

# Opening 1 in a Suit

You must have 13 points (HCP plus distribution points) to open at the one level in a suit. Normally if you have a 5 card major, regardless of its strength, you open the 5 card major. Without a 5 card major you open a minor. When opening a minor a diamond opening promises at least 4 diamonds. If you don't have 4 diamonds, you can open 1♣ with as few as 3 clubs. Why is this? Because, if you remember the point count and trick counts ... the goal is to find a fit in a major suit, or if it is possible to play in no trump. In fact opening in a minor is asking your partner "hey, do you have a 4 card major?" This is referred to as "opening a convenient minor".

With 13 – 21 pts:

- Five-card-major, open the longest major first.
- If major suits are of equal length open with the highest ranking first. Unless, you have 16+ HCP and are playing "Reverses".
- If no Five-card-major, open with the longest minor
  - With 4-4 open ♦
  - With 3-3 open ♣
    - ♦ A K Q ♣ 6 3 2 open 1♦ (recommendation)
    - ♦ A Q 10 ♣ K 10 9 open 1♣
- With 4-4 in the majors and 3♦ 2♣, there are those who play a diamond opening promises 4 diamonds, thus will open this hand with 1♣.
  - I am not really sure what makes the diamonds special to warrant this
  - If this hand is opened 1♦, it would only account for 3% of the 1♦ openings
  - If you take away the possibility of opening this distribution with 1♦ you remove one chance of a 2/1 auction
  - When playing this "strict promise of 4 diamonds" say at a SAYC event, every time your partner opens 1♣, you must announce "could be short".
  - [Larry Cohen](#) [David Farmer](#) [Princeton.edu](#) [ACBL](#)
- Opening light, with the right hand
  - Most often in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> seat and no one has opened
  - Hand should normally have at least 11 points and adhere to the "rule of 20"
  - Rule of 20: HCP only in two longest suits + number of cards in those suits = 20

By opening one in a suit, you tell your partner how many points you have and your best suit (longest). Sometimes, you do not "really" have a good suit. Sometimes your points are a little less, but you do have a good suit. And sometimes they are more ... all the way up to 21! The good news is, you can tell your partner you have "more" the next time you bid. The bad news is ... you do not always get to bid again

## Responses / Intro to 2/1 GF

I am not sure whether to cover responses first, or to go around the table with Overcall, Response, Advance. If the later makes more sense to you then by all means read the material

in that order. My rationale is: most of the time there is someone who opens, and most of the time his partner responds. There is less often an Overcall, and even less often an Advance.

The response to your partner's opening bid relays your point count and suit information about your hand. If you are playing 2/1 GF (Game Force), it may also mandate the bidding to continue until a game bid is reached. By far, the response bid is a much more difficult decision than the opening bid. First of all, you have to tailor your response to the opening bid. Then, there is one bid for response which was not available for opening (it is available for overcall) that is doubling the intervening overcall from the opponents. Your response determines if you are playing the rest of the bidding in 2/1 GF or just for one round, or not at all.

With that said, this will start the introduction to 2/1 GF. 2/1 GF is a very limited, yet powerful, convention which does not come up often. If you are playing 2/1 GF and get the 2/1 response from your partner to your opening, you are hard pressed to force back that smile! Why? Because you and your partner are going to game! And as I mentioned earlier, game is the goal of the partnership in each and every hand. But, slams are nice too! By playing 2/1 the partnership allows themselves the time to explore the hands they have between them with no worry of one or the other stopping before game is reached.

Because 2/1 GF happens so infrequently, we will also be learning Standard American, that is what 2/1 players will be playing in most of the time (without the smiles).

What is 2/1 GF? How does it start?

2/1 starts when neither the opener nor the responder has passed and the responder bids a new suit at the two level without jumping (skipping a bid order).

1♥
pass
2♦

North was the opener, East passed, South's response of 2♦ places them in 2/1. If East's response was 1♠ or 2♠ the partnership would not be in 2/1, they would be playing Standard American. The bid has to be at the two level, and not a jump bid.

The requirements for the Responder to initiate 2/1 are:

- 13 or more points
- 5 card suit if responding in hearts
- 4 card suit (or a really good 3 card suit) to respond with a minor

2/1 is ONLY possible when:

- The opening bid is 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠
- The player to the Opener's left passes
- Responder bids a new suit at the two level without jumping
- Responder has not previously passed

This allows only six auctions which initiate 2/1.

Opening	Response initiating 2/1
1♠	2♣, 2♦, 2♥
1♥	2♣, 2♦ {2♠ is a jump bid}
1♦	2♣ {2♥, 2♠ are jump bids}

Example 1:

Opener  
1♥

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

Opener has 13-21 points and a 5 card heart suit. Responder has 13 HCP plus 1 distribution point in diamonds. Between them they have the points for game. Responder bids 2♦ putting them in 2/1 convention guaranteeing a game bid.