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. 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 or maybe long strong clubs.
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. The 2-4-1 response applies to either a passed or an unpassed hand, and over a takeout double.

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
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 or maybe long strong diamonds

Two-For-One responses are not used in the absence of competition by an unpassed hand, but are used by a passed hand and my be used over a takeout double. See section 3-17, Responses by a Passed Hand, and 3-19, Bidding Over a Double.