

Two Over One Game Force (2/1 GF)

This is a reasonably thorough definition of what the system is (it's generally just called 2/1 not 2/1 GF). This is not about how to play 2/1 but what the mechanics of it are (although a lot can be inferred just by knowing what those mechanics are **and** what they imply). I'll treat those things that are optional to the system separately as well as the major conventions used with it - as a rule, conventions that can be used in Standard American (SA) can be used in 2/1 also.

2/1 is in common use in the United States (a majority of duplicate players now use it) and is becoming more common in the rest of the world (as of 2019), especially at the top level.

Saying 'I play 2/1' is similar to saying 'I play Acol' or 'I play Standard American' ... not definitive of exactly what you play but it does set a framework or general approach.

I have tried to make this as objective and consistent as possible with my own preferences primarily being shown in the system I prefer. It really doesn't make any difference at all if you play it like I do - it's primarily just personal preference after all ... as long as you adhere to the basics of the system. But you can't call it 2/1 if you don't meet the 3 criteria below.

If there are any questions at all, please send me a Sticky Note and I'll try to clear them up.

I. It's Standard American ... but improved

A system can be called 2/1 **only** if it meets 3 criteria:

1. The opening bids of 1 of a suit are as defined in SA.
2. A Two Over One suit response to 1 of a major is forcing to game (discussed in Section 1A.).
3. The 1NT response to 1 of a major is either: 100% forcing - (discussed in Section IB.) **or** what's called semi-forcing (it's 100% forcing **except** in a couple of situations - discussed in Section IC.).

Note: this bid denies 4 S in both the forcing and semi-forcing variety.

So, basically, 2/1 is SA + 2. and 3. above.

What are the improvements (in order of frequency)?

1. The forcing or semi-forcing 1NT response to 1 of a major. Semi-forcing may be a little better than forcing (they both have advantages and disadvantages though) but they are both preferable to SA ... although by a small margin. The 1NT forcing or semi-forcing response to 1 of a major is required because of the nature of the two over one response but, since it happens so often, it is probably the biggest advantage from a frequency standpoint.

2. The two over one response being forcing to game. This occurs relatively rarely but **always** leads to as good or a better contract than the two over one response in SA. The bid all by itself has an advantage but one of its resulting advantages comes in that, since it's now often used as the **only** strong

bid, you can use many of the other jumps for specific purposes - e.g. Bergen raises, mini-splinters, a non-forcing 6-card jump shift (a hand not quite good enough for a two over one response), better definition of splinters, etc.

3. Another resulting advantage is better definition (after an opening of 1 of a major and a two over one response) of various sequences.

E.g. 1H - (2 of a new suit); 4H or 1S - (2 of a new suit); 2H - 4S. These are infrequent also but, combined with the advantage of the two over one response itself, come up moderately often.

Also, you sometimes find slams that other systems don't or stay out of bad slams. At the very least, some of the auctions that involve some guesswork in SA are very clear in 2/1.

The difference isn't tremendous ... but it's very definitely an overall improvement. Try it and see for yourself.

IA. The Two Over One Response to a Major

The responses of 2C and 2D to one of a major and 2H to 1S are forcing to game. This really means it's forcing to 3NT, 4 of a suit, or penalizing the opps. However, if either opener or responder bids NT or raises the other, it actually becomes 100% forcing to game (or penalizing the opps).

Opener's rebid can be a variety of things:

A rebid of opener's suit doesn't necessarily show 6 or more cards in it, just nothing else to bid - this is generally the default. This is not always the way it is played, tho, but is certainly the simplest.

Note: Requiring it to be 6 or more does have system ramifications, however, and they must be considered before it is implemented.

