



## More Frequently Asked Questions

The previous issue discussed that a popular approach is to use a jump shift to the three level in a lower-ranking suit as an invitational bid, showing about 9-11 points and a good six-card suit. The reason for this is to help responder to distinguish between hands like these when partner opens 1♥:

1) ♠ 10 7 2	2) ♠ 10 7 2
♥ 5	♥ 5 2
♦ Q 3	♦ Q 3
♣ Q J 9 8 7 5 3	♣ A Q J 8 7 3

With the first hand, we have just enough to respond, but certainly not enough to make a 2/1 game-forcing bid of 2♣. So we start with a forcing 1NT response. If opener rebids 2♦ or 2♥, we don't want to pass and put down this worthless dummy, so we'd like to bid 3♣, showing a long suit but a weak hand, hoping partner will leave us to play there.

With the second hand, we also don't have enough to make a 2/1 game-forcing bid, but it's close. If we start with a forcing 1NT response and partner rebids 2♦ or 2♥, how do we make an invitational bid? If

we bid 3♣, partner will assume we have a hand like the first one.

The invitational jump shift to 3♣ is a solution to this dilemma. We jump to 3♣ over 1♥ with the second hand, and go through 1NT with the first. Opener has a better picture of our hand in both cases.

Tom's question raises the issue that this approach conflicts with the use of Bergen raises, which are a set of conventional responses to an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠ as described in the box below. If the partnership uses Bergen raises, a jump response of 3♣ over 1♥ is artificial and shows four-card support for hearts and about 7-10 points (or 10-12 in some variations).

Before discussing the merits of this convention, the key point is that **Bergen raises are not an integral part of 2/1 Game Force**, despite what some authors might imply. Neither are invitational jump shifts. It's important not to confuse 2/1 with other things.

Some partnerships adopt Bergen raises when playing a standard approach, not 2/1 Game Force. Others play 2/1, but don't use Bergen raises. Some play 2/1 and Bergen raises. Bergen raises conflict with things like invitational jump shifts and strong jump shifts, not with 2/1 Game Force.

Do Bergen raises have some merit? Let's take a look.

The previous article discussing the use of jump shifts when playing 2/1 generated some new questions.



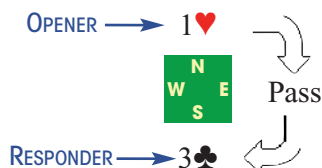
Dear Mr. Rodwell:

I preface our questions with the caveat that we in no way question your knowledge of 2/1 or the value of your suggestions on its use, especially in view of your performance in the recent Cavendish Pairs. (*Playing with Geoff Hampson, Eric won this event, where the first-place prize was over a quarter of a million dollars — Ed.*)

Tom MacLean  
Portland, OR

**1) Doesn't the idea that responder's jump to 3♣ or 3♦ in response to an opening 1♥ or 1♠ bid be used as a natural invitational bid conflict with Bergen raises, which some authors consider a fundamental part of 2/1?**

Here is the type of auction that Tom is addressing:



What meaning should be assigned to responder's 3♣ bid when playing 2/1?

### BERGEN MAJOR SUIT RAISES

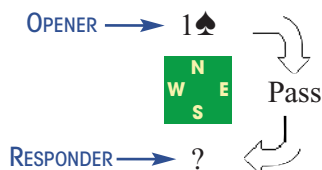
When partner opens 1♥ or 1♠ and the next player passes:

- A jump raise to 3♥ or 3♠ is a preemptive raise with four-card support and fewer than 6 high-card points.
- A jump to 3♦ is an artificial limit (invitational) raise with four-card support and about 10-12 points\*.
- A jump to 3♣ is an artificial constructive raise with four-card support and about 7-10 points\*.
- A raise to 2♥ or 2♠ shows three-card support and about 6-10 points.

\* Many partnerships reverse the meaning of the 3♦ and 3♣ responses.

Marty Bergen developed Bergen raises while partnered with Larry Cohen, a big proponent of the *Law of Total Tricks*. One ‘Law’ concept is that whenever the partnership has a nine-card fit, it should be willing to compete to the three level — nine tricks — even if the opponents have the balance of strength, and even if they have not yet entered the auction.

Bergen raises immediately get the partnership to the three level when there is a nine-card major suit fit. For example, suppose partner opens 1♠.



