

**REVERSE BIDS****OPENER'S REVERSE BIDS**

The standard definition of an opener's reverse bid is a bid in a third suit in an uncontested auction which prevents responder from returning to the first suit at the two-level. In other words, a player reverses when his first bid is made in a lower ranking suit than his second bid and when his second bid is made at the two-level.

1H  
2D

1S

When a player shows two suits he is offering a choice for trumps and his partner is expected to show preference. In simple non-forcing

sequences this is done by passing the second bid suit, returning to the first bid suit, or raising or jump raising one or other suit as the strength warrants.

1H  
2S

2D

In this second sequence, where opener has bid hearts before spades, responder cannot avoid going to the three-level to show preference for hearts. To

safeguard this the opening bidder must guarantee a strong hand, strong enough to stand a three-level contract, for which reason a genuine reverse should be treated as a one-round force.

A reverse bidding sequence should never be chosen in order to show strength, but should only be used when expedient and when the necessary strength is held. It follows from this that the first suit bid is always longer than the second as otherwise, even on a strong hand, the higher ranking suit can be opened and, the second, lower ranking suit can be shown by a jump rebid.

S AKJ8  
H QJ1097  
D A64  
C K104

Here for example, you are strong enough to open 1H and rebid 2S over a 2C or 2D response. Make the four of clubs into the four of spades however, and there is no reason not to open a normal 1S.

The opener's reverse bid therefore, should show distribution, the first suit always being longer than the second, and strength, as a rough guide, a hand containing about seventeen high card points.

S AQ84  
H AJ53  
D A64  
C A8

Be careful not to get confused with this situation where you open 1H for quite a different reason. Here you do not intend to rebid in your equal-length spade suit unless to raise a spade response. You are merely hoping to

facilitate a spade response, or rebid no-trumps over a club or diamond response or a heart raise.

Note that the rebid of a higher ranking suit at the one-level does not constitute a reverse, as it may merely be taking the opportunity to show a second suit - probably a four-card major when you have elected to open a six-card minor as in this example:

S AQ97	1D	1H
H J8	1S	
D AJ10976		
C 7		

Had partner's response been 2C instead of 1H, you would have rebid 2D and not bid 2S.

1S	1NT but	1S	2D
2C		3C	

Note that in above, except in the case of a 1NT response to 1S, it is impossible for opener to show a secondary club suit except at the three-level. The clubs will be shorter than the spades, or the 1C opening would have been chosen, and the new suit bid at the three-level is a one-round force, often known as a 'high reverse', with spades guaranteed longer than clubs in a strong hand. Compare these next three sequences to clarify.

1S	2C	1S	2H	1S	2C
2D		3C(or 3D)		3D	

In the first, opener's 2D rebid merely shows an opening hand with two possible trump suits. In the second, opener's 'high reverse' of 3C or 3D is forcing, showing a strong hand with at least a five-card spade suit, and in the third, opener uses a jump rebid to show his strength, as responder's 2C bid has left the two-level free.

Care must be taken to distinguish between a true reverse and a mere two-level rebid when this occurs in a contested auction.

N	E	S	W
1C	1S	2D	Pass
2H			

Here East's intervention has forced South to show his diamonds at the two-level and North, therefore, to bid hearts at the two-level when doubtless he had intended to bid 1H over a 1D response.

N	E	S	W
1D	2C	2H	Pass
2S			

Here, had East not intervened with 2C, South would have been able to bid 1H and North to rebid 1S.

1H	2H
2S	

Note that the in above sequence, North's rebid of 2S is not a reverse. It is a trial bid which does not carry the same implications as a normal reverse.

Finally to end with, compare the following two hands.

S AJ87  
H AQ1076  
D K64  
C 5

Here after opening 1H, over partner's 2C or 2D response you must rebid 2H and not bid 2S although you have the distribution for a reverse, you don't have the strength.

S AQ87  
H AKJ95  
D KQ6  
C 5

Now, after your 1H opening and 2C or 2D response you can rebid 2S since you have the strength requirements for a reverse. This hand shows why it is invaluable to have the reverse as forcing for one round.

### RESPONDER'S REVERSE BIDS

Responder as well as opener can reverse, though the bid carries a somewhat different significance. Like an opener's reverse, a responder's reverse is generally regarded as a one-round force, and may well be an attempt on responder's part to reach a No Trump game contract, though the chance that he holds a two-suiter is by no means excluded.

N	S
1H	2C
2H	2S

Responder's first bid suit should be at least of five-card length, and by virtue of the fact that opener may have to raise the bidding level to three to show preference, the reversing

hand should contain greater strength than would be needed for a simple rebid in a new suit. Compare these next two sequences:

S AJ972  
H KQ1064  
D 87  
C 7

N	S
1D	1S
2D	2H

South

In the first South bids his suits in normal order, inviting North's preference for spades or hearts over North's repeat of his own suit (or a 1NT rebid), as even a mild fit for either of South's suits is likely to produce a better result.

S AQJ9  
H AJ1096  
D Q7  
C 75  
South

N	S	or	N	S
1D	1H		1D	1H
2D	2S		1NT	2S

In the second case. however, South is strong enough to bid his five-card suit first and to reverse into 2S over North's rebid. By this he implies that his heart suit is longer than his spade suit, at least five cards, that he is good enough to stand preference to 3H, and that he is unable himself to bid No Trumps, clearly because of a lack of a club stop. Generally a responder's reverse will show a minimum of eleven high card points.

As long as the reverse bid is treated as a one-round force there is no danger in using it this way, and the only final result is likely to be the best contract. Opener should take the rebid as an invitation to 3NT if he holds the fourth suit covered, and should not be too enthusiastic about raising responder's second suit to game in case responder has only used the bid as a one-round force on a three-card holding.

Note that if opener's rebid is made in a second new suit then the entire character of responder's rebid can change. It can become a fourth-suit forcing bid and not merely a reverse. Compare the following sequences to make things clear:

1D	1S	Non-forcing, showing a second biddable suit and asking for preference.
2D	2H	
1D	1H	A responder's reverse - a one-round force probably in search of a No Trump game.
2D	2S	
1D	1H	Fourth-suit forcing, a one-round force not guaranteeing a rebid.
2C	2S	
1H	1S	New suit at the three-level, a one-round force.
2H	3C	
1H	1S	Fourth-suit forcing at the three-level, a one-round force guaranteeing one further bid.
2D	3C	

S AK7	N	S
H KJ873	1D	1H
D J84	2D	2S
C 86		

South

If responder's second-round reverse were not forcing he would not dare to bid 2S here. What he's actually doing is to find out whether North can guard the clubs for a No Trump contract. North of course will be entitled to place his partner with a five-card heart suit and put him back to the three-level if appropriate.

S 86	N	S
H AQ875	1D	1H
D J6	2D	3C
C AK74		

South

There's absolutely no need to gamble on 3NT here after North's 2D rebid, since it is understood that South's 3C rebid is a one-round force. North should treat this as looking for 3NT and if unable to bid it without a spade guard he should make the most expressive rebid possible.