	2C
2H	4D

What is 4D? Well, I'm guessing that most of you recognize it as a "splinter" bid. One of the principles in learning 2/1 is that you don't jump around without a specific purpose. You are already in a game-forcing sequence, so you don't need to jump to show extra values. By jumping around you defeat the purpose of 2/1. Keep it low and investigate the best contract. Fast arrival applies. So, **ALL** jumps have a definite meaning. Jumps in new suits are usually "splinter" bids, showing a fit and shortness in the suit in which you jump. So far, I probably haven't told you anything you didn't already know.

Another **key** thing about as splinter bid is this. It should show limited values. You are turning over **captaincy** to partner. You are saying "here's what I have; you make the decision." If partner signs off over your splinter you should be willing to respect his decision; otherwise, what was the purpose of the splinter? All splinters have this "limited values" characteristic. Yes, there are some underlying principles that run through bridge, so that we don't have to memorize each individual sequence.

Now that we know what partner is doing it is up to us to make a decision. For the decision to be a good one we need to **visualize**. Visualization doesn't have to be an exact science, but it is indispensable in making good decisions.

What do we know about partner's hand? I'm guessing he has 4 hearts, 5 or 6 clubs, a singleton (or void) in diamonds, and 2 or 3 spades. He probably has about 12-14 highs. Remember our hand?

AKxxx KQxx xxx x. Do we like our hand for slam? That's the only question. We like the fact that none of our values are wasted in diamonds. We don't like the fact that we only have 12 highs - more would make our decision easier. Partner might have something like **Jxx AJxx x AKxxx**. Slam is not so good here we have a probable spade loser and a sure diamond loser. But he could have

Qx Axxx x AKxxxx. Now slam just needs 3-2 hearts (about 63%) and probably 3-3 or 4-2 spades. Maybe about a 50% slam. But that's an almost perfect hand. What about **Qxx J10xx x AKQxx**? We would get to the 5 level only - assuming we use RKC.

By the time we have run through all the possibilities the opponents - not to mention partner and the director - are getting a little antsy. What's the bottom line? If you bid

slams like this, you'll be out on a lonely street. The rest of the field will be in game. You'll either get a bottom (likely) or a top (rarely). It's just too pushy. But developing the thought process will serve you well. The next time the auction proceeds as above, you might have **AK10xx AKxx xxx x**. Now you not only have nothing wasted in diamonds, you have extras, and a normal splinter by partner should produce a good play for slam. You would check for keycards - mostly to make sure you are not off an ace and the queen of trumps, and bid the slam otherwise. Partner might have **QJx QJxx x AKxxx**. This one's virtually cold, but because you only have 27 highs between you, you would get an excellent score for bidding the slam. On a bad day partner might have **Jxx Qxxx x AKQxx**. Slam is iffy, but far from hopeless. The **Jack-Ask** would serve you well here, but that's for another day.

I'll have a flyer out soon, but the cost will be \$100 (same as last time) with special discounts available in most states.* Let me know if you plan on attending via email or cell phone 274-4661.

spike

*not available in Florida pursuant to FLDOR#234-916.