

This series is based on *Grant Standard*, a set of conventions and agreements that are in popular use today, such as 15-17 INT openings, five-card majors, and weak two-bids. A summary chart of *Grant Standard* and the corresponding convention card can be found at www.AudreyGrant.com. The site also has *Grant Basic*, a simpler set of agreements.

Earlier articles in this series appeared in the *Bridge Bulletin* and can also be found under 'Articles' at www.AudreyGrant.com.

In the previous issue, we looked at opener's reverse—a non-jump bid in a new suit at the two level that is higher-ranking than opener's first suit. After a one-level response, this shows extra strength and is forcing for one round. Can responder also make a reverse bid? Let's see.

Responder's Reverse

Responder can indeed make a reverse bid. As with opener's reverse, this typically occurs at the two level:

RESPONDER'S REVERSE

A non-jump bid at the two level in a new suit that is higher-ranking than responder's first bid suit.

Suppose responder is South:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥

South's 2♥ is a reverse. It is a new suit at the two level that is higher-ranking than South's first bid suit, diamonds. Note the following points:

- Responder's first bid was one-of-a-suit.
- Responder's second bid is in a suit opener bypassed — hearts.
- Opener would have to bid at the three level to give preference to responder's first suit—3♦.

Responder's Reverse

So opener typically recognizes responder's reverse because it makes the auction uncomfortable, especially if opener has a minimum hand. Responder is bidding a suit for which opener is unlikely to have support—since opener bypassed it—and the auction is already at the two level.

So what does the reverse show? **Responder's reverse shows 13 or more points and is forcing to game.**

There are two situations in which responder can make a reverse:

- When opener rebids 1NT.
- When opener rebids the same suit at the two level.

Let's look at both situations, since responder's options are a little different in each case.

When Opener Rebids 1NT

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♥
1NT	?

Opener's 1NT rebid describes a minimum balanced hand of about 12–14 points, too weak to open 1NT. But it says more than that.

Opener does not have four-card support for hearts, since opener's priority is to raise to 2♥. In fact, many players might raise to 2♥ with three-card support when holding a doubleton in one of the unbid suits.

Opener has also denied four spades. Opener's priority is to bid 1♠ with a four-card suit, so that the partnership doesn't miss an eight-card fit.

Responder must now choose a rebid and has the following options:

RESPONDER'S OPTIONS AFTER OPENER'S 1NT REBID

NON-FORCING:

- Pass.
 - Old suit at the two level.
 - Lower-ranking suit at two level*.
- (*Except when using new minor forcing.)

INVITATIONAL:

- 2NT
- Jump to three level in old suit.

FORCING:

- Jump in a new suit.
- A reverse at the two level.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♥
1NT	?

With only 10 high-card points, game is unlikely, since opener has a maximum of 14 points. We want to stop in partscore, and 1NT looks like the best spot, so we should pass.

We don't need to worry about showing the spades. Opener has denied four spades, and a bid of 2♠ would be a reverse, showing 13 or more points and forcing to game!

Here we have only 5 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, but we can rebid 2♥, an old (previously bid) suit at the two level, to play. We know there's an eight-card fit, since opener has shown a balanced hand and must have at least two hearts.

Playing standard methods, we can bid 2♣ with this hand. Since it is lower-ranking than our first suit, it is not forcing. Opener can pass or give preference back to 2♥. (See the later section on new minor forcing for an alternative approach.)

♠ A K 8 4
♥ Q J 7 3
♦ 8 2
♣ 9 6 5

♠ 9 6
♥ J 9 8 6 5 2
♦ K 7 3
♣ J 4

♠ 4
♥ Q J 7 6 2
♦ 9 2
♣ K J 9 4 3

With 11 high-card points, we want to invite game. There's no need to bid spades, as partner has already bypassed that suit. Instead, we raise to 2NT, showing 11-12 points.

♠ A Q J 3
♥ Q 10 6 4
♦ 6 4
♣ Q 7 3

With 10 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, we have enough to make an invitational jump to 3♥, an old suit at the three level.

♠ 7 3
♥ K Q 9 8 6 3
♦ J 4
♣ A 6 4

To make a forcing bid, we can jump to the three level in a new suit, 3♣. Using standard methods, a rebid of 2♣ would not be forcing.

