

Reverses

A reverse can only be used on strong hands with specific patterns. It involves two bids, the suit being bid at the 2-level, causing the responder to show preference to the first bid suit at a higher level. It is a forcing bid so only strong hands can utilise this method of bidding.

Note: Opener's rebid at the 1-level is **not** a reverse:

1♣-1♥
1♠

Rules:

1. **A low reverse is only made on a hand with 17+ TPs and with uneven suit lengths.**
2. **A High reverse (bid at the 3-level) can be made with even suit lengths.**

A *low reverse* bid is never shown with equal length suits, for example, 5-5. The first suit will always be longer than the second bid suit when using a reverse. Therefore the first bid suit must be at least 5 cards long.

Low reverse

1. **A low (one-level) reverse**

Responder bids at the 1-level

Opener bids his second suit at the 2-level, for example, 1♦-2♣/2♥

Opener requires 17+ TPs for a Low Reverse:

♠ Q7 1♣-1♠
♥ AKJ52♥ This hand is minimum for a *Low Reverse*
♦ 3
♣ KQ10964

Note: The first suit must be longer than the second suit, for example, a minimum of 5-4

2. **A low (two-level) reverse**

This is where you must go to the 2-level to show your second suit. It shows a distributional hand with extra strength, and it forces partner to bid again. Specifically, it promises:

- At least 16+ high-card pts.;
- At least 5-4 distribution in your two suits;
- Your first suit must be longer than your second suit;
- Your second suit must be **higher in rank** than your first suit; *and*
- Partner must have bypassed your second suit with his response.

Note that opener's one-level rebid (1♣-1♥//1♠) is **not** a reverse. Your rebid is a reverse **only** if you must go to a higher level to show the suit.

Responding to opener's Low Reverse

If responder bids at the 2-level, a reverse by opener is game forcing. Therefore, since showing preference is forcing, jump preference is fast arrival: weaker than slower route; therefore: 3♥ is a real slam try.

1♥-2♣
2♠-4♥ at least 3-card support but minimum for the 2 over 1 bid.

1♥-2♣
2♠-3♥ slam try

Responder's weakest bid:

1♥-2♦ Responder rebids his minor suit. Perhaps
2♠-3♦ he dredged up a 2-level bid on a 6-card suit, with minimum values and
 nothing else.

For example,

♠ 75
♥ 9
♦ AQJ975
♣ Q753

Holding:

♠ 983
♥ K82
♦ AQ1095
♣ 73

What do you bid after:

1♥ - 2♦
2♠ - ?

The 2♠ reverse bid is game forcing. It breaks the barrier (2♥ in this instance) which forces Responder to go to the 3-level if he wants to put opener back to his first bid suit. The 2♠ bid shows 17 TPs minimum and also guarantees the first bid suit (♥s) to be longer than the second bid suit (♠s). Therefore the opener is at least 5-4 in ♥s and ♠s respectively. You are minimum for your original bid so show your 3-card support for ♥s with a bid of 4♥.

Note: Most players would say that a jump bid to 4♥ was fast arrival and shows a minimum hand.

What about intervention?

W	N	E	S
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		1♦	2♣
2♥	P	2♠	P
?			

Holding:

♠ K93
♥ AQ1086
♦ Q5
♣ 864

Make a 3♣ cue-bid. Partner has shown a 5-card ♦ suit and a 4-card ♠ suit, but you don't yet know where the best game is. This allows partner to describe his hand further. You must make every effort to find the best playable game (3NT, 4♥, 4♠, even 5♦).

What do you bid holding:

♠ 10982
♥ KQ32
♦ J6
♣ KJ5

When the bidding goes:

W	N	E	S
		1♣	
1♥		1♠	
?			

The 1♠ bid is just a bid of a second suit which maybe as long as the ♣ suit. It is not a reverse and hence it isn't forcing. But West should now make a limit bid of 3♠, showing 4-card support and a 8-loser hand.

