

The background of the cover is an abstract composition of overlapping shapes in shades of green and dark grey. The top section is a solid green band. Below it is a dark grey band with a large, irregular white shape that resembles a heart or a stylized letter '2'. The bottom section is a dark grey band with a large, irregular white shape that resembles a heart or a stylized letter '2'.

Kathy Rolfe

WANNA PLAY BRIDGE
THE 2/1 WAY?

An Honors eBook from Master Point Press

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Acknowledgments

I have a lot of people to thank for getting me to the point of writing this book, but I have to begin with my mom, Faye Hicken. She gave me the love of the game and the example of teaching it to others, simply because she loved it herself. I learned how to play by being her assistant when she taught bridge classes as a fundraiser for our church. That started when I was nine. The game has been a great source of pleasure, friendships, and even a small amount of income in the intervening years. My mom went on to help me teach my husband, friends, and my older son Eric and some of his friends. It is no wonder that eventually I left my engineering career behind and began my bridge teaching and directing career. I have been heading this way my entire life!

When my husband died, I soon realized I wasn't playing bridge as much. I had always been just a social bridge player. It became harder to do that without a ready partner. That is when I found the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and took the course to learn how to teach bridge. My younger son Paul, perhaps unwillingly, became my first bridge student at the age of 12. Paul deserves special mention as well. He may have started out a reluctant bridge player, but has in adulthood learned to enjoy the game! However, for me to get to the point that I felt like another bridge book was needed, and that I might be capable of writing it, required a host of others, encouraging and helping me learn the bridge and the teaching skills. I have to thank my son Eric and his friend Patrick who actually went to play duplicate bridge twice before I did! That leads to thanking the wonderful club managers and directors, in whose games I started out as a very beginning novice, even though I had played social bridge for almost forty years at that point. Without their kindness and support, I'm sure my game would not have progressed and my teaching skills would have languished as well. So thanks go out, especially to Doug, Ernie, Tom, and Keith. I have to thank the great teachers in the gifted and talented program of the Lee's Summit, MO school district, who gave me my start at teaching. They opened their classrooms to me once a week for nine weeks, so that I could teach their students this great game. They invited me back, year after year, for eleven years! Thank you especially to Wanda, Stacia, Linda, Cindy, and Patti. In that same vein, I need to thank my homeschooling parents and

grandparents who graciously allowed me to teach their children. So thank you especially to Mike and Nancy for letting me introduce this game to your entire family! My bridge partners, especially those with whom I play regularly at tournaments, have helped my game immensely. They have helped not just in the playing, but in the sometimes long and vociferous discussions after the game. There are too many to name them all, but Krisi, Norm, Sandy, and especially my son Eric deserve special mention.

It took a lot of encouragement to write this book. I have my friend Dolores to thank for that first of all. She doesn't play bridge. She doesn't even play games! However, she has been telling me for years that I should write a book! She did not insist upon bridge as the topic, any book would do, in her mind!

I need to thank ACBL and the American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA). The resources available from these organizations have been enormously helpful. The friendships made within those organizations have been priceless! It takes willing and encouraging students to make a teacher. My students, both youth and adult, are by now way too many to mention by name. Without them none of this would have been possible. Thank you for giving me the chance to teach you this wonderful game. I hope those of you reading this book will find it just as wonderful.

CONTENTS

<u>Acknowledgments</u>	<u>i</u>
<u>Contents</u>	<u>iii</u>
<u>Introduction</u>	<u>iv</u>
<u>Chapter 1: Some Basics</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Chapter 2: Hand Valuation</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Chapter 3: Object of the Game & Bidding</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Chapter 4: Opening 1NT and Responding</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Chapter 5: Some Practice Playing</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>Chapter 6: Responding to 1NT with 0-7 Pts</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Chapter 7: Responding to 1NT with 10-15 Pts</u>	<u>43</u>
<u>Chapter 8: Responding to 1NT with Stayman</u>	<u>55</u>
<u>Chapter 9: Responding to 1NT with 8-9 Pts</u>	<u>75</u>
<u>Chapter 10: Opening 1 of a Major & Responding with Support</u>	<u>81</u>
<u>Chapter 11: Forcing Bids in Response to Opening 1 of a Major</u>	<u>101</u>
<u>Chapter 12: Opening 1 of a Minor and Responding</u>	<u>121</u>
<u>Chapter 13: Responding to Opening 1 of a Major without Support</u>	
<u> And then Rebids – What to do next!</u>	<u>137</u>
<u>Chapter 14: Jacoby 2NT Response to 1 of a Major</u>	<u>155</u>
<u>Chapter 15: Splinter Bids in Response to 1 of a Major</u>	<u>165</u>
<u>Appendix 1: More about Vulnerability and Scoring</u>	<u>175</u>
<u>Glossary:</u>	<u>184</u>

