

## Forcing Two Bid

The traditional use of an opening two-bid in a suit to show a hand which can virtually guarantee game, or even slam. This designation is also referred to as Culbertson Two Bid, Demand Bid, or Strong Two Bid. It was a cornerstone of the Culbertson System and remained standard practice in the United States and many other parts of the world. In postwar years virtually all experts abandoned the Forcing Two Bid in favor of the Weak Two Bid, the Acol Two Bid, and other treatments.

A variety of formulas have been put forward to determine whether a hand is worth a forcing two. Mr. Charles Goren gives the following schedule:

With a good five-card suit	25 high card points
With a good six-card suit	23 high card points
With a good seven-card suit	21 high card points

With a second good five-card suit, one point less is needed. If the game is to be in a Minor suit, two points more are needed. Two more formulas were devised by Mr. Hy Lavinthal: (a) More honor tricks than possible losers. (This rule was incorporated into the Culbertson System.), (b) Rule of 24: add to the high card point count two points for every card over four in any suit; then subtract a point for any King or Queen not in sequence with a next-ranking honor; bid two if the answer is 24 or more. However, the expert does not normally use such rules; he employs the Forcing Two Bid if he has reasonable game prospects opposite a worthless or nearly worthless hand.

Another consideration is that a hand may be slightly too weak for a Forcing Two Bid, but at the same time distinctly too strong for an opening bid of one in a suit. In such circumstances, a slightly shaded two-bid may be a lesser evil than an over-strength one-bid.

However, the likelihood that a one-bid may be passed out is a further consideration. Highly distributional hands may safely be opened with a bid of only one, because if opener's partner passes it is most unlikely that both opponents will do so. Lacking controls of three suits therefore, the expert will tend to open with a one-bid and jump later to show distribution.

Mr. Ely Culbertson later modified the unconditionally game-forcing character of the bid to permit partner to pass a bust hand if opener's call after a 2NT response was a simple rebid of his first suit, i.e.:

2♥    2NT    3♥

*Responses.* The conventional negative response is 2 No Trump. Other responses are positive and natural, showing at least 7-8 points and seldom less than one quick trick (i.e., an Ace, a King-Queen, or two Kings. However, other responding treatments are used, including Ace Showing Responses and Herbert Negative.