The majority of people seem to think that opener's suit rebids above 2 of his/her suit, show extra strength. There are some, however, who think opener doesn't require extra strength - that it's more important to immediately show the shape than to try to combine shape and strength. I first saw this in Britain and Larry Cohen mentions it too but it doesn't seem to work out well in practice. For what it's worth, Mike Lawrence thinks you should have extra strength, say 14-15 or more points for a raise and the normal 16/17 or more for a reverse or a high-reverse. He treats 2 of the opened major as the default rebid by opener meaning only that there is nothing else to do (if you can, you will rebid a new suit below the opened suit - obviously this isn't possible in the auction 1H - 2D or 1S - 2H) so this rebid might well be only with a 5-card suit.

Opener rebids 2NT with 12-14 or 18-19 and 3NT as 15-17. The same scheme usually applies for responder but, obviously, opener has made a rebid first. If you have the 18-19 HCP balanced hand, you will make a move beyond game as a rule.

Note: 3NT will come up very rarely as opener, especially if you open 1NT with any 5-card major as long as the hand otherwise qualifies, so you may wish to use this bid for something else.

Note: Mike Lawrence plays it as a 15-17 point balanced hand with, specifically, a small doubleton in the two over one suit.

You can use a raise of a 2C and 2D response (but not 2H) to 4 as Roman Keycard Blackwood if you fit responder's suit and can force a slam - it does save room ... although it's not mandatory, of course.

Opener's immediate rebids of a jump shift after opening 1 of a major and receiving a two over one response are basically undefined (if not splinters) and should be discussed by the partners. It's usually the case that, in 2/1, neither opener nor responder jumps and, if they do, it usually has a very specific meaning.

A jump rebid of 3 of the opened suit is generally a solid or a semi-solid suit that has something outside according to Mike Lawrence. However, some people, like Larry Cohen, say it can have nothing outside, that the importance of jump rebidding 3 to show a solid suit outweighs the need to have anything outside.

Note: It can also be the normal (as in SA or Acol) jump rebid in the major showing a good 6-card suit and 17-19 points.

A jump rebid of 4 in a major is generally a hand limited to no control outside of the two bid suits. So, if the auction goes 1S - 2H; 4H or 1H - 2C; 4H opener's 4H rebid won't have a singleton or void or King or Ace in D or S. This is also up to partnership understanding - it's simply what Mike Lawrence advocates.

Note: This agreement can be extended to responder if responder jump rebids 4 of the opened major. E.G. 1H - 2C; 2H - 4H or 1S - 2D; 2H - 4S.

Responder's rebids are usually natural and otherwise undefined except:

If responder rebids, without a jump, 2 or 3 of opener's suit, then she/he has specifically 3 cards in the suit (i.e., it is **never** a simple preference whether or not opener has rebid a new suit or rebid his/her opened suit. If your rebid of the opened suit shows 6 or more cards, then, I suppose, it might be made with only a doubleton ... but, as I said, there are ramifications to this).

The bids of 2NT and 3NT are generally as above.

IB. The Forcing 1NT Response to a Major

This is the original way that 2/1 was played (and still is the primary way it's played - semi-forcing is relatively recent even tho it has been around for several years now and its adoption rate has been very gradual).

The argument for the forcing 1NT (an invention of Alvin Roth who also invented 5 card majors, the negative double, the unusual NT, maybe even the precursor of 2/1, and was certainly one of the finest bridge theorists the world has ever seen) is that, if responder has:

3 or more cards in opener's major, that is almost undoubtedly going to be the trump suit (as far as your side is concerned).

2 cards in opener's major, a contract of 2 of that major, even if only a 5-2 fit, should be at least as good a contract as 1NT, and that will often be responder's rebid if opener rebids a new suit at the 2 level without reversing (unless you have 5+ cards in opener's 2nd suit and even then you may go back to the higher scoring major). This is analogous to the weak transfer to a major after an opening 1NT – you are often willing to risk a 5-2 fit there too).

1 card or 0 cards in opener's major, the hand most likely belongs in some other suit and **not** NT or might be a misfit (although 1NT will sometimes score better than two of a suit, two of a suit will often be the better contract in both MPS and IMPS ... but, if it's the misfit, it just might play better in 1NT ... but it's too late - this possibility exists in the semi-forcing NT tho).