Introduction

As I build to explain this wonderful game of bridge, some words will be in **bold**. Those words will be explained as they come up, but they will also be in a glossary at the back of the book. Therefore, you can quickly reference them later if you need a review on their meaning. At the end of each chapter, I'll summarize what you should have learned from that chapter. As you are reading, you may find some sections *italicized*. This means you might want to skip over this for now. In addition, I throw in just a few extra bells and whistles near the end of the book to help move your bidding along. While I highly recommend those bells and whistles, it is quite possible to play this game without any of them. So if you are not ready for them, practice with what you will have learned from the earlier chapters for a while until you feel comfortable and ready to take on those new bids. They really will make bidding easier if you learn them.

This book is designed for you to be able to follow it and teach yourself if necessary. However, I strongly urge you to find a qualified bridge teacher to help you with the process. You can find those bridge teachers in your area by checking a couple of organizations that have a process in place to either provide training for teachers or document the experience level of those teachers. Those organizations are the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL), www.acbl.org or the American Bridge Teachers Association (ABTA) www.abtathome.com. Find a teacher near you to guide you!

This book has just one pair at a time doing all the bidding. To find out what real life is like, when it seems like everyone is bidding, will take another book. Hopefully a second book from me will be coming soon. In the interim there are many informative bridge books available on competitive bidding.

This book will attempt to teach the game of bridge using the two over one (2/1) Game Force bidding system. In conjunction with that system, the opening 1 NoTrump (NT) range will be 15 to 17 High Card Points, and the responses to opening NT bids will include Jacoby transfer bids as well as the Stayman Convention.

Chapter 1

Some Basics

If you've ever enjoyed playing Pitch, Spades, or Rook, then you may very well enjoy the game of bridge. Bridge is played with a regular 52-card deck (no jokers) with 4 suits and 13 cards in each suit. I hope you will find that bridge becomes your game of choice and provides a lifetime of fun, learning, and friends. So let's see what this game is all about! Please have a deck of cards with you as you read this book. It will help to practice the ideas with the cards in front of you!

Bridge is a **trick**-taking game in which you always play with a partner against another partnership. It is usually played at a table, which is where a lot of the terms in the game come from, but you can play at the beach if you wish!

I will assume you are playing at a table as I further describe this game. You and your partner sit across from each other at the table. Your opponents sit across from each other as well, each on either side of you and of your partner.

To make that easier to describe we refer to those positions at the table by their compass directions. So one partnership sits North-South (NS) and the other partnership sits East-West (EW). It doesn't matter as to what physical compass direction you are placed. Just pick who will be designated North and the rest follows.

There are two different parts to the game. The auction or the bidding part of the game is used to determine what the **trump** suit will be or if there will be **no trump** suit. It also determines how many **tricks** must be taken and who will be responsible for playing to win those tricks. And of course, you're probably ahead of me here, the second part of the game is the playing portion.

In this book I'll teach the bidding and also something about how to play. I've probably already used terms you are not familiar with or at least not comfortable with yet. Let's talk about those terms.

Tricks – After each player has played one card in clockwise rotation, a trick has been played. In just a little while, we'll talk more about the specifics of who plays a trick first.

Trump – When playing to a trick you must play the suit played by the first person who played, if you can. If you are out of that suit, but you have the suit named as trump during the bidding part of the game, you may choose to play a card from the named trump suit.

This is called trumping. If your trump is the highest trump played on that trick, it will win the trick. The highest card of the suit **led** (played by the first person to play), will win the trick unless it has been trumped!