High Reverse

Opener bids his second suit at the 3-level, for example, 1♠-2♦/3♣

A High Reverse does **not** guarantee that the first suit is longer than the second suit. The strength needs to be a good 5-loser hand and game expectancy. Partner has responded at the 2-level (showing 10+ TPs) and you must have 17+ TPs for a reverse, so the two hands are worth game. Opener's game forcing rebid (new suit at the 3-level) must have a good playing card hand, because if there is a misfit you need to have good trumps yourself. For example,

♠ AKJ86	1♠ - 2♥ Partner's response has improved
♥ Q3	3♦ your hand, so you have visions
♦ KQJ86	of playing in either major
♣ 2	

A **high-level reverse** is made when partner's response forces you to the 3-level to show your second suit (for example, 1♠-2♥//3♦). Like a two-level reverse, this is forcing and shows extra values. The only differences are that your second suit will usually be **lower in rank** than your first suit, and you **may** have equal length in your two suits (5-5 distribution).

Responding to opener's High Reverse

Since rebidding your suit is forcing, a jump in your own suit shows an excellent 6-card suit. For example,

1♠-2♥
3♦-4♥

Typically the hand would be:

♠ K3
♥ KQJ1086
♦ Q53
♣ 53

Having weaker than reverse hands but the correct shape:

- With weaker hands you never reverse. You must plan your bidding before opening.
- With 12-14 and no singleton you are best opening 1NT or opening your longest suit and rebidding it.
- With 15-16 and no singleton you are best opening 1 of your longest suit and rebidding 1NT.

♠ Q
♥ A85
♦ AQ104
♣ K7654

Open 1♣ and rebid 1NT if Pard bids 1♠; or raise 1♥ to 2♥.

Rules:

- Do not open 1NT with a singleton
- Do not open a suit other than your longest suit
- Do not reverse on a hand this weak
- Do not repeat a poor 5-card suit if you can help it!

♠ 52
♥ AQ85
♦ K2
♣ AQ843

Open 1♣ and rebid 1NT if Pard bids 1♠.

♠ 10
♥ AQ85
♦ AKJ42
♣ Q103

Open 1♦ and rebid 1NT if Pard bids 1♠; but bid 2♥ over Pard's 2♣ (the 2♣ bid has improved your hand).

With 6-4 and too little strength to reverse, the rule is simple: Open your 6-card suit and, unless you can show a second suit without reversing, rebid the same suit. With 6-5 shape and too little strength to reverse, look at the strength of your 5-card suit. If it is good treat the hand as a 5-5, therefore open the higher suit. If it is poor, treat the hand as a 6-4.

How forcing are reverses?

1. A *low reverse* after a 1-level response is only forcing for **one round**
2. A *low reverse* after a 2-level response is **game** forcing

Examples:

(a) 1♣-1♥ (b) 1♣-1♠ (c) 1♦-1♠ (d) 1♦-2♣
 2♦ 2♦ 2♥ 2♥

(e) 1♦-2♣ (f) 1♥-2♣ (g) 1♥-2♦
 2♠ 2♠ 2♠

Some typical hands might be:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| (a) ♠ A3
♥ 75
♦ AQ107
♣ AQJ97 | (b) ♠ A3
♥ 53
♦ AK73
♣ AKJ86 | (c) ♠ Q2
♥ KQ106
♦ AKQ75
♣ J5 | (d) ♠ 2
♥ AQ74
♦ AQJ975
♣ Q7 |
| (e) ♠ AQJ3
♥ 7
♦ AQJ75
♣ K53 | (f) ♠ KQ97
♥ AKJ107
♦ 86
♣ A7 | (g) ♠ QJ1075
♥ AKJ1075
♦ A6
♣ - | |

Note:

a, b, & c are forcing for 1 round only
d, e, f, g are game forcing

Responder's rebid following opener's low reverse bid

After responder has initially made a 1-level bid, a reverse by opener is forcing for **one** round. Responder should clarify his hand. There are four bids to be made:

