

**TWO OVER ONE. AN INTERVIEW OF BARBARA SEAGRAM**  
**by DAR WEBB of ST PETERSBURG BRIDGE CLUB IN FLORIDA.**  
**Excerpted from Baron Barclay newsletter**

**How is 2/1 better than Standard American?**

The 10-12 point range is a nebulous one. When playing Standard, the Opener and Responder with 10-12 cannot quite decide whether they should be in game or not.

Playing 2/1, once there has been a 2/1 auction, now you know that your side must get to at least game. There is no longer an issue about having to make sure you make forcing bids.

For example:

**1H - 2D**

2H - 3H is forcing in 2/1 but not in Standard.

Playing the 2/1 system, the Responder with 10-12 may not make a 2/1 bid. Let's say Opener bids **1S**. and his partner has:

S Kx  
H AJxxx  
D Kxx  
C xxx

Responder must now bid **1NT**. So, the 1NT response of one of a major shows 6-12 points (including distribution) and is thereby forcing. In Standard, the **1NT** response only promises 6-9 points and is not forcing.

**Should 2/1 be taught to beginners?**

I believe that beginners need to learn Standard first. They need to walk before they can run. So many newbies have friends in country club settings or in the world of social bridge. They need to be able to play with these people, who often do not know 2/1 and have no interest in learning. e.g. they may be elderly and just want to play happy duplicate with their friends. BUT once students have learned Standard, it is easy for them to move on to 2/1, when they get interested in honing their skills. It is most useful for them to know both systems as their game develops.

**What's the hardest thing to learn in 2/1?**

People have trouble grasping the fact that an actual 2/1 auction comes up very infrequently.

For example, you hold:

S Axxxx  
H Kx  
D Kx  
C Axxx

Partner opens 1H and you should respond 1S and await further developments. Students new to the system are anxious to show that they have opening-plus points and have a burning urge to bid 2C with this hand. But 1S is correct.

For that matter, here's another hand:

S KQxx  
H xx  
D xxx  
C AKJx

Partner opens 1H and newbies are in a hurry to bid 2C instead of just bidding 1S, which is forcing. 1S is the correct bid as Responder should name his 4-card suits up the ladder.

### What's the hardest thing to teach in 2/1?

The rebid by the Opener after a Forcing NT. Learning Forcing NT is foreign to the students so it is an adjustment for them.

Personally, I prefer Semi-Forcing NT. If Opener has

S KJxxx  
H KQx  
D Kx  
C J10x

He opens 1S. If Responder bids 1NT, Opener wants to pass, AND I believe he should be allowed to pass. Thus playing Semi Forcing NT is a better system.

The adjustment I like to make in 2/1 playing 1NT as semi-forcing is:

1S -1NT  
or  
1H -1NT

Shows 6-12 total points and guarantees **2 or fewer cards** in partner's major

This is a warning bell to opener. BUT playing this, you must have an agreement about how to show (10) 11-12 total points and 3 card support.

I like

1S - 3H to show 11-12 total points and 3 card spade support and  
1H - 2S to show 11-12 total points and 3 card support

In our opinion, this improves the traditional 2/1 system immeasurably.

BUT remember that these are partnership agreements.

## What are the most common mistakes players make with 2/1?

Not discussing system nuances with partner before playing. There are so many approaches to this system so you have to discuss these.

One main issue is whether you want reverses to show extra values after a 2/1 auction. I want a reverse to show extra values because otherwise Responder will never know if opener has extras or not.

BUT many partnerships believe that bidding out shape regardless of values is the priority.

This must be discussed, before playing together. The other error they make is in forgetting that 1D -1NT or 1C -1NT is not Forcing NT.

Only 1 of a major - 1NT is forcing. And then it is only forcing by an unpassed hand.

# DEEP FINESSES

by Andrew Robson

Andrew is a wonderful teacher and also has received an O.B.E. from the Queen. He is an international champion and a wonderful teacher.

## ANDREW ROBSON: LEAD TO THE LOWER HONOUR FIRST

Sometimes, in your attempt to promote cards by finessing, you are missing two or more key honours.

Take:

- (a) AQ10 facing 432
- (b) KJ2 facing 432
- (c) Q109 facing 432
- (d) AJ9 facing 432

The principle is the same for all four:

*Finesse against the lower missing honour first.*

- (a). Lead to the ten, finessing against the jack. If the ten wins, cross back to the weak hand, and lead to the queen.
- (b). Lead to the jack, finessing against the queen. If the jack wins, cross back, and lead to the king.
- (c). Lead to the nine, finessing against the jack. If that loses to the king/ace, cross back and lead to the ten.
- (d). Lead to the nine, finessing against the ten. If that loses to the queen/king, cross back and lead to the jack.

North Deals	♠ 7 4 2	
N-S Vul	♥ J 7 6	
	♦ Q J 9 7	
	♣ A K Q	
♠ 9 6		♠ K J 8
♥ A K 5 2		♥ Q 9 3
♦ 10 6 3		♦ 8 4 2
♣ J 9 6 3		♣ 7 5 4 2
		♠ A Q 10 5 3
		♥ 10 8 4
		♦ A K 5
		♣ 10 8

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	2D	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♣		

## What happened

West kicked off with ♥ A, receiving an encouraging "throw high means aye" ♥ 9 from East. He cashed ♥ K, then led over to East's ♥ Q. At Trick Four East switched to ♦ 8, and declarer had to take the rest of the tricks.

Winning dummy's ♦ J, declarer led ♠ 2 to East's ♠ 8 and his ♠ Q. The finesse against ♠ K was successful, but East's ♠ KJ now had to score a trick. Down one.

## What should have happened

Needing to avoid a trump loser, declarer wins ♦ J and leads ♠ 2 to ♠ 8 and... ♠ 10. He needs East to have both ♠ K and ♠ J to prevent there being a loser, and is lucky this time. ♠ 10 (a finesse against the lower missing honour - i.e. ♠ J) wins, so he crosses back to ♣ Q, plays ♣ 4 to ♣ J and ♣ Q, cashes ♣ A felling ♣ K, and claims the remainder in top tricks. 10 tricks and game made.

## If you remember just one thing...

When missing two or more key honours, it is usually best to try to finesse against the lower one first.