No trump – If there is no trump suit named during the auction, then the cards will be played in notrump (NT). The highest card of the suit **led**, will win the trick. Nobody can trump you! You'll notice I spelled it differently here, as one word instead of two. You will also see it spelled as no-trump. The bridge world does not seem to have reached a consensus on how to spell it. I tend to view it as being similar to a suit, so I refer to it as one word, notrump.

I explained a few new terms, and in the process may have mentioned yet some more terms that you are unfamiliar with! Not to worry, I will explain it all! Let's get started!

The Mechanics of the Game

If you are sitting at the kitchen table playing with friends, you will probably draw a card from the deck to determine who deals the cards first. Usually highest card drawn wins the deal. That person is now the **dealer**. With a deck that has already been shuffled, he should then ask his opponent to the right to cut the cards. He will then deal the cards one at a time, starting with the person on his left, then his own partner, then his other opponent, and finally his own. He will repeat this 13 times until everyone has 13 cards face down in front of them. The last card will be the dealer's card if everything has gone correctly! Those 13 cards in front of each player is called their **hand**. If playing at your local bridge club, the cards will likely arrive in a duplicate **board**. This is a pre-formed board with 4 slots. Each slot will hold the hand of 13 cards that belongs to each player, designated by their compass directions. The duplicate board will also label who the dealer is. When the dealer is done dealing, or whenever it is time to play that particular duplicate board at the local club, everyone should then pick up his cards. Keep them face down and count them. If you all count 13, then you have made a good start at determining the deal has been done correctly. By the way, if playing social bridge, while the dealer is dealing, his partner is shuffling another deck of cards to get it ready for the next deal. When done shuffling, he places it to his right hand side, ready for the next dealer. On the next deal, the player that now has that deck on his left will pick it up and present it to his right-hand opponent to cut. Then he will proceed to deal the next hand. You have saved time here by multi-tasking the dealing and shuffling into the same time frame!

The next step is to look at your own hand of cards, being careful not to show any of your cards to any other player. Most bridge players then sort the cards into the different suits. Those **suits** are clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades. For those of you unfamiliar with cards, the diamonds and hearts are the red suits. The clubs and spades are the black suits. The spade suit ♠ looks like little shovels or spades. The club suit ♣ looks like clovers.

Some players like to sort the cards within a suit by **rank**. The rank of the cards is from the low 2, ascending in numerical order to the 10, then the Jack, Queen, King, and finally the Ace. Following sorting of the cards, it is usually a good idea to count them again. This is to make sure you can see all 13 cards. So remember – COUNT-SORT-COUNT.

So far this is a lot like Spades! If you are a Spades player, you know you actually have a round of **bidding** to determine how many tricks you need to take in order to win. Bridge will have at least one round of bidding as well.

Deal 1 (a notrump hand):

For now, bid like you were playing Spades! Just announce to the table how many tricks your hand will take. But wait! How do you know how many tricks it will take? First, you need to know that for this deal, since we cannot bid to determine the trump suit, we will play the hand in notrump. That is, there will be no trump suit. That in turn means that the highest card of the suit **led** (played first) will win the trick. You must play a card of that suit if you have it, which one is entirely up to you! This is called **following suit**. However, don't forget, you have a partner! It is not necessary to play higher than your partner on the trick if you think his high card will win the trick. For example, the club suit was led and partner played the King of clubs at his turn. You have the Ace, the 3, and the 2. You can just play the 2 and let partner win. Your Ace will take a second club trick later. Now partner knows something about the cards in your hand. It is highly likely you have the Ace of Clubs. If one of the opponents had it, he would most likely have played it to keep your partner from winning the trick with the King. Of course, if at any time a player does not have a card in the suit led, he must still play, but now he will **discard**. This means he will play a card in another suit that he does not think will win a trick.

So back to bidding! Who starts announcing that number? That would be the dealer! Dealer bids first. For ease of discussion, let's say the dealer is South. Bidding, as well as dealing and playing,

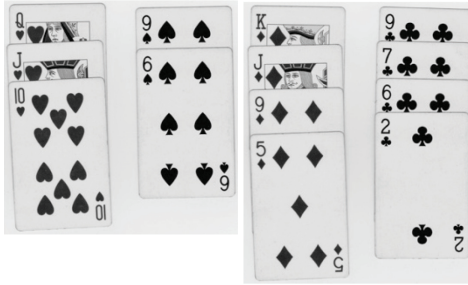
goes clockwise. Therefore, next to bid would be West, then North, then East. For our modified bridge game, I am assuming that North-South guessed they would take the most tricks. It may have happened differently with your cards. We will have the person to the left of the person who declared they would win the most tricks make the first lead. So West (with my imagined deal in which South announced the most tricks) will lead.