1. Give preference to opener's first suit (non-forcing NF)

1♣-1♠	♠ QJ97	Responder would have only raised to 2♣ on the first round if he hadn't had a 4-card major
2♥-3♣	♥ 753	
	♦ 75	
	♣ K1087	

2. Raise opener's second suit (**forcing**)

1♣-1♠	♠ QJ975
2♦-3♦	♥ 7
	♦ K1087
	♣ 753

3. Rebid 2NT to show a stopper in the fourth suit (6-7 HCPs) (**NF**)

1♦-1♠	♠ QJ97
2♥-2NT	♥ 753
	♦ 75
	♣ K1087

4. Rebid his own suit at a minimum level, to show a 5+ card suit, in a weak hand with no other attributes (**NF**)

1♣-1♠
2♥-2♠

Since opener is known to have a hand containing 17+ TPs, responder will only have a hand containing 6-8 TPs.

All other bids, including 4th suit forcing, will be game forcing.

Note: Some players have different agreements, but the above is standard.

After responder has initially made a 2-level bid, a game forcing situation has been made after Opener's reverse bid. All rebids are therefore forcing and 4th suit forcing asks opener to bid no-trumps with a stop in the fourth suit or make a further description of his hand.

Opener's third bid

After responder has made one of the four weak rebids (6-8 TPs) to a *low reverse*, shown above, opener should pass with 17 to a poor 18 TPs. On a slightly stronger hand, a good 18+ TPs, opener must make a further move. This may be by:

- 1 Showing 3-card support to responder's suit (or good 2-card support if responder rebids his suit),
- 2 Rebidding one of his suits

With a 5-4 shape you do not (should not) bid the suits again unless Responder shows support.

With 6-4 shape you reverse and then bid your first suit a second time (you have already shown 5).

With 6-5 shape you reverse and then bid your second suit a second time (inferring that your first suit is 6 cards long – *low reverse* shows uneven length in your two suits).

Auction 1

1♣ - 1♠
2♥ - 2♠
3♣

Auction 2

1♥ - 2♣
2♠ - 2NT
3♠

Auction 1:

You have denied 5 ♥s but have indicated 6 ♣s. Typically:

♠ 5
♥ AQJ5
♦ 102
♣ AKQ843

Auction 2:

You have indicated 5 cards in ♠s and hence inferred six in ♥s. Typically:

♠ AQ1065
♥ AQJ854
♦ 4
♣ 3

3 Bidding no-trumps

1♦ - 1♠
2♥ - 3♦
3NT

You have shown five ♦s (maybe 6 poor ♦s) and 4 ♥s; typically: 1-4-5-3 or 2-4-5-2 with at least a ♣ stopper. Note: you have denied 5 ♥s. Typically:

♠ 5
♥ AQ85
♦ KQ1084
♣ AKJ

Non-reverse bids

The following auctions would **not** be showing reverse bids:

1♣-1♥ The second bid is not at the 2-level. This bidding
1♠ is common on equal length suits.

1♣-1NT This bidding does not show a reverse hand type. It
2♠ will be a hand of distribution, perhaps 5-5 or 6-4 or
6-5, not wishing to play in no-trumps.

1♣-2♦ Responder has made a jump-shift, game forcing,
2♠ bid. The main reason for making a jump-shift is so the partnership can bid
their hands naturally, in a forcing auction. Therefore, opener is now
showing that he has a 4-card ♠ suit, but he may have a minimum
hand.

1♦-(2♣)-2♥-(P)
?

A bid of 2♠ here, by opener, would just be a natural showing bid.
Partner has made a forcing bid; he knows that you will probably have
to bid at the 3-level, so take the opportunity to show a second suit.

Example hands

♠ J107
♥ 3
♦ AQJ7
♣ AKQ102

You open 1♣ and partner responds 1♠.