♠ 7 4
♥ A K 6 5 2
♦ 5
♣ A Q 9 7 3

Here we finally have a hand for a true reverse by responder. We have enough strength to force to game. We plan to rebid the spades next, showing a five-card suit, and by inference, six or more hearts—since we bid hearts first.

♠ A Q 9 7 4
♥ A J 7 6 5 2
♦ 5
♣ 6

This type of hand is rare. A reverse by responder is more commonly used on a hand like this. Here we'd like to make a forcing bid showing support for diamonds. However, neither 2♦—an old suit at the two level—nor 3♦—an old suit at the three level—would be forcing. Instead, we can make use of the reverse into 2♠.

♠ A 9 4
♥ A K J 7 3
♦ A J 7 6
♣ 4

We don't intend to play in spades, since opener has already denied four of them. We just need a forcing bid. 'Fourth suit' (see later) isn't available, since only two suits have been bid.

The reverse acts as a 'marathon bid'—forcing to game. If opener next bids 2NT or 3♣, for example, we can now bid 3♦ without fear of being passed. We may belong in 3NT, but we first want to explore the possibility that we might belong in 5♦ or 6♦, or perhaps 4♥ or 6♥.

When Opener Rebids a Suit

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♥
2♣	?

When the auction begins this way, opener is showing a minimum unbalanced hand, typically with a six-card or longer suit. As with the 1NT rebid, opener does not have four-card support for hearts and has denied a four-card spade suit.

Responder now has these options when choosing a rebid:

RESPONDER'S OPTIONS AFTER OPENER REBIDS A SUIT

NON-FORCING:

- Pass.
- Rebid responder's suit (old suit) at the two level.

INVITATIONAL:

- 2NT
- Raise opener's suit (old suit) to three level.
- Jump in responder's suit (old suit) to the three level.

FORCING:

- New suit at the two level — forcing one round.
- A reverse at the two level — forcing to game.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♣	1♥
2♣	?

With this hand, we should pass. Partner presumably has a six-card or longer club suit, didn't support hearts, and doesn't have four spades. Best to stop early on a likely misfit. We can't bid 2NT, since that would be invitational with 11-12 points.

♠ K 9 6 4
♥ K J 7 6 3
♦ 9 8 3
♣ 4

With 12 high-card points, we can invite game by bidding 2NT. Partner won't have four hearts or four spades, so there's no possible major-suit fit.

♠ K Q 9 3
♥ A J 7 5
♦ Q 9 2
♣ 4 3

Here we have 11 high-card points and can invite game by raising to 3♣. We don't want to bid notrump with nothing in the spade suit.

♠ 7 3
♥ A Q 6 2
♦ Q 10 7 2
♣ K 9 5

A new suit by responder is forcing, but it is not forcing to game. With 11 high-card points, we can afford to move toward game by bidding 2♦, waiting to see what partner does next. Partner may show support for hearts or bid notrump with a spade stopper.

♠ 9 4
♥ K J 7 6 2
♦ A K 8 4
♣ 7 5

With 15 high-card points, we have enough strength to take the partnership to game, but we aren't sure which is the best game. A raise to 3♣ would not be forcing, and we don't want to jump to 3NT with no stopper in diamonds.

♠ K 9 4
♥ A K J 2
♦ 9 3
♣ K J 7 5

We can make use of responder's reverse by bidding 2♠, forcing to game. Opener's next bid should help us decide where we belong.

In summary, responder's reverse is usually used as simply a forcing bid, when looking for the best contract.

Reverse Versus Fourth Suit

If opener has bid two suits, responder's bid of a new suit is 'fourth suit':

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥

Responder's 2♥ bid after three other suits have been bid is the fourth suit. The standard agreement is that **responder's bid of the fourth suit at the two level or higher is an artificial game-forcing bid**. So fourth suit is not technically a reverse, although there is a similarity in that both bids are forcing to game.

New Minor Forcing

Some partnerships play the 'new minor forcing' convention after opener's 1NT rebid.

OPENER	RESPONDER
1♦	1♥
1NT	?

If the partnership agreement is that 2♣ is forcing, we can't bid it with this hand. Instead, we'll have to settle for passing or rebidding 2♥. ♠

♠ 4
♥ Q J 7 6 2
♦ 9 2
♣ K J 9 4 3