

The Reverse In Bridge

One More Time

What Is a Reverse In Bridge Bidding?

- A reverse occurs when the opener's rebid (the second bid) meets the following conditions:
 - The opener's second bid is in a higher ranking suit than the first bid.
 - The opener's second bid is at the two level.
 - The opener's second bid is not a jump bid.
- Those three lines put together sometimes make my students' eyes glaze over, so see the next slide.

The following Auctions Are All Reverses

1 ♣ -1 ♠ -2 ♦
1 ♣ -1 ♠ -2 ♥
1 ♣ -1 ♥ -2 ♦
1 ♣ -1nt-2 ♦
1 ♦ -1nt-2 ♥
1 ♦ -1nt-2 ♠
1 ♦ -1 ♠ -2 ♥
1 ♣ -1nt-2 ♥
1 ♦ -1nt-2 ♥
1- ♥ 1nt -1 ♠

- Note that in each auction the opener's second suit bid is a higher rank than the first.
- It is at the two level.
- It is not a jump bid.

Just to be Clear

- 1 ♣ -1 ♥ -1 ♠ or 1 ♣ -1 ♦ -1 ♥ are not considered reverses because the opener's second bid is not at the two level.
- 1 ♣ -1 ♥ -2 ♠ or 1 ♣ -1 ♦ -2 ♥ are jump shifts, which are game forcing bids.

Why Do We Reverse?

- To keep the bidding open and show extra values.
- In order to make a game try.
- To clearly describe a hand to partner.

What Does a Reverse Show?

- An unbalanced hand – all opener's suit bids are natural.
 - At least 5 cards in the first suit
 - And at least 4 cards in the second suit.
- 17 to 19 points
- A reverse is forcing, for one round, on the responder, but not forcing to game.

Reverse Hand Example 1

- Opener's hand

♠ 4 2

♥ A K 3 2

♦ A 5

♣ K Q J 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥

- Opener has 17 points
- 5-4 distribution
- 2♥ is a reverse bid.

Reverse Hand Example 2

- Opener's hand

♠ K J 2

♥ 2

♦ A K J 7

♣ K Q J 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♦

- Opener has 18 points
- 5-4 distribution
- 2♦ is a reverse bid

Reverse Hand Example 3

- Opener's hand

♠

♥ A Q J 3

♦ K Q 7

♣ K Q J 7 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥

- Opener has 18 points
- 6-4 distribution
- 2♥ is a reverse bid

Reverse Hand Example 4

- Opener's hand

♠ A Q J 6 5

♥ A Q J 7 5 3

♦

♣ K 3

North	East	South	West
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1♥	pass	1nt	pass
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2♠

- Opener has 17 points
- 6-5 distribution
- 2♠ is a reverse bid

One Point to Consider

- Opener's hand

♠ J 6

♥ A 7 5 3

♦ 5 4 2

♣ A K 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

1nt

- You might be tempted to bid 2♥, here instead of 1nt, because your diamond suit is wide open.
- Resist that urge, 2♥ would be a reverse.
- Your hand is much too weak.

How Do You Respond to a Reverse?

- With a good 8 or more points, you want to help opener find a game.
- With 6 to a bad 8 points, you want to discourage opener as much as possible, while still describing something about your hand.

Weak Bid (1)

- Rebid your suit at the minimum available level, with 5 cards in the suit.
- This bid says:
 - I have 6 to a bad 8 points (5+ cards in my suit)
 - I intend to pass your next bid.
 - Tends to show a stopper in the unbid suit.
 - Opener can pass your bid.

Weak Bid (2)

- Bid 2nt.
- This bid says:
 - Balanced distribution 6 to a bad 8 points.
 - I intend to pass your next bid.
 - Opener can pass this bid.

Weak Bid (3)

- Support opener's first suit, at the minimum available level.
- This bid says:
 - I have 6 to a bad 8 points.
 - 3+ cards in the suit.
 - Opener can pass your bid.

Response Example 1

- Responder's hand

♠ K 9 7 5 2

♥ 3

♦ 7 5 3

♣ A 7 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥ pass 3♣

- Responder has 7 points
- Weak hand
- Can support opener's first suit.
- Opener may bid on or pass.

Response Example 2

- Responder's hand

♠ K 9 7 5

♥ 3 2

♦ Q J 5 3

♣ 7 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥ pass 2 nt

- Has a stopper in the unbid suit.
- A weak hand. Does not want to go on to game, unless partner chooses to do so.
- Partner can pass or bid on.

Response Example 3

- Responder's hand

♠ K 9 7 5 2

♥ 3 2

♦ K 5 3

♣ 8 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥ pass 2♠

- one more weak response.
- You can rebid a 5 card suit after a reverse.
- Tells partner you have a weak hand and that you will pass her next bid.

Response Example 4

- Responder's hand

♠ A K 9 7 5 2

♥ 3 2

♦ K 5 3

♣ 8 4

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥ pass 3♠

- Your jump bid is a game forcing response.
- You might have only 4 spades, but you are showing game forcing points.

Response Example 5

- Responder's hand

♠ A 10 9 7 4

♥ J 8 5 2

♦ 3

♣ K 8 4

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥ pass 4♥

- You have 8 points, plus a singleton.
- With partner's strong hand, you will have a good play for game.
- This is a good 8, in support of partner's reverse.

Response Example 6

- Responder's hand

♠ A 10 9 7

♥ J 8 5

♦ K Q 7

♣ 8 4 3

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥ pass 3nt

- You have 10 points.
- A solid stopper in the unbid suit.
- You must bid the game.

Response Example 7

- Responder's hand

♠ A 10 9 7

♥ K 8 5

♦ A 7

♣ K J 8 4

North East South West

1♣ pass 1♠ pass

2♥ pass 4♣

- You have passed up an easy 3nt.
- By doing this you are strongly suggesting a slam in clubs or no trump.

Can a Responder Make a Reverse?

- Responders can use a reverse, under certain conditions.
 - A reverse by responder shows the same distribution as does a reverse by opener.
 - First suit is longer than the second suit.
 - A reverse by responder is game forcing.
- If you play fourth-suit forcing, a reverse by responder is on only when opener bids and rebids the same suit.

Consider the Following Auctions

North East South West

1♦ pass 1♥ pass

2♣ pass 2♠ pass

- Responder has reversed her bidding, but if the partnership is playing 4th suit forcing, this is not played as a reverse, because it is the 4th suit.

North East South West

1♦ pass 1♥ pass

2♦ pass 2♠ pass

- Here responder's bid is played as a reverse, because she has not bid the fourth suit.
- Responder should have a game forcing hand with 5 hearts and 4 spades.

Final Thoughts

- I hope this lesson clears up any misunderstanding you might have had about reverses.
- The reverse is an important part of the standard or 2/1 bidding system.
- Talk it over with your partner and use reverses when they apply.
- Don't reverse unless your hand meets the requirement for a reverse.