You can now reverse with a rebid of 2♦. This forces partner to bid again and gives you more information.

- If he rebids a long ♠ suit, you'll raise to 4♠.
- If he bids anything else, you can further describe your hand by bidding ♠s next.

Note that since you didn't raise ♠s right away, you denied holding 4-card support. Your belated raise shows 3-card ♠ support *and*, by inference, tells partner you have a singleton ♥ (since you've shown 9 cards in ♣s and ♦s and 3 cards in ♠s).

♠ AQJ106
♥ J
♦ KQ1076
♣ A5

You open 1♠ and partner bids 2♥, showing 10+ pts. and at least 5 ♥s.

Since you must go to the next highest level to show your ♦ suit, a 3♦ bid here is a 3-level reverse (called a *high-reverse*).

Note: This is the one situation where a reverse can have similar length suits. With a weaker hand (12-14 pts.), you would rebid 2♠ to show a minimum and keep the bidding low.

♠ AK1054
♥ KQ9862
♦ A4
♣ Void

You can also use a reverse bid when your suits are longer than 5-4. Here, you open 1♥, partner responds 1NT, and you make a reverse bid of 2♠ to force. Over whatever partner bids, you'll bid your ♠s again to show extra length. Partner will know that you must hold 5 ♠s (because you bid them twice) and 6 ♥s (because your ♥s must be longer than your ♠s). Partner can now decide what the trump suit should be.

♠ K7
♥ AQ62
♦ AQ
♣ KJ754

You open 1♣ and partner bids 1♠.

This hand qualifies as a reverse to 2♥, but a 2NT rebid is a better description of your strength and distribution. Your hand is fairly balanced, your suits are not robust, and you have almost half your points in your doubletons. If you instead bid 2♥ here, you promise only about 17+ pts., and you tend to show a hand that's more suitable for a trump contract than for 3NT.

Examples and explanations

Bid	Meaning
1♣ - 1♥ 2♦	16+ HCP, 5+ ♣s and 4+ ♦s (♣s longer), reverse suit is above opener's first bid but below responder's bid 1 round force
1♣ - 1♠ 2♦/♥	16+ HCP, 5+ ♣s and 4+ ♦s/♥s (♣s longer), reverse suit is above opener's first bid but below responder's bid. 1 round force
1♦ - 1♠ 2♥	16+ HCP, 5+ ♦s and 4+ ♥s (♦s longer), reverse suit is above opener's first bid but below responder's bid
1♥ - 1NT 2♠	16+ HCP, 5+ ♥s and 4+ ♠s (♥s longer), reverse suit is above opener's first bid but below responder's bid. 1 round force
1♥ - 2♣/♦ 2♠	16+ HCP, 5+ ♥s and 4+ ♠s (♥s longer), reverse suit is above opener's first bid but below responder's bid. Game forcing

Responder's reverse

Treat a responder's reverse as a game force. Responder's reverse usually follows a same suit rebid or a notrump rebid by opener. Typical responder's reverse sequences are:

1♦ – 1♥
1NT – 2♠

1♣ – 1♦
2♣ – 2♥

Exercises

1. You opened 1♣ and partner responded 1♠. What is your rebid on these hands?

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) ♠ A4
♥ AK98
♦ 63
♣ QJ864 | (b) ♠ 73
♥ AQJ6
♦ 92
♣ AQ982 | (c) ♠ 3
♥ AK9
♦ K742
♣ AKJ64 | (d) ♠ 43
♥ AKJ3
♦ K6
♣ AK932 | (e) ♠ 86
♥ QJ62
♦ A
♣ AKQ863 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