As a rule, the 1NT forcing mechanism is very likely to get you to a contract that's playable (the primary exception is misfits ... when any system will often have a hard time). The 1NT response will be used on **any** responding hand except raises (and even one of them starts with 1NT), of 6-11 / 12 points. This is necessary since a two over one response is forcing to game.

It can also be used on sub-par raises to 2, on game-going hands where there is no good two over one suit (this does have a drawback, tho), as well as on most weak hands with a long suit.

Opener's rebid over a forcing NT response can be a variety of things:

2 of the opened major if it's at least 6 cards long and the opener can't envision a game in the hand ... which strongly implies that any other bid denies a 6-card major.

Note: If opener has 6 S and 4 H, whether or not opener shows the H and what that means is a matter of partnership understanding (maybe 2S shows a dead minimum and 2H shows some extra values?).

A 4-card suit without a jump.

Note: See the note above.

A 3 (yes, 3) card minor (it's virtually always 4 if you play the semi-forcing NT - see below). It can even be 2 C (1D is **always** 3 or more) when opener has 4=5=2=2 distribution but thankfully, that's rarely the final contract unless you have at least a 5-2 fit and that particular distribution itself is rare.

An invitational rebid by jumping to 3 of the opened major or rebidding 2NT as in SA. This, of course, isn't forcing.

Opener can also jump to a game as in SA.

A strong jump shift as in SA.

Responder's rebid after a forcing NT response can also be a variety of things:

A rebid of a new suit isn't forcing and opener should not raise unless there still might be a game in the hand (this is more likely if responder's next response is 2H than if it's a minor) or it can also be to further preempt the bidding (hence 1-2-3 preemptive). This 2nd response, if a new suit, shows a minimum of 6 cards in the suit (but might be 5 cards **only** in the case of 2H). It's not forcing even as a jump shift - it simply shows a hand with a 6+ card suit that's not good enough for a two over one - if it's done without a jump shift it guarantees no additional strength at all.

Note: If you play the immediate jump shift as non-forcing and a good 6-card suit not quite good enough for a two over one response, you should discuss with partner just what specific meaning to assign to the jump shift after 1NT or if you even want to play it that way.

Responder can return to 2 of opener's major (or pass if opener rebids the opened suit) with 2 card support and a minimum hand or with the sub-par raise.

Responder also can jump in opener's major to indicate specifically 3-card support (the immediate raise to 3 is always 4+ card support) and invitational values (11-12 support points).

If responder has 11-12 HCP and a balanced hand, he/she can rebid 2NT.

If responder has one of the rare game-going hands that start with a 1NT response, she/he should bid game although that might result in missing a slam when opener is strong - which might be a good reason not to include a game-going hand in the 1NT response. An alternative is to use it only for specific types of game-going hand (maybe only 13 or 14 HCP and totally flat, 4-3-3-3 distribution without a good suit that can be bid).

You may have inferred that, very often, responder's 10 points should be downgraded to 9 points or upgraded to 11 points and that a good 12 **might** qualify for a two over one response.

The main advantage to the 100% forcing 1NT is that invitational, some game-going hands (those strong enough to qualify for a two over one response but without a good suit to bid - but see above), and some sub-par raises to 2 can be handled by the 1NT response.

The downsides are that 1NT may be the best contract and that opener can bid a 3-card minor which does make a minor suit partscore harder to get to when it might be the only playable contract.

The forcing 1NT is clearly **less** of an advantage to 2/1 than the two over one game forcing response.

IC. The Semi-Forcing 1NT Response to a Major

This is the most common modification to 2/1.

If opener has a small balanced hand (12 - a bad 14 HCP), she/he can pass. Incidentally, a stronger balanced hand will generally be opened 1NT (a good 14 - 17 HCP) or will rebid 2NT (18 - 19 HCP).

