**(13) 2/1 Game Forcing – Slam Bidding and Fast Arrival**

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*Level: Intermediate- Advanced* *robert@advinbridge.com*

**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 – 4N *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 if 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 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 2N auctions if it they have not heard the term before:

1♠-2N\*-4♠ No shortness, very weak hand

1♠-2N\*-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 their 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 two level), we need to determine what the rest of our auction is going to mean.

*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.*