

A Basic Modern Acol Bidding System

LESSON 3: Bidding as Opener with an UNBALANCED 4441 hand and an explanation of the REVERSE problem

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We stated in Lesson 1 that the opener should always have his first two bids planned, but this can be difficult and your 13 cards will sometimes give you more to consider. With a 4441 hand, which is not too common, consider:

- PASSING with 12 points, or
- With more points use "TAPS": ...HOT Hearts and COLD Clubs. With a RED suit singleton open 1♣; with a BLACK suit singleton, open 1♥

What is your rebid?

- If partner supports your suit or bids another of your 4 card suits then you have found your 8 card fit.
- If partner's response is your singleton you have to tell a little lie: either rebid an off-shape NT or bid a second suit without 5 cards in your first - see below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- When you have opened 1♣, REBID your cheapest second suit (here it is no big deal to lie about a 5th club - a minor suit)
- When you have opened 1♥, REBID your cheapest second suit with 13/14 points but REBID NT at the appropriate level with 15+ points
- With 4441 shape, a good 19-22 points and your singleton is an ACE, open 2NT

REVERSES

If opener's REBID forces responder to the 3 level to give suit preference back to opener's first suit, i.e. 1♥-2♦-2♠-3♥, then opener is said to have REVERSED. This is because opener's 2nd suit is higher ranking than the first. 1♣-1♥-1♠ is not a 'reverse' because responder can show club preference at the 2 level.

A sequence such as 1♠-2♥-3♣ is also a 'reverse', as to show spade preference responder has to bid 3♠.

- Traditionally opener needs about 16 points to reverse
- OR you could agree not to play reverses and bid your shape. This will sometimes mean you end up a level too high BUT it does keep things simple and means that repeating a suit will always show 6-cards
- OR because showing the shape of your hand is so important, why not compromise and play reverses *with a really good 14 points!*

Whether or not you decide to play reverses as showing extras, sometimes you have A BID AVAILABLE TO AVOID REVERSING. On each of the following hands you can avoid 1♦-1♠-2♥:

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
♠J6	♠2	♠Q8	♠Q93
♥A862	♥K642	♥J8523	♥Q1052
♦K9742	♦KQJ107	♦AK962	♦AKJ96
♣QJ	♣A86	♣K10	♣2

- a) Simply pass
- b) Open 1♦ and rebid 2♦. Those 5 look like 6, don't they?
- c) OPEN 1NT. Two doubletons but both with a good honour. Your rebid is pass.
- d) Open 1♦ but raise a 1♠ response to 2♠. This is a limit bid showing a maximum of 15 points (here 12) and normally 4-card support; but it is the best you can do with this hand.

With ♠42
♥KQ42
♦K4
♣AQ952

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♠. Ideally you would like to show your shape with a 2♥ bid but this would be a reverse and so to avoid it you would rebid 2♣. But why not relax the 16-point guideline for a reverse and shape-show with this good 14 point hand. There is no perfect solution but have the conversation with your partner.

So, because the reverse bid is unwieldy, it is to be avoided. SOMETIMES in a cramped auction 1♠-2♥-2♠ you will have to repeat a 5-carder, but you should always try to avoid this, especially with a poor suit.

CONCLUSION

1. Are you going to play reverses at all....or just shape-show?
2. Are you going to play reverses with 16+ or a very good 14?
3. You MUST look for creative bids that avoid making a bid that you KNOW is a REVERSE
4. The 4441 hand may be easier to bid playing 5-card Majors, but with the REVERSE you have the same decision as in points (1) to (3) in any bidding system