

Lebensohl: The Brief Version

When They Overcall
Partner's No Trump
Opening

Lebensohl

- Lebensohl is a complex convention.
- It is used when opponents overcall your partner's 1 or 2 no trump opening bid.
- What I am giving you here is a simplified version. There is more to learn.
- If you learn this version, you can handle most situations.

Memorize This Phrase

- **Slow Shows – Direct Denies**
- You must always know what their overcall means.
- If they bid a suit: Is that suit a single suit or is it a two suit bid?
- If the overcall is a double: Is it a single suit or an equal hand?

After a Two-Level Overcall

- A double is for penalty.
- Remember, partner has opened 1 no trump. She has a hand full of high cards.
 - If the bid is natural, you can penalize that suit.
 - If it is a two-suit bid you can penalize the suit that is known.
 - A two-level bid is to play. Partner should pass.
 - 2 no trump is a relay to three clubs.

Some Examples

South's hand

♠ K 8

♥ K J 9

♦ Q 8 6 2

♣ 9 8 5 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	dbld	pass

South's hand

♠ K J 8 7 6 3

♥ 9

♦ Q 2

♣ 9 8 5 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	2 ♠	pass
pass	pass		

You Can Still Get to 3 No Trump

South's hand

♠ K Q 8

♥ J 9

♦ Q 8 6 2

♣ A 10 5 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	3 nt	pass

Remember, direct Denies a stopper in their suit.

South's hand

♠ K J 3

♥ K 8 2

♦ A 8 6 2

♣ 8 5 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	2 nt	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 nt	

Slow shows a stopper in their suit.

A Point To Remember

- After an opponent interferes, there are no transfers.
- If you bid a suit, you have that suit.
- Except, of course, when you cue bid the opponent's suit. That is Stayman and you are telling partner you have game values.
- Once again, direct denies...slow shows.

Here Are Some Examples

South's hand

♠ K Q 8 5

♥ 9 3

♦ Q 8 6

♣ A J 9 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	3 ♥	pass

Remember, direct denies a stopper in their suit.

South's hand

♠ K J 8 5

♥ Q J 3

♦ J 8

♣ Q J 10 9

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	2nt	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 ♥	

Remember, slow shows a stopper in their suit.

If You Have the Suit, Bid It

South's hand

♠ K Q 8 5 3 2

♥ 9

♦ Q 8

♣ A J 9 2

South's hand

♠ 8 5

♥ J 10 9 7 5 3

♦ A K 3

♣ A 9

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	4 ♠	pass

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♣	4 ♥	

A Direct 3-Level Bid

- A direct 3-level bid in **a major suit** is game forcing with a 5-card suit.
 - If you have a 6-card major suit and game points, just bid the game.
- A direct 3-level bid in **a minor suit** is game forcing, *usually* with a 6-card suit.
 - If you have a 5-card minor suit and game forcing points, look for a no trump game.
 - Bid 3 of the suit directly, then look for a no trump game.

Consider the Following Examples

South's hand

♠ K Q 8 5 3

♥ 9 3

♦ Q 8

♣ A J 9 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	3 ♠	pass

The direct bid shows a 5-card suit with game-going points.

South's hand

♠ K 5 4

♥ 9

♦ A Q 9 7 5 3

♣ A 9 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♣	3 ♦	pass

The direct minor-suit bid shows 6 cards and game going points.

Consider the A Few More Examples

South's hand

♠ 8 5

♥ K Q 10 9 3

♦ J 8

♣ A 10 9 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♠	3 ♥	pass

The direct bid shows a 5-card suit with game-going points.

South's hand

♠ 9 5

♥ K 9 4

♦ A 10 9

♣ A J 10 9 7

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♠	3 ♣	pass

The direct minor-suit bid usually shows 6 cards and game going points, but might be a 5-card suit. .

One Little-Known Provision

- If responder uses the relay, then bids a suit that she could have bid at the two level, she is showing an invitational hand.
- Remember the elements of this provision.
- Responder:
 - Uses the relay 2 nt...3 ♣
 - Then bids a suit that could have been bid at the two level.
- This does not come up often. Some just leave it out.

Here are Some Examples

South's hand

♠ K J 9 7 5 3

♥ 9 3

♦ A 9 7

♣ 10 5

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	2 nt	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 ♠	pass

South could have bid spades at the two level and he could have bid 4 ♠. Instead, he used the relay and then bid his suit. That shows an invitational hand in spades.

South's hand

♠ 8 5 2

♥ A 10 9 6 5 4

♦ 3

♣ A 9 6

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♦	2nt	pass
3 ♣	pass	3 ♥	

Again South is inviting game in hearts... North can pass or bid 4 ♥.

What You Give Up

- When you play this version of Lebensohl, you give up the natural 2 no trump invitational bid.
- After an opponent's overcall, if your intention was to bid 2 no trump to invite partner to game, you can:
 - Pass
 - Double
 - Bid 3 nt.

Some Examples

South's hand

♠ K J 5

♥ 9 3

♦ Q 9 7 2

♣ Q 10 5 2

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	pass	pass

South's hand

♠ 8 5 2

♥ A 9 6 4

♦ 3

♣ A 9 6 5 4

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♣	dbld	pass

More Examples

South's hand

♠ 9 5

♥ Q 10 4

♦ A Q J 9 8

♣ 10 9 8

South's hand

♠ K J 2

♥ 9 6

♦ 10 9 8

♣ A J 10 9 5

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	2nt	pass
3 ♣	pass	3nt	

North	east	south	west
1 nt	2 ♥	3 nt	pass

One Last Reminder

- Slow shows....
- Direct denials