A pass is also acceptable if the hand is specifically 4=5=2=2 distribution and has 12 - a bad 14 HCP (this distribution with 15 - 16 HCP can sometimes be opened 1NT).

Opener's rebids are as in IB. except a 1NT response can be passed - this means that a rebid of a minor is **very** likely to be 4+ cards.

Responder's rebids (if the auction gets that far) are also as described in IB. but then the 1NT response must **not** be used on any game going hand.

The main advantage to the semi-forcing 1NT is that you can play in 1NT whereas you can't if it's 100% forcing - this is sometimes an advantage and sometimes a disadvantage depending on the hands. Since the specific distribution of 4=5=2=2 can be passed with 12 - bad 14 HCP and any distribution of 5-3-3-2 can be passed if it has 12 - a bad 14 HCP, opener's rebid of a minor is **very** likely to be 4 cards. It theoretically can be 3 only in the case of 4=5=3=1 or 4=5=1=3 distribution where you'd have to rebid a minor with only 3 cards. This is **very** unlikely to happen ... although it is possible. It is also possible to just pass at least some of those hands in the 12 to a bad 14 point range.

The primary downsides to the semi-forcing NT are:

A 5-3 major suit fit might not be found when responder has a 3-card limit raise and opener passes.

Note: if you use Bergen raises, you can modify them to show this hand.

A 5-3 major suit fit might not be found when responder has an invitational hand with 5+ H and opener passes but has 3+ H.

If responder has a 6-card suit he/she was planning on bidding next and opener passes, that can no longer be done immediately but, if opener does pass, it might not be a problem or responder might get a 2nd chance (this is similar to the case in SA or Acol).

Note: The semi-forcing NT is clearly **less** of an advantage to 2/1 than the two over one game forcing response.

Note: Based on my experience, the 4=5=3=1 or 4=5=1=3 distributions come up rarely enough to not worry about them **at all**. If they do, and there's no other option, you're probably no worse off than in SA or Acol.

Note: if you miss a 5-3 fit in a major, you would probably be at the 3-level so are two levels higher than 1NT. Besides, on some of those hands, the opps will give you another chance to bid.

II. 2/1 Options

There are really only 2 options to the main system itself. The other options are how certain sequences are treated.

1. The primary option, by far and away, is whether the 1NT response to 1 of a major is forcing or semi-forcing.

2. The auction 1D - 2C is not necessarily game forcing although most 2/1 partnerships treat it that way and, without prior discussion, that's how it should be handled. However, it's a common option to treat this auction as it is treated in SA (for the sake of simplicity if nothing else).

Note: If you choose to adopt it as a 2/1 sequence, bear in mind that auctions beginning with 1D don't include either the forcing or semi-forcing 1NT response so can well be a bit more complicated and somewhat clumsier.

III. Primary Treatments or Conventions used with 2/1

2/1 doesn't necessarily include 5 card majors in 3rd or 4th position although you can play it that way if you wish (in SA too).

Note: In other words, the system doesn't have to change at all depending on position.

Light 3rd hand openings are not a requirement (in SA either). Incidentally, Edgar Kaplan has an excellent presentation of light 3rd hand openings in his book about the Kaplan-Sheinwold System (he didn't believe they should be made in one of a suit but he advocated slightly unusual weak twos in 3rd seat and also said that the requirements for the weak NT could be lowered in this situation - and he did consider Drury. In the interest of fairness, Mike Lawrence is very emphatic that Drury is a good thing).

Note: In other words, the basic system doesn't have to change at all depending on high card strength.

2/1 does not necessarily use Inverted Minors although many people playing 2/1 do use them.

The opening two of a suit bids don't necessarily have to be the SA bids where 2C is the only strong bid and the other three suits are weak 2s. You could, if you so desired, play 2/1 with Benji two bids, the Multi-2D with 2H and 2S bids used as Dutch 2s, or something altogether different.