At the kitchen table, bridge players frequently just play their card towards the center. When the trick is won, the winner picks up all the cards in the trick and stacks them face down in front of them. At the local duplicate bridge club, this deal will be played again. Therefore, keeping the hands separate throughout the play will allow them to go back into the board slots at the end of the play. The deal can then move to another table for four different players to bid and play. Playing cards in the duplicate style while learning is quite helpful since you review the bidding and play after the deal is finished. **Play online** and you will see the cards shown that way as well. Might as well get used to it!

So West put that card face down right in front of you. Now look across to your partner, and say “Any questions?” I have you do this so that you get into the habit of making the opening lead face down. You do that so that you can take your card back with no harm done, if you were not the player who was supposed to lead. It also allows your partner to ask questions of the opponents about their bidding or perhaps their general style of play, before the card is exposed. Once the card is out there face down, it is considered led, assuming you were the correct person to lead. Once partner has no further questions, you can turn it face up for all to see.

Now North, it is your turn, but we want to make this look like we are all bridge players. So, North, your hand will become the **dummy**. The dummy is the hand that is exposed on the table for all to see. It is usually laid out in four columns, one for each suit. The highest cards in the suits are near the edge of the table. The cards overlap in the suit, down to the lowest card, closer to the center of the table.

NORTH



WEST



EAST

SOUTH

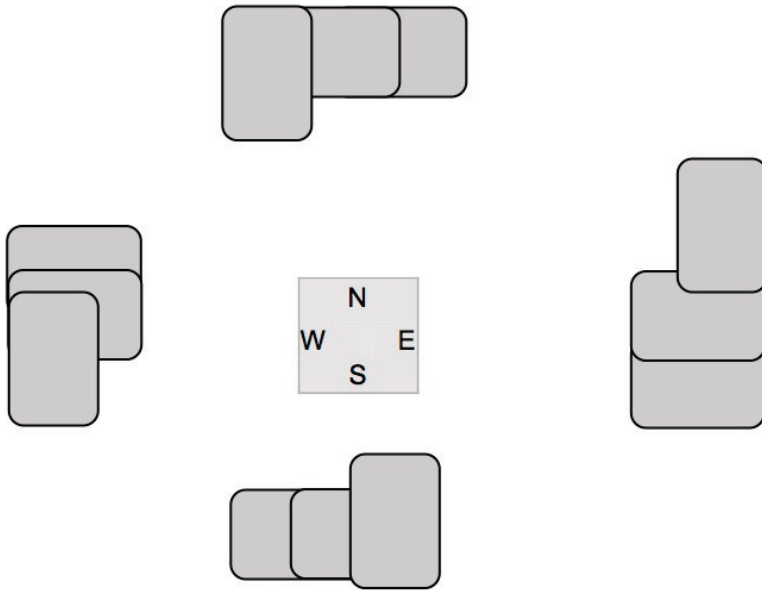
Why is North's hand down on the table? We do this so that his partner, South, can play both his own hand and North's hand. South can coordinate decisions for both hands. This makes it easier to take the required number of tricks. In a real bridge deal, the bidding would have determined who would be the **declarer**, the person playing both hands, as well as what the trump suit is and how many tricks will be required to be taken. The declaring side will have to take the majority of the tricks.

Why do we call the hand on the table "the dummy"? There are at least a couple of reasons for that. Dummy should not talk about the hand during the play. He is allowed to say a few things during the play, "Are you out of those, partner?" Those being whatever suit partner did not follow suit in. For example, clubs were led and partner played a heart. Dummy could ask partner if he is out of clubs. Thus, dummy can sometimes prevent partner from making that mistake. Dummy can also try to keep partner leading from the correct hand. If partner appears to be about to pull a card from his own hand, but in fact should be leading a card from the dummy hand, dummy might say, "You are on the **board**" or "You are in dummy." Both of these terms are synonymous. The term board, rather than dummy, refers to the table or board where the cards are

located. Dummy might also point out if partner has recorded the trick incorrectly, that is has it pointing in the wrong direction. He can only do that before the next trick is led to though. Secondly, dummy physically plays the cards, keeping them right in front of him. Dummy cannot make decisions about what to play. He just follows the instructions from his partner. Think of it as a ventriloquist (declarer) and his dummy or perhaps a puppeteer with his puppet on strings!