♠ Q J 7 4  
♥ 5  
♦ 8 4 2  
♣ Q 9 4 3 2

In standard methods, we’d raise to 2♠ with this hand. If partner has a minimum and passes, the opponents will likely enter the auction and find a fit. Playing Bergen raises, we can make a preemptive jump raise to 3♠ with this hand. If the opponents have the balance of strength, it will be more difficult for them to enter the auction. If partner has a good hand, our descriptive bid will help partner decide how high to bid.

♠ K 9 7 3  
♥ 8 4 3  
♦ K 10 6  
♣ K 8 3

In standard methods, we’d also raise to 2♠ with this hand, leaving room for the opponents to enter the auction if they have about half the points. Using Bergen, we’d jump to 3♣ (or 3♦) to show a constructive four-card raise. Not only does this make it tougher for the opponents to compete, with some extra values partner can consider game, since we are promising four trumps and some high cards.

♠ Q 10 9 4  
♥ A J 8 5  
♦ 7 4  
♣ K J 5

In standard, we’d make a limit raise to 3♠ with this hand. Using Bergen, we’d jump to 3♦ (or 3♣) to show a limit raise. Opener can sign off in 3♠ or accept the invitation and bid 4♠. There’s also more room if opener wants to make a slam try.

♠ Q 8 5  
♥ J 6 4  
♦ A J 6 3  
♣ 9 4 2

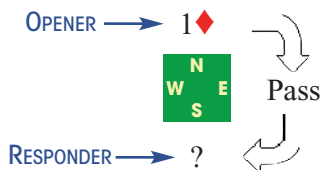
In both standard and Bergen we’d raise to 2♠ with this hand. The difference is that, using Bergen, opener will know we have only three-card support and act accordingly. In standard, opener won’t know whether we have three or four spades.

Bergen raises help the partnership make better decisions, especially in competitive auctions. I like them, but they aren’t an integral part of 2/1.



2) We’ve found it useful to use a jump shift to 2♥ or 2♠ to tell partner we have a five-card or longer suit and 13 or more points. It fits well with 2/1, since now any new suit by responder at the two level is game forcing. What is your view?

Here is an example of this approach:



♠ A 6  
♥ A K 8 5 3  
♦ J 9 5  
♣ 8 4 2

Using standard methods, or regular 2/1 Game Force, responder would bid 1♥ with this hand. A new suit by responder is forcing, but not game-forcing, so responder would have to continue making forcing bids until the partnership reaches game.

Your approach is to respond 2♥ with this hand as a marathon bid, forcing to game, similar to a 2♥ response to a 1♠ opening playing 2/1 Game Force. It’s an interesting idea: Let’s get into our 2/1 auction whether we have to jump to the two level or not! It’s irregular, but that doesn’t necessarily make it a bad idea, and I wouldn’t reject it out of hand. If you find it makes your auctions more comfortable, then it has some merit. But be sure to alert opponents to your approach, since it isn’t standard.

In adopting such approaches, it’s a good idea to weigh any potential

gain against what we might give up. There are other popular uses for the jump shift:

- Strong jump shift
- Soloway jump shift
- Weak jump shift

You are also giving up responding at the one-level with 13+ point hands.

### Strong Jump Shift

I don’t think we’re giving up much by giving up the traditional strong jump shift, showing 19+ points and slam interest. Such hands are rare, and few of today’s players use this approach.

### Soloway Jump Shift

Paul Soloway suggested using a jump shift to show one of three hand types:

- A strong suit with good trick-taking potential and about 15+ points.
- A good fit with partner’s suit, a good second suit, and about 15+ points.
- A strong balanced hand of about 18-19 points.

Responder shows which hand type on the rebid. This can help slam exploration, and such hands are more frequent than the 19+ ones, but there’s a lot to remember, so your approach might still feel more comfortable.

### Weak Jump Shift

Using this approach, we can show a good six-card suit with barely enough to respond. It’s both descriptive for partner and has some preemptive value when the deal belongs to the opponents. This is a popular approach.

### A New Suit at the One Level

This might be the main drawback to your methods. Responding at the one level instead of the two level does save bidding room, and that can be important. At times we need that space to exchange the information necessary to reach the best contract. I’m not saying I like long auctions. Bidding quickly to what we think we can make often works out well.

Anyway, if you’re comfortable using a jump to 2♥ or 2♠ as a 2/1 response, my advice is to enjoy using the jump shift your way. There are many considerations when choosing bidding methods, and being confident and comfortable is one of them. ♦