

TWO-FOR-ONE RESPONSES

Two-For-One Limit Raise in Clubs

A two-level major suit jump takeout of a 1♣ opening *in competition* into a major suit is called 2-4-1. It is highly invitational but not forcing, showing a four-card suit, a game-invitational hand, and at least four clubs. That's two bids for the price of one, while robbing LHO of bidding space. A minimum opener can pass with four-card support (or a strong three, with a side singleton), bid 2NT, or retreat to 3♣. A 2NT rebid implies a three-card club suit. He can also bid 2♠ over 2♥ (you could have both majors), but that has to be forcing. With a good hand opener can raise, force with a new suit, or bid game. Having shown support for his minor, you are free to bid something else after opener's forcing rebid.

The purpose of 2-4-1 is to handle hands with a (possibly weak) four-card major and good four-card or better support for opener's clubs. A raise is not forcing, so a jump to game is stronger:

South	West	North
1♣	1♦	2♥ - four hearts, good clubs, may have spades too
Pass		minimum, four hearts
	2♠	- forcing, but may be minimum
	2NT	- natural, minimum hand, maybe only three clubs
	3♣	- signoff, minimum, would have passed a limit raise
	3♦	- asks for a diamond stopper, but may be a cue toward slam
	3♥	- invitational
	4♥	- stronger raise
	3♠/4♦	- splinter, very good hearts
	4♣	- invitational

The jump may be made with two four-card majors in a 4=4=4=1 or 4=4=0=5 hand. A jump to 2♥ gives opener room to bid 2♠ (forcing) if he has four spades. A jump to 2♠ therefore denies four hearts.

Two-For-One Limit Raise in Diamonds

After a 1♦ opening the only 2-4-1 limit raise response available is 2♠ over a 1♥ overcall:.

North	West	South
1♦	1♥	2♠ - four spades with diamond raise, could have hearts
Pass		minimum, four spades
	3♣	- forcing
	3♦	- minimum, would have passed a limit raise
	3♥	- asks for a heart stopper, but may be a cue toward slam
	3♠	- non-forcing raise
	4♠	- stronger raise
	4♣/4♥	- splinter bid, good spade support

Two For One by a Passed Hand

Two-For-One responses are not used in the absence of competition by an unpassed hand, but are especially useful by a passed hand, which can use them as above, showing a limit raise and a four-

card major, but also (but only over a pass or double, not if RHO overcalls) can show values for a 2NT response without actually responding 2NT.

Two-For-One Two Diamond Response to One Club

A 2♦ jump takeout of 1♣ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2NT or sign off with 3♣. He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support you bid 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT.

I said "probably" four cards in a major, but that is not mandatory. Having passed conservatively with ♠A32 ♥A76 ♦A87 ♣9865, 2♦ is a better response to 1♣ club than 2NT. If opener now bids a major (or asks for a major) you will have to bid notrump, but maybe he will rebid in notrump and get the play on his side.

Opener	Responder (a passed hand)
1♦	2♥ - equivalent to 2NT, probably four spades
	2♠ - minimum, four spades, maybe a strong three if unbalanced
	2NT - minimum hand, would have passed a 2NT response
	3♣/3♥ - natural, forcing
	3♦ - signoff
	3♠ - non-forcing spade raise
	4♠ - stronger raise
	4♣/4♥ - splinter bid, probably good

By the way, the 2♦ response is always optional. With a weak major, tenaces, and a good hand for notrump, e.g., ♠J965 ♥KJ9 ♦AJ9 ♣Q102, just respond 2NT. You won't be worse off than those making the same bid, and you ensure that a notrump lead comes up to your hand. Opener in like fashion may rebid 2NT with such a hand (or 3NT with a stronger hand), ignoring the major. Others will be in the same contract, probably from the wrong side.

West	East
♠AJ	♠Q872
♥9532	♥Q876
♦Q62	♦K5
♣KQ104	♣AJ3
Pass	1♣
2♦ *	2♥ **
Pass	

* Values for 2NT, with (probably) one or both majors
 ** Light opening, could have spades too

If West's major suit holdings were reversed, the bidding would go:

West	East
Pass	1♣
2♦	2♥
2♠	Pass

If the 2♦ bid gets doubled, opener's redouble says that the contract may be playable. He probably has at least four diamonds with a high honor. A pass (forcing) denies a four-card major but does not deny a good hand. A 2NT bid is a signoff, as usual, with strength in diamonds.

Two-For-One Two Club Response to One Diamond

A 2♣ takeout of 1♦ is artificial, showing a 2NT response with (probably) four cards in one or both majors. A light opener can rebid 2♦ (which asks responder to bid 2NT), 2NT, or sign off with 3♣. He can also show a major (hearts with both), which responder passes with four-card support. With less support responder bids 2NT (or 2♠ spades over 2♥). A stronger opener can employ the usual methods for rebidding after a non-forcing jump to 2NT.

By the way, the 2♦ or 2♣ response is always optional. With a weak major, tenaces, and a good hand for notrump, e.g., ♠J965 ♥KJ9 ♦AJ9 ♣Q102, just respond 2NT. You won't be worse off than those making the same bid, and you ensure that a notrump lead comes up to your hand. Opener in like fashion may rebid 2NT with such a hand (or 3NT with a stronger hand), ignoring the major. Others will be in the same contract, probably from the wrong side.

To repeat: The artificial notrump responses do not apply when RHO overcalls.

Two-For-One Limit Raise in Clubs

After a 1♣ opening a jump to two of a major shows a limit raise in diamonds and four cards in the major, exactly as described above when bidding in competition.

Two-For-One Limit Raise in Diamonds

After a 1♦ opening a jump to two of a major shows a limit raise in diamonds and four cards in the major, exactly as described above when bidding in competition.

Do not use 2-4-1 if you have a good major and can pass or raise a 1NT rebid. If partner opens 1♣, just bid 1♠ with ♠KJ92 ♥Q4 ♦876 ♣A976, since you are not too strong to pass a 1NT rebid. Why take a chance on getting too high? Similarly, with a strong major and weak four-card support for opener's minor, just bid one of the major even if you won't pass a 1NT rebid. Respond 1♥ to 1♣ with ♠J73 ♥AKJ2 ♦Q4 ♣10842. You don't mind playing hearts opposite three-card support. If opener rebids 1NT you will bid 2NT, suppressing the club support, since this is a good notrump hand.

Two-For-One Over a Double

After a minor suit opening has been doubled for takeout, 2-4-1 bids can be used exactly as described for passed hand responses, provided the hand has merely invitational strength. It is better to redouble with stronger hands. The artificial notrump responses will often right-side a notrump contract. The artificial notrump responses promise at least three cards in opener's minor, since a redouble would be preferable if shorter. Opener can bid three of his suit to sign off, even with a five-card suit.

Because a jump to 2♠ over a double of 1♥ is rather rare, whether played to show a good hand or a weak one, an alternative is to use a jump to 2♠ over a double of 1♥ to show an 11 HCP or stronger notrump hand. This can also right-side a notrump contract, but unlike the other artificial notrump bids it shows exactly three hearts. With fewer hearts a redouble is usually better, with the prospect of a possible ensuing lucrative penalty double.

Opener can therefore sign off by rebidding his heart suit at the three level, even with just five, or he can bid game with just five if that seems in order.

After this response the partnership's usual gadgets after a non-forcing 2NT jump response (e.g., Checkback, Stoplight) can be employed. Opener's rebid of 2NT is not forcing, of course.