



# Adventures in Bridge

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## (13) 2 over 1 Game Forcing: Slam Bidding and Fast Arrival

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Level: Intermediate- Advanced

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### Slam Bidding in 2/1 Game Forcing Auctions

Slam Bidding in 2/1 Game Forcing auctions is a matter of cooperation from both members of the partnership. We want to make a joint decision about whether or not slam is going to be a good idea. Before we explore slam, we first want to determine if we have a fit. If we do not have a fit then our slam exploration will be based solely on quantitative or ace-asking bids. These auctions are relatively simple and do not require many special tools – 4NT *Quantitative* or 4♣ *Gerber*.

The more complex auctions are the ones where we do find a fit and we want to explore slam. Once we have found a fit, both players need to be able to communicate whether they are interested in slam. We also need to know what bids are “normal” and which bids show “slam interest.” 2/1 Game Forcing allows for much of this communication because we do not have to worry about partner passing us below game. This is one of the big advantages that 2/1 Game Forcing has over Standard American.

This document will not be a treatise on slam bidding, but we will explore some of the tools and concepts from 2/1 GF that should help you judge whether or not to bid a slam.

### The Principle of Fast Arrival

This is the single most important principle in all of modern slam bidding. The idea is that when you are in a “forcing auction,” jumping to game is the weakest action and bids below game show extra values (because they leave room for cuebidding.)



Most people are familiar with *The Principle of Fast Arrival* from Jacoby 2NT auctions even if they have not heard the term before:

- 1♠ - 2NT\* - 4♣                      No shortness, very weak hand
- 1♠ - 2NT\* - 3♣                      No shortness, much stronger hand

In 2/1 Game Forcing auctions we have lots of opportunities to make use of the principle of Fast Arrival.

### Examples

1♠ - 2♦ -  
2♠ -

- 3♣      Responder shows slam interest, asks Opener to start cuebidding.
- 4♣      Responder shows a minimum hand with no slam interest.

In this example Responder shows support and level of interest using Fast Arrival.

1♠ - 2♦ -  
2♥ - 2♠ -

- 3♣      Opener shows slam interest, asks Responder to start cuebidding.
- 4♣      Opener shows a minimum hand with no slam interest.

In this example Opener shows their level of interest by using Fast Arrival.

### Shape vs. Cuebids

Now that we have a fundamental concept (*Fast Arrival*) to base our slam bidding around, we need to discuss what we do when partner does not make a Fast Arrival bid. Partner has left space available for us to communicate more information and decide about bidding a slam. One of the most important parts of good slam bidding is to be able to make most of our slam bidding decisions without going beyond game – that is stopping in 4-Major instead of ending in 5-Major (being in 5-Major down 1 is one of the worst feelings in bridge.)

### Major Suit 2/1 GF Auctions

When we are in a 2/1 GF auction and we find a fit at a low level (the 2-level), we need to determine what the rest of our auction means.



*Example*

1♠ - 2♣ -

2♦ - 2♠ -

In this auction cuebidding doesn't start until the 4-level (above 3♠.) If we make additional bids (other than ♠) at the 3-level, we are showing additional shape. This shape information is often very helpful for partner in order to determine whether or not to bid slam.

*Some more detailed examples*

1♠ - 2♣ -

2♦ - 2♠ -

3♦

This shows 5♠ and 5♦.

1♠ - 2♣ -

2♦ - 2♠ -

3♣

5-1-4-3 (or 6-0-4-3)

1♠ - 2♣ -

2♦ - 2♠ -

3♠ -

This asks responder to start cuebidding for slam. This is what we bid if we want to know about specific Aces and are not interested in showing more shape information. *This key is that the 3-level is used for shape and the 4-level is used for cuebidding.*