

# Lebensohl X 4 Penalty/Fast Arrival R No-No's!

Provided by Neil H. Timm

## Lebensohl

The history of the Lebensohl convention is unknown. Although Kenneth W. Lebensold is credited with it he denies being its creator! It appears to be first published by George W. Boehm from NY City in the November 1970 issue of "The Bridge World" magazine. And is today used by many bridge partnerships as the preferred defense when the opponents interfere over the bid of 1NT=15-17.

**It should be noted that the original published version of the convention did not include the X as penalty when the opponents make a natural 2-level overcall bid (usually a 6-card suit).**

Today most bridge experts believe that the X of a natural overcall 2-level bid is seldom beneficial and have replaced the penalty X to show "cards/negative double" with a balanced or semi-balanced hand and 7-8HCP, which occurs far more frequently than hands with sufficient points for a penalty double. Do not let the opponents play at the 2-level when the combined total points for the 1NT pair is 22-24HCP? Even worse, the opponents' play in a 2-level contract and make it. If doubled and made even worse.

What is one to do when the bid is NOT natural, but artificial to showing 5-5 card hands? Well it depends:

- (a) The overcall shows an unspecified, unknown one-suited hand (often the bid of 2♣).

A X is Stayman, otherwise ignore the overcall.

- (b) The overcall shows a two-suited hand where one or both are known.

A cue-bid of a known suit is invitational and if the second is also known a cue-bid of the higher-ranking suit is game forcing.

- (c) The overcall shows a two-suited hand and both suits are unknown.

A X is Stayman and any bid is natural, and pass followed by a X is penalty since there is no known suit to cue bid.

While many partnerships play conventions over strong NT bids that show a 5-5-card hands, in general conventions that show two-suited hands are dangerous conventions to play (e.g. DON'T, Cappelletti, Meckwell, Brozel, Landy, Astro, Hello, etc.) because they often give away too much information about the bidder's hand, and the opponents often gain more from the bid than partner.

Fortunately, one suited hands with 6-cards occur more frequently than 5-5 card hands. However, it is better for the over caller with a 6-card suit to bid the lower ranking suit as a transfer so that partner bids the suit since it puts the strong 1NT bidder on lead if the contract is won.

For a modern discussion of Lebensohl see: Eric Rodwell (2019, p.115), “Eric Rodwell’s Bidding Topics 2”. Baron Barclay.

### **Fast Arrival**

In the uncontested auction 1♠ - 2♦; 2♠ - 4♠, what is the meaning of the 4♠ bid? Is it “Fast Arrival” saying I am not interested in bidding more; for if I were I would have bid 3♠ which shows mild slam interest? Or, does it show a rather specific holding? Bridge experts like Eric Rodwell, Eddie Kantar, Marshall Miles, and Mike Lawrence to name a few recommend picture bids.

That is the 4♠ bid is used to show responders high cards are in spades and diamonds without controls in the two unbid suits clubs and hearts. For example

♠AK2 ♥ Q9 ♦AQJ987 ♣98 or ♠AQ87 ♥ 76 ♦AQJ98 ♣J2

If the opening bidder holds ♠KJ10542 ♥7 ♦K42 ♣A107 he may bid 4NT. Without the club Ace he will pass since he knows he has two club losers. With a weak Jack high spades suit even with controls in the unbid suit he should pass.

In the sequence, 1♠ - 2♦; 2♠ - 4♦ is not a drop bid, but probably stronger since the 3NT bid was bypassed. However the sequence 1♠ - 2♦; 2♥ - 4♥/4♠ is again a picture bid.

What about the sequence: 1♠ - 2♥; 4♥= shows good spades and hearts with no controls in the minors. Can picture bids be used over Jacoby 2NT? Yes!

Recall the Jacoby bids:

### **Jacoby 2NT\* Responses by Opener**

<b>Rebids by Opener</b>	<b>Suit Length</b>	<b>Bergen Points</b>
3 (new suit)*	Singleton/Void	12+
3 (major suit opened)*	5/6+ in major	18+
3NT*	(5-3-3-2) balanced	15-17
4 (new suit)	4+ card suit	12+ to 17
4 (major suit opened)	5+ major	12+ to 14

Suppose you have the following hand and partner opens 1♠ and you hold the following hand:

♠AJ964 ♥Q7 ♦7 ♣KQJ76

Following for example some including Audrey Grant recommends showing the 5-card club suit, but I believe this is wrong! **If you must bid it (since you play picture bids), it should show two quick losers in the other suits, hearts and diamonds.**

You must first show shortness. Why? Partner may hold good trumps and the ♥K. Will partner know it is a valuable card? You might have a singleton heart. It is partner's ♦K that is worthless to you. But if you bid 3♦\* (singleton/void) partner may consider good trumps, A's K's and Q's of hearts and clubs as valuable cards. And the jump to the 4-level takes up too much bidding space.

Lets look at an example.

Opener	Responder
♠AQ643	♠K1097
♥A7	♥43
♦KJ942	♦AQ3
♣7	♣KJ65

The bidding goes: 1♠ - 2NT\*; 4♦-4NT; 6♠.

For more on Picture Bids see: Eric Rodwell in his March/April 2008 Two-Over-One article called the "Principle of Fast Arrival" on the site [/www.betterbridge.com/articles/Two-Over-One/09-200803.pdf](http://www.betterbridge.com/articles/Two-Over-One/09-200803.pdf).

Or go to Timm's Bridge Bits on the site: [www.bridgewebs.com/Ocala](http://www.bridgewebs.com/Ocala).