



## Lebensohl

THE LEBENSOHL convention came in as a means to deal effectively with intervention after a 1NT opening bid.

It has also now been extended to cover various other situations. In my next article I will deal with using it as an invaluable aid to defending against Weak Two opening bids and the Multi 2♦.

### Dealing with Intervention after 1NT

Lebensohl allows room to make both forcing and non-forcing bids after intervention over our 1NT opening bid.

So if we open 1NT and they overcall:

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♥	?	

Then a new suit at the two level is obviously to play in anyone's system. But what about a new suit at the three level?

Classically this is just to compete (non-forcing). This is all well and good but what happens if you wish to make a forcing bid instead? Say you hold Hand A and the auction starts:

<b>Hand A</b>
♠ 7 2
♥ A K 6 5 3
♦ K 9 4
♣ K 8 2

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♣	?	

To bid 3♥ (non-forcing) would clearly be silly as game would be missed. But what should you bid? Guessing to bid 4♥ could be absurd but so could bidding 3NT!

The obvious solution, available playing Lebensohl, is to use a new suit at the three level as forcing to game. If instead you have a weaker hand which wishes to compete, you start by bidding an *artificial* 2NT instead. This is alertable and initially asks partner to bid 3♣. When he does this, if clubs is your suit you pass, otherwise you correct to your own suit which is now *non-forcing*. E.g.

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♥	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass <sup>1</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> At least five clubs, approx. 6-10 points, non-forcing

Or:

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♥	2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦ <sup>1</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> At least five diamonds, approx. 6-10 points, non-forcing

Sometimes you actually have three options rather than two, depending on the order of the suits. Thus:

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♣/♦/♥	?	

Now you have a choice of:

2♠ = to play (at least five spades, weakish)

3♠ = at least five spades, game-forcing  
2NT, then 3♠ = at least five spades, game-invitational

Here are a few example hands to demonstrate:

<b>Hand B</b>
♠ A Q 7 5 2
♥ 8 5
♦ 8 4 2
♣ J 6 2

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♥	?	

Bid 2♠, to play.

<b>Hand C</b>
♠ A Q 7 5 2
♥ A 9
♦ A 7 2
♣ 8 6 2

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♥	?	

Bid 3♠, natural, game-forcing, showing at least five spades.

<b>Hand D</b>
♠ A J 10 7 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ A J 2
♣ 8 6

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♦	?	

Bid 2NT, then 3♠, invitational.

<b>Hand E</b>
♠ 5 2
♥ A 9 3
♦ A 2
♣ A Q J 7 6 3

Partner	Oppo 1	You	Oppo 2
1NT	2♣	?	

Bid 3♣, forcing to game. Using Lebensohl you do not need to guess whether to bid 3NT or 5♣ on your first round of bidding – you can explore both contracts at some leisure!

**SILVER PLATE:** Congratulations to Mike Tedd, Tony Disley, Patrick Jourdain, Roger Penton, Tony Ratcliff and John Salisbury who have won the 2011-2012 British Silver Plate. In the final, they beat Nick Stevens, Paul Bowyer, Duncan Happer, David Jones, Jim Mason, Garry Watson by 30 IMPs.

## Doubling the Opponent's Intervening Bid

Opinions differ as to the best treatment here. When Lebensohl first started, there was a split panel between using the double for penalties or to show the values for 2NT (11-12 approx). The ability to bid a natural 2NT is the one major loss that playing Lebensohl will bring you (in my humble opinion, the swings far outweigh the roundabouts though, provided you are prepared to put a bit of effort in by reading articles on the subject!)

This is my article, however, and I strongly recommend playing double for take-out after natural overcalls.

If the overcall is conventional, though, (Astro, Multi Landy, etc.) then I recommend using the double just to show general values (approx. 11+ points).

## Showing or Denying Stoppers

If your partner opens 1NT, the opponents overcall in a suit and you have a bash at 3NT, nothing is more humiliating than finding that they then proceed to run off their suit leading to swift defeat and egg on face. The need for a stopper is vital.

With Lebensohl, following an overcall a direct 3NT bid guarantees a stopper, whereas bidding the artificial 2NT first (forcing partner to bid 3♣, remember), then bidding 3NT denies a stopper. Some people refer to this as FASS (Fast Arrival Shows Stopper).

## Bidding the Opponent's Suit

This acts as Stayman. A direct cue-bid shows a stopper in the opponent's suit, whereas a cue-bid after the artificial 2NT denies a stopper. E.g., holding Hand F:

### Hand F

♠ A Q 7 4  
♥ 8 2  
♦ K 9 5 3  
♣ A 6 3

If partner opens 1NT and the opponents overcall 2♥, you could either double for

take-out, or bid 2NT then 3♥ to act as Stayman (i.e. showing four spades but *no* heart stopper)

## Problem Hand Types

Clearly, as I mentioned earlier, holding a balanced 11-12 point hand where you would wish to bid a natural 2NT is the main problem hand type. Your options are basically to double for take-out or to sometimes pass and defend against the opponents' contract.

## When Does Lebensohl Apply?

The primary use of this mighty fine convention is to establish whether the partnership has *game-going values* or not. If this is impossible, then Lebensohl does not apply.

The main applications are when your side either *opens* or *overcalls* 1NT and the opponents then intervene. Thus in the auction:

Oppo 1	Partner	Oppo 2	You
1♠	1NT	2♠	?

Lebensohl would now apply here too!

Exactly the same philosophy is used, i.e. a new suit at the three level is forcing to game, double is take-out, 2NT the start of a weaker auction etc.

## Dealing with Jump Intervention (Usually at the Three Level)

If those horrible opponents make a jump overcall (usually at the three level in practice, I find), then while Lebensohl as such does not apply, it is important to have some agreements.

I recommend quite simply:

- A new suit is natural and *forcing*;
- A double is for *take-out* and not for penalties.

I hope this has given you some ideas on sharpening up your methods. Next time I will develop these ideas a little further with reference to how to defend more competently against the dreaded Multi and Weak Two bids. □

**2013 CAMROSE TROPHY:** England lead the field after the first half of the Camrose Trophy, held in January in Belfast. They didn't lose a match and are 5 VPs ahead of Northern Ireland. Congratulations to Frances Hinden, Graham Osborne, Jeffrey Allerton, Chris Jagger, David Price and Colin Simpson with NPC David Burn. Full report in the next issue.

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The Masters Pairs section is open to all below the rank of Regional Master on 1st Jan 2013; it has been changed from a two-day event in a central location to a two-session one-day event on 3rd March (11.30 start, finish by 6.45pm) in these venues:

- Bradford Bridge Club
- Richmond Bridge Club
- Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club
- Welwyn Garden City Bridge Club
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