It also doesn't require you to use 2NT to show 20-21 HCP (High Card Points) and a balanced hand although, being based on SA, it's usually played that way. You can, however, use it for whatever purpose suits your system.

It also doesn't require you to use weak jump responses to one of a suit. The original Two Over One system was popularized by Max Hardy (although it was really invented as a specific system by Richard Walsh) and he liked weak jump responses but he specifically says that they're not part of the system (as does Larry Cohen). Mike Lawrence preferred the standard, rock-crusher jump shift by responder (because, as he said, 'I'm not fond of the preemptive jump shift' and he liked the other responses to be limited by the jump shift). This is optional, however, and he has come over to treating them as non-forcing and an almost two over-one response with 6 good cards in the suit.

Jacoby 2NT isn't absolutely necessary but I've never seen 2/1 played without it.

Responder's jump shifts can be like they are in SA ... but they don't make nearly as much sense as strong bids over 1 of a major as they do over 1 of a minor. If you are not playing the auction 1D - 2C as game forcing (in other words, you use it as in SA), the jump shift is also like it is in SA. The jump shift over a major (2S if the opening was 1H, 3C/D, and 3H if the opening was 1S) can be a hand not quite good enough for a two over one response and is 6+ cards. They can also be mini-splinters, a single jump shift is a splinter with a singleton, a double jump shift is a splinter with a void, they can be Bergen raises, or they could even be the previously mentioned weak jump shifts.

IV. What You Can Expect if You Agree to Play 2/1

You can certainly expect that you'll be playing the basics of the system so the primary things to agree with partner are whether the 1NT response to 1 of a major is forcing or semi-forcing, is 1D - 2C a 2/1 auction, what 2-bids do we play, how do we treat raises, and what about jump shifts?

You are almost undoubtedly playing Jacoby 2NT after 1 of a major. The immediate 2NT response doesn't really make any sense to play as the invitational to 3NT hand that it normally is in SA or Acol.

V. Questions (note: these are just the more important ones that I can think of that are not covered elsewhere - there might well be others and there might be duplication. If there's a question about anything, you can send me a sticky note.)

Do responder's jump shifts after an opening of 1 of a major show a very strong hand?

Probably not. You can play them to show various things such as Bergen raises, you can play a single jump shift to show a splinter with a singleton and the double jump shift to show a splinter with a void, you can play them as regular rock-crusher jump shifts (probably the least used option), you can play them as mini-splinters, you can use them to show an almost two over one response that is non-forcing but with a good 6-card suit (this has, for all practical purposes, become the default when you don't use Bergen raises), or they can even be weak jump shifts.

Is a bid of the 4th suit the artificial 4th suit forcing?

Yes ... although the need for it is greatly reduced. E.g., in the auction 1S - 2C; 2H/2S, responder would still need to use 3D to find out if opener has a stop in D (an example responder hand is Kx AKx xxx AJxxx - how else can you possibly bid this hand?) is probably a good example. Another is 1D - 1H; 1S - 2C where 2C is asking for a stop in C to play in NT.

Note: Technically, the bid is asking for more information and this is whatever you think partner will think is most important - often delayed support or a stopper.

Note: some people will say 4th suit forcing no longer applies and this might be true **but only in their particular version of 2/1.**

Does the principle of Fast Arrival still apply?

While this used to be absolutely true of 2/1, the current philosophy, since jumps are generally unnecessary in 2/1, is that a jump bid, whether by opener or responder (after a two over one response) is now generally a very specific type of hand. It's still true that the Principle of Fast Arrival is adhered to but the definition has changed to be one where the lower bid is simply not the hand promised by the jumps to 3 or 4 ... and they are not **necessarily** stronger, although they usually are, but they have more possibilities. E.g. an auction like 1S - 2D; 2H - 2S might have more potential than a jump to 3S or 4S, however you define them, although the 2S hand might be weaker - e.g. be Kxx Kx KQxxx Kxx (which is 14 HCP), and the 4S hand might be KQx xx AKQJx xxx (which is 15 HCP).