2. Opener bid 1♦ and you responded 1♠ then partner bid 2♥. What is your rebid on these hands?

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) ♠ KJ63
♥ Q54
♦ 76
♣ 9842 | (b) ♠ QJ8642
♥ K863
♦ 6
♣ 82 | (c) ♠ QJ9732
♥ AK
♦ 652
♣ J6 | (d) ♠ J984
♥ 73
♦ 65
♣ AJ743 | (e) ♠ QJ98
♥ 92
♦ 753
♣ AKJ5 |
| (f) ♠ 987642
♥ 2
♦ 32
♣ AQ54 | (g) ♠ AK73
♥ K4
♦ 932
♣ 7632 | (h) ♠ KQ843
♥ 52
♦ 83
♣ A962 | (i) ♠ A862
♥ 2
♦ KQ73
♣ K843 | (j) ♠ AK862
♥ KQ732
♦ 96
♣ 7 |

3. The bidding has started: 1♦, 1♠, 3♣. What should Responder rebid on these hands?

- | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| (a) ♠ KQ74
♥ 973
♦ Q106
♣ 652 | (b) ♠ A9863
♥ 854
♦ 64
♣ Q52 | (c) ♠ J8643
♥ J3
♦ AK64
♣ Q9 | (d) ♠ Q109732
♥ 874
♦ 62
♣ A2 | (e) ♠ QJ8652
♥ KJ9863
♦ 3
♣ - |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|

Answers

- 1 (a) 2♣ (b) 2♣ (c) 2♦ reverse (d) 2♥ (e) 2♥
- 2 (a) 2NT (b) 4♥ (c) 3♠ (d) 2NT (e) 3NT
(f) 2♠ (2NT) (g) 3♣ (h) 3♣ (i) 4♦ GF (j) 4NT* Blackwood

Partnership bidding

How should the following hands be bid? (West is the dealer on all hands.)

1 ♠ K8732 ♥ K4 ♦ 754 ♣ 652	♠ 4 ♥ AQ96 ♦ AKJ86 ♣ K43	2 ♠ A762 ♥ J32 ♦ 54 ♣ AJ108	♠ K4 ♥ KQ76 ♦ AKQ32 ♣ 93
3 ♠ K8732 ♥ K4 ♦ 95 ♣ 9852	♠ 4 ♥ AQ96 ♦ AKJ86 ♣ 743	4 ♠ J6 ♥ AK32 ♦ 76 ♣ AKQ43	♠ K9742 ♥ 65 ♦ A98 ♣ 765
5 ♠ 32 ♥ A986 ♦ AKJ864 ♣ 7	♠ A8754 ♥ K432 ♦ 5 ♣ A94	6 ♠ Q762 ♥ 653 ♦ AJ10 ♣ 753	♠ K83 ♥ KQJ2 ♦ 8 ♣ AKQ32
7 ♠ AQ ♥ 73 ♦ KQ72 ♣ AJ1043	♠ J86 ♥ KQ8654 ♦ 93 ♣ 75	8 ♠ 43 ♥ AKQ2 ♦ AQ862 ♣ K3	♠ AK72 ♥ 765 ♦ K43 ♣ 862
9 ♠ A10 ♥ 73 ♦ KQJ3 ♣ AQ874	♠ 73 ♥ AQ8654 ♦ A2 ♣ 5	10 ♠ Q10652 ♥ A5 ♦ J42 ♣ K53	♠ A83 ♥ KQJ2 ♦ 8 ♣ AQJ42

Answers

1 P – 1♦ 1♠ – 2♥ 3♦ – P	2 P – 1♦ 1♠ – 2♥ 3NT – P	3 P – 1♦ 1♠ – 2♦ P	4 1♣ – 1♠ 2♥ – 2NT P
5 1♦ – 1♠ 2♦ – 2♥ 3♥ – 4♥ P	6 P – 1♣ 1♠ – 2♥ 2NT – P	7 1♣ – 1♥ 1NT – 2♥ P	8 1♦ – 1♠ 2♥ – 3♣ 3NT – P
9 1♣ – 1♥ 2♦ – 3♥ 4♥ – P	10 P – 1♣ 1♠ – 2♥ 3♦ – 3♠ 4♠ – P		