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# Mike's Advice

## Questions on 2/1

In Two-over-One (2/1) bidding, is a 2/1 100% forcing to game? I say yes, although my view has evolved.

Be careful, however, that you recognize that interference can alter the meaning of a 2/1 sequence and even turn "off" the game force.

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♠	Pass	2♣	2♥

You are still forced to game. Once 2♣ was bid, your side is committed to game or doubling the opponents if they get too high.

What happens, however, if left-hand opponent interferes?

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♠	2♣	2♦	

In this case, because LHO got in there with 2♣ first, you are not obliged to bid a game. 2♦ shows a good hand, but not as good as if LHO had passed. A typical minimum 2♦ bid after an overcall of 2♣:

♠J 2	♥A Q 4	♦K J 9 8 4	♣5 4 2.
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If LHO had passed, partner would have bid 1NT, forcing. After the 2♣ overcall, however, you can bid 2♦. (A negative double would promise four hearts, which you do not have.)

Here are a few additional auctions in which a definition is needed.

<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♠	Dbl	2♦	

2♦ in this sequence is not even forcing. When an opponent makes a takeout double, the 2/1 system is not in effect. An example hand:

♠3	♥J 8 5 4	♦K Q J 8 5 3	♣8 4.
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<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♥	1♠	2♣	

Here, the overcall was at the one level. It's still an overcall, however, so 2♣ is no longer game forcing. It is forcing for one round — opener has to bid again — but you are allowed to stop in various partscores after this beginning. Responder may have a game-forcing hand, but it's possible that he simply has a great 10- or 11-point hand. An example:

♠5 3 2	♥8 2	♦K Q 7	♣A Q 9 8 7.
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<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>
1♠	2♥	3♣	

When responder bids a new suit at the three level, it is forcing to game. You need this agreement so that responder is assured of being able to show his hand. The key is that your partnership remembers the rule. Here, however, is a problem hand:

♠3	♥8 4 3	♦K 4 3	♣A Q 9 8 5 4.
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If you held this hand after a 1♠ opening and 2♥ overcall, you have to pass. A 3♣ bid would be forcing to game. It hurts to pass, but it is correct. If your partner bids again, you may survive. If you end up being robbed, blame the system. At least your pass was correct. If you bid 3♣ with this hand and they double you

(in 3♣, 3♠ or something else), you won't do well.

<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>
1♥	3♦	3♠	

The 3♦ bid is not a normal overcall. It is a preempt. When they preempt at the three level, a new suit by your side is game forcing. This is similar to the previous auction. If their bidding forces you to bid at the three level, your bid is forcing to game. The hands that have game-going values are pretty easy to bid but be aware that their preempt may be hard to handle. The big issue is that 3♠ over 3♦ is forcing. You can't bid 3♠ and expect partner to stop bidding. You would bid 3♠ with:

♠A K J 8 4	♥K 4	♦8 7 4	♣A J 4.
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If you bid 3♠ with this hand, you would hate to hear your partner pass.

Life is not always perfect. Consider:

<i>Partner</i>	<i>RHO</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>LHO</i>
1♥	3♦	?	

♠Q J 8 7 5 4	♥5 2	♦K 5	♣K J 5.
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This hand is difficult because you do not have enough strength, in theory, to bid 3♠. But if you don't bid 3♠, you will often be shut out — a miserable situation. There are two possible solutions. One is to bid 3♠ anyway, recognizing that it is forcing. There are obvious dangers to this, but equally there are dangers to passing.

A second possible action is to make a negative double. Your partner will sometimes bid 3♥, over which you can bid 3♠. If he bids 3♠, however (we can dream), you can raise to game. If he bids 3NT, you have a serious guess to make. And if he bids 4♣ all bets are off.