Can you play Jacoby 2NT over 1 of a minor?

Yes ... although this is only a 2/1 question if you play 1D - 2C as a 2/1 auction.

Note: Since better minor is used in 2/1, I would think responder should really have a 5+ card suit in this case.

Should you open a strong 1NT with a 5-card major?

This is clearly not a 2/1 question but is, rather, almost a religious debate. There is a good argument for yes because it makes many exception auctions go away and doesn't seem to have a great impact on the final contract if it's 3NT and there's a 5-3 major suit fit ...even when the 5-card major is good). Neil Rosen, a British international, wrote some articles about this that can be found on the internet.

Note: This is totally up to partnership agreement.

Is 2/1 off (so the system becomes SA) whenever the opps interfere with either an overcall or a takeout double?

Most people play it that way but it should always be discussed with partner. Maybe the system should be off except ..., etc.

VI. Is it complicated?

No – but you can make it as complicated as you wish, as is the case with most bidding systems. Almost everything is logical once the basic principles of the bidding system have been laid out (like with all decent bidding systems).

It's not necessary to have many predefined sequences any more than it is with SA or Acol. Experienced players will see the logic almost immediately and that's enough. If you have a regular and serious partner tho, you'd probably want to clarify at least some of the sequences further.

VII. Possible systems (note: these are just three of the many possibilities):

Examples:

1. Vanilla 2/1 Based on the Strong NT.

The 1NT response to a major is 100% forcing.

Immediate jumps over 1H/1S are a good 6-card suit and are non-forcing.

1D - 2C is treated as a 2/1 auction.

Inverted Minors.

Jacoby 2NT.

Two-bids are a strong 2C and three weak twos.

2. My preferred system.

The opening 1NT is (a good 14) to 17 HCP (instead of the normal 15 - 17 HCP) so the small balanced hand is really a small balanced hand – it's only 12 to a bad 14 HCP so opener would pass most normal invitations - e.g. 1C - 1H; 1NT so the invitational 2NT must be a good 12. Playing in the part score of 1NT is a clear advantage when 2NT goes down although it must be admitted that 3NT will sometimes make if you have a bad 14 opposite 11 or a bad 12 - obviously I'm not too concerned about this possibility). If playing minor suit raises as limit bids (normal for Acol all along and now for modern SA as well) and you have the small balanced hand, you should almost always pass (normally, at best, you will have 13, or a bad 14, HCP opposite 11/12 so the theoretic maximum is 25 or a baddish 26).

The semi-forcing 1NT.

The Two Over One responses are absolutely forcing to game only over 1 of a major. 2C over 1D (which Mike Lawrence tactfully calls the '... the black sheep of the Two-Over-One System') is not part of this system and is played as in SA.

A jump rebid of the opened major is just like in SA, a good 6+ card suit and 17-19 points - both over the semi-forcing NT and a two over one response. This is somewhat unusual but I use it because the solid suit variety comes up so rarely ... although it can be invaluable when it does. However, jump rebids to 4 of the major after a two over one response, show no control in the other two suits.

Regular raises (so no Inverted Minors).

Responder's jumps in a new suit after opener has opened 1 of a major are splinters whether at the 2-level (only 2S over 1H), 3-level, or 4-level. If the bid is a single jump shift, it's a splinter with a singleton; if it's a double jump shift, it's a splinter with a void.

Note: There also seems to be an argument for modified Bergen raises.

Two-bids are a strong 2C and the Multi-2D is only a weak 2 in a major with 2H and 2S being Dutch 2s so an opening 2NT is 20-21 HCP and a balanced hand.