Okay, so back to the hand you have dealt. Finish play to the first trick. Who won the trick? The player that played the highest card of the suit led. He will be making the lead to the next trick. However, before he leads to the next trick, you need to turn the first trick over. As I said, at the kitchen table, those cards would be scooped up by the winner, or his partner, and stacked in front of him. At duplicate, it is important to keep the tricks in front of each player. Let's record the tricks, duplicate style.

Turn the card over right in front of you. You also want to have a way of keeping straight which partnership won the trick. Pretend it is an arrow and point it towards the winning partnership for that trick. So if West won the trick, all the cards for that trick at the table will be turned lengthwise in the East-West direction. Then West will lead for the second trick, since he won the first trick. If East wins the next trick, the second trick will overlap but still point that East-West direction. East would then lead to the third trick since he won that second trick. If South wins the third trick, it will be pointed in the North-South direction. So all the tricks at the table would look like this for the first 3 tricks.



So who leads to the next trick in this pretend example? South! Since he just won the previous trick. Whoever wins the trick, leads to the next trick! Remember, if won by the dummy, declarer must tell dummy what to lead next.

Don't stress about it, just finish playing the first deal. If somebody looked at you right now, they might recognize you were playing bridge! Of course you really aren't yet, but you are on your way!

How close did you come to meeting the number of tricks you announced earlier? What was the smallest card that won a trick? Well, you might not have come close to the announced number at all, but learning how to bid as in bridge will help solve that problem. Did you find small cards winning tricks? If you did, you may have noticed that having a suit with a lot of cards in it was valuable. That will be valuable information when learning to bid and play.

Deal 2 (playing with a trump suit):

Let's play one more spades-like hand since you still don't know how to bid in bridge. Shuffle the cards, deal out another hand. Let's rotate the deal, clockwise, so West is the new dealer. COUNT-SORT-COUNT. Before you bid, keep in mind that on this hand you will have a trump suit. Since you don't have the bridge bidding figured out yet, just make diamonds the trump suit. Hope that works

out well for someone! The highest card of the suit led normally wins the trick. However, if a trump has been played on the trick, the highest trump card played on a trick will win the trick. If you cannot follow suit, you now have two choices. You either discard or you may play a trump card. Suppose West leads a club. North is out and trumps with the $\diamond 3$. However, East is out of clubs as well and plays the $\diamond 5$, South plays a club.

East wins the trick, because he **over trumped** North! There are no restrictions on leading trump. You can choose to lead the trump suit whenever you like. Now start announcing the number of tricks you can take, beginning with the dealer West. Which partnership bid the most? Have them be the declaring side. Which one of that partnership predicted the most winners? He will be declarer.

Opening lead will come from the hand to the left of declarer.

Dummy hand is then placed on the table, after the opening lead. The dummy will always be the partner of declarer. When playing with a trump suit, the trump suit in dummy's hand is always placed on the table on dummy's right hand. Let's review how this works. Declarer will play the dummy hand by instructing dummy on which card to play. This is "**calling for a card.**" (At social bridge, where cards are played to the center and picked up together, declarer physically plays the card from dummy). Remember if dummy wins the trick, dummy's hand must lead to the next trick. Remember you still need to follow suit if you can. However, if you are out of the suit led, you either discard or trump. For this hand, trump is a diamond.

Have fun with the mechanics of the game. Next you will learn how to value your hand to determine if your partnership can take the majority of the tricks. You will also start to look at how to choose a trump suit or perhaps choose notrump.

What you should know after Chapter 1:

Terms: tricks, trump, notrump, dealer, declarer, discard, dummy, lead, follow suit, over trump, clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, recording tricks duplicate style, duplicate board

You know how to deal, COUNT-SORT-COUNT.

You know how to make an opening lead, lay out the dummy, play a called card from the dummy, follow suit, trump if needed, discard if needed, record who won the trick, lead to the next trick.