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(35) Competitive Bidding: Reverses and Jump Shifts

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Level: Intermediate/Advanced

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General

When the opening bidder has a strong 2-suited (or 3-suited) unbalanced hand they have two ways to show it – either a jump shift or a reverse. When our longer suit is higher-ranking (or our suits are of equal length) we open our higher-ranking suit and make a jump shift. If our longer suit is lower-ranking we use a *Reverse* in order to show our values.

Jump Shifts

If we have 18+ points and a 2-suited unbalanced hand we will make a jump shift. If it is right to open our higher suit (using our “which suit to open” Rules) then we do so and follow-up by jumping in our second suit.

Jump Shift Auctions

1♠ 1N

3♣

1♠ 1N

3♦

1♠ 1N

3♥

1♥ 1♠/1N

3♣/3♦

1♦ 1♥/1♠/1N

3♣

These Jump Shift auctions generally show 5+c Major and 4+c minor. The more shape we have the fewer HCP we need to make a strong *Jump Shift*.



Note: There are also some strange jump shift auctions that happen at the 2-level, but we will discuss those at a later date.

Special Case Notes

- With 6331 distribution and a 6-card Major and a hand too strong to rebid 3M we make a Jump Shift into our 3-card minor.
- With a 4/1-4-4 we will often open 1♦ and Jump Shift into 3♣ when we have 18+ points. These large 4441 hands are very difficult to bid – the British call them the “Death Hand” for this reason.

Not Enough Values to Jump Shift

If we need 18+ points in order to make a Jump Shift then with 12-17 points and the same shape we make only a simple shift – bidding our second suit. This new suit by the Opening bidder limits Opener’s hand to 12-17 points and thus is non-forcing.

Reverses

If we have a strong 2-suited hand, but our primary suit (longest suit) is lower-ranking than our secondary suit (example 2-4-2-5) we open our primary suit and rebid our secondary suit. If this bid of the secondary suit is at the two-level then this is called a Reverse.

A Reverse shows at least 5-4 distribution (with our first-bid suit being longer than our second), 17+ points, and is forcing for 1-round. More specifically, it is forcing to 3-level (three of Opener’s first-bid suit.)

Examples – All the Reverse Auctions

1♣ 1♥/1♠/1N
2♦

1♣ 1♦/1♠/1N
2♥

1♣ 1♦/1♥/1N
2♠

1♦ 1♠/1N
2♥

1♦ 1♥/1N
2♠



1♥ 1N
2♠

Standard Bidding – More Bidding After a Reverse

After a Reverse in a 3-suited auction 1X-1Y-2Z, Responder's weakest action is to bid 3X. If Responder has a game-forcing hand they can bid 4th Suit Game Forcing.

If Responder rebids their suit at the 2-Level this is forcing for 1 Round and shows a good 5-card suit or a 6-card suit.

Example

1♦ 1♠
2♥ 2♠

Advanced Bidding – Lebensohl Over Reverses

For those that already play Lebensohl/Simplesohl over 1N this is another application of the 2N Relay.

We can adapt a different structure over our partner's (Opener's) Reverses: we use Lebensohl over Reverses. In this case all bids above 2N are natural and Game Forcing, while 2N is a relay to 3♣ to show a desire to end the auction at the 3-Level.

1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ -

2N -> 3♣	5-7 points, usually hoping to land in a reasonable part-score
3♣	4 th Suit Game Forcing (wants to know more about Partner's hand), (7+) 8+ pts.
3♦	3+c♦, Game Forcing, 8+ points (good 7 points)
3♥	4+c♥, Game Forcing, 8+ points (good 7 points)
3♠	6+c♠, Game Forcing, 8+ points (good