Opener, after a two over one response over 1 of a major, will never exceed two of his/her suit with a minimum hand (except for the rebid of 2NT which is 12 - a bad 14 HCP or 18-19 HCP and balanced). A rebid of 2 of the opened suit, regard-

less of the range of the opening NT, does not show more than 5 cards – just that there is nothing else to bid. This does not say that, if you rebid 2 of your suit, you have a really minimum hand but just that, if you go beyond it, you show extra strength. It must be admitted, tho, that you will often have another bid if you're truly not minimum.

The Edgar Kaplan modification to the strong 2C making it forcing only for two rounds if partner makes two negative responses (however you define them - this system uses the cheapest suit over any forcing rebid by opener) and opener rebids his/her suit.

Responses to 1NT are:

2C = normal Stayman.

2D and 2H = transfers to 2H and 2S respectively.

2S = McKendrick - an invitational hand in NT or a weak hand with a 6 card minor. Opener rebids 2NT with a minimum (a hand that would pass an invite by a normal response of 2NT so a good 14 - 15) or 3C with a maximum (so 16-17). Over 2NT, responder passes with an invitational hand or corrects to 3C or 3D if having the weak hand with a 6-card minor. Over 3C, responder, with a weak hand and the 6-card minor, passes or corrects to 3D; or, with the invitational hand, bids 3H or 3S with a 4 card major or 3NT with no 4-card major.

2NT = minor-suit Stayman.

3 of a suit bid = natural and game-forcing.

Reasonably vanilla Jacoby 2NT so a rebid of 4 of the major is the worst possible hand you could have to open 1 of the major, 3 of a new suit shows a singleton in the suit and a rebid of 4 of a new suit is a void in the suit (except when the opening is 1H, a rebid of 3S is either a singleton or void), a rebid

of 3NT shows a better than an absolutely minimum hand (or else you'd bid 4 of the major) but not good enough to rebid 3 of the major, and a rebid of 3 of the major shows a good hand (both 3NT and 3 of the major deny a short suit).

3. Vanilla 2/1 Based on the Weak NT

Two Over One can also be thought of as an improvement on the Kaplan-Sheinwold System which was popular in America during the heyday of Edgar Kaplan, one of the all-time best theorists and then one of the world's better players – the Kaplan-Sheinwold System used a weak NT, 5 card majors, the forcing 1NT response to a one of a major, and Inverted Minors.

The 1NT response to a major is 100% forcing.

1D - 2C is treated as a 2/1 auction.

The opening 1NT is 12-14 HCP (as it often is in Acol).

Jacoby 2NT.

Inverted minors.

Immediate jumps over 1H/1S are a good 6-card suit and are non-forcing.

The opening 2NT is 21-22 HCP (as it often is in Acol). A 15-18 HCP NT type hand is handled by opening 1 of a suit and then rebidding the cheapest NT and a 19-20 HCP NT type hand is handled by rebidding with a jump in NT.

Two-bids are a strong 2C and three weak twos.

Note: these are only 3 of the possibilities - there are many more ... but they **all** meet the 3 criteria shown on page 2.

VIII. Getting to 2/1 from SA or Acol

The specific recommendation for migrating from these two systems is below but I'd recommend that you try it out in other than an important event. I would not expect everyone to like it or to even want to try it although it provides a moderately infrequent, but very clear, improvement in bidding accuracy (although this advantage can be quite large when it happens).

From SA

Since 2/1 is quite similar to SA, the simplest way to migrate is to use SA with the forcing 1NT response to 1 of a major and the two over one response over an opening bid of 1 of a major as absolutely forcing to game and then, once you have the basic structure down, decide if you want to use the semi-forcing 1NT response to an opening bid of 1 of a major or if you want to treat the auction of 1D - 2C as a 2/1 auction.

You don't have to change your opening 1NT and its responses, your 2-level or higher bids, your 1C or 1D openings, or your raises.

From Acol

It's a little harder to migrate from Acol (unless you play Acol with 5 card majors and 3 weak 2's when the upgrade path is identical to upgrading from SA) than from SA (which makes sense bearing in mind the derivation of 2/1).

