

Reverse Bids

A reverse bid is a player's rebid of a higher ranking suit than the suit that they originally bid. The bid shows additional strength because it forces responder to go to a higher level to return to the opener's first suit. It generally shows 17+ HCP with 5+ cards in the first suit and 4+ cards in the second suit.

A reverse bid has the following requirements:

1. Opener's second suit is a higher rank than his first suit bid.
2. Responder's 1 level bid is a higher rank than opener's 2 level rebid.
3. Usually guarantees a longer first suit than the second suit bid. Do not reverse with suits of equal length (e.g. 5-5)
4. 16-17 or more high card points up to the level of a strong 2 bid, This can be done with less points on strong distributional hands.
5. Opener's reverse is forcing for one round. If responder reverses, it is a game force.

Examples:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. 1D – 1S
2H | Shows 5+ diamonds, 4+ hearts, 17+ HCP |
| 2. 1D – 1NT
2S | Shows 5+ diamonds, 4+ spades, 17+ HCP |
| 3. 1C – 1H – 1S – P
2D | Still a reverse even with overcall. Shows 5+ clubs, 4+ diamonds, 17+ points. |
| 4. 1D – 1H
1S | Not a reverse. Responder's suit is a lower level than opener's second bid. To show a big hand, opener has to Jump to 2 spades. |
| 5. 1H – 2C/D
2S | Playing Standard American, shows 5+ hearts, 4+ spades, 16+ HCP. Playing 2/1 strength is dependent on partnership understanding. |

Reverses can be made with less than 17 HCP with 6-4 or 6-5 distribution and strength in the long suits. (16+ with 6-4, 15+ with 6-5)

Sample Hands

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. S K 7 5
H A J 10 7
D K Q J 4 3
C A | 1D P 1S P
?

Rebid 2H, 18 HCP, 5+ diamonds, 4+ hearts |
| 2. S A Q 8
H A K 9 3
D A J 8 6
C 7 4 | 1D P 1S P
?

Sometimes there is an exception to the rule. Rebid 2H. |
| 3. S A Q J 9 3
H A K 7 6 4 2
D 8
C 9 | Reverses can be made with less than 17 HCP with very distributional hands.

Open 1H, Rebid 2S |
| 4. S J 2
H K Q 9 7
D A J 9 7 3
C K 8 | 1D P 1S P
?

This hand is too weak to reverse. Bid 1NT. |
| 5. S A K 10
H 4 3
D A 8 5
C A K 9 7 2 | 1C P 1S P
?

Sometimes with a worthless doubleton in an unbid suit, you may have to reverse in a 3 card suit. Bid 2D. |

Responding to a Reverse

In most cases, the partnership is forced to game after the opener makes a reverse bid. However, responder can sign off with the cheaper of:

- a. 2 of the 4th suit, or
- b. 2NT.

Both bids are artificial and should be alerted. Since the bids are artificial, opener must bid again. He can show 3 card support for responder, rebid one of his suits, or bid NT if he has a stopper in the 4th suit. Responder can pass or bid again.

However, I recommend you only play a 2NT sign off for simplicity.

Sample Hands

The bidding has gone 1C – 1S
2H - ?

Responder holds:

1. S K J 3 2 H K 10 9 D 3 2 C Q 4 3 2

Raise partner's clubs (3C). This is a game force.

2. S K J 4 3 2 H 5 4 3 2 D Q 2 C 3 2

The hand is weak with game unlikely. Bid 2NT to show a signoff. Then bid 3H on the next round.

3. S Q 5 4 3 2 H A Q 3 2 D 5 3 C 3 2

Bid 3H or 4H depending on which is weaker in your system. You want to be in game but have no interest in slam.

4. S K J 3 2 H K 10 9 D 2 C K 8 6 4 3

Jump to 4 clubs showing slam interest. This hand has only 10 HCP but it has a singleton in the 4th suit and no wasted values. If partner has 3 aces, slam is a good possibility.

5. S K Q 8 5 4 2 H 8 4 D 9 2 C J 10 7

This hand is close to a minimum but the spade suit is good. Bid 2S

The bidding has gone: 1C – 1S
2D

6. S K J 4 3 2 H J 4 3 2 D J 2 C 3 2

Sign off by bidding 2H or 2NT