The first real hurdle is to start using 5 card majors if you're not already. This involves a shift in thinking about the opening bid that is really not that difficult. Your opening bid is now pretty much dictated by 2/1 (not having a 5 card major forces you to open 1C or 1D unless you have the criteria for a 1NT or higher bid). However, although to a much lesser extent, the principle

of preparedness still applies. You can't always follow it tho - if you have a 4=4=4=1 hand (the singleton being in clubs), you can't open 1 of a major so must open 1D when a 2C response will force you to lie about your hand somehow. In 4 card major Acol, this hand can be opened 1H or even 1S if the heart suit is bad.

Note: SA and Acol with 5 card majors have the same problem).

On the other hand, the distribution requirements for a reverse aren't as limiting as they usually are in 4-card major systems – you don't always have to have more of the first bid suit than the second (unless you have clubs and diamonds or hearts and spades) – e.g., if you have AKx AJxx xx KQxx, you can open 1C (or, if the minors are reversed, 1D) and reverse into 2H over 1S or 1NT) but, if you have AK x AJxxx KQxxx, you'd open 1D and then probably make a simple rebid in clubs.

Once those points are clear, you can simply change your 1NT response to 1 of a major to be forcing (opener rebidding a 3 card suit systemically takes some getting used to and this is equally true for SA players) and change the two over one response to 1 of a major to be game-forcing.

Note: you are quite free to continue to use the weak NT and this does make life simpler in some regards.

As with SA, you don't have to change your opening 1NT and its responses, your 2-level or higher bids, your 1C or 1D openings, or your raises.

IX. Sources (with my comments)

Mike Lawrence. Workbook on the Two Over One System (book).

This book is a little older than his CD below but it has a treatment of the 3-card raise by opener that is extremely valuable.

Mike Lawrence. The Two Over One System (CD).

This, to me, is the definitive source on the 2/1 system although it doesn't treat the 1NT semi-forcing response to 1 of a major.

Larry Cohen. Larry Teaches 2/1 Game Forcing (book).

Larry Cohen was quite a good player so his opinions have to be considered and this is the only 2/1 book that I know of that covers 1NT semi-forcing. He thinks 2/1 is clearly the way to go and has a simple version that has some interesting ideas.

Paul Thurston. 25 Steps to Learning 2/1 (book).

Paul Thurston. Playing 2/1: The Rest of the Story (book).

Paul Thurston is a very good Canadian player but these books talk about what he plays (as do most books about 2/1) but don't give much, if any, attention to the options. This is not to really denigrate the books tho ... they are definitely ok.

Max Hardy. Various older books.

A decent basic introduction but out of date (e.g. they don't even mention the semi-forcing NT since it wasn't invented yet or not treating 1D - 2C as a 2/1 auction) and they include the author's preferences which aren't really part of 2/1 - this may or may not be stated. The **only** reason to avoid his books is that they are outdated. They were my introduction to 2/1 tho.

Bill Treble. Two Over One (book).

A decent introduction to basic 2/1.

Audrey Grant, Eric Rodwell. This book capitalizes on Eric Rodwell's name (he's one of the world's very best) but is a decent introduction to basic 2/1.

Paul Marston. The Language of Bidding - 2 over 1. I live in Australia and Paul Marston is kind of revered here ... but this book is, in my opinion, just a confusing rehash of the system.

Neil Timm. Various books of theory by a weaker player (compared to the other authors, anyway - he's a professor in Canada).

The internet is a good source of articles about various features of 2/1.

There are very few books that cover 1NT semi-forcing (in fact, the only one that I recall that discusses it at all is Larry Cohen's) and none, that I know of, that cover the Kaplan Inversion (not really a problem - the internet tells you all you need to know ... and I don't think it confers much of an advantage, if any).

Note: the sources underlined are the ones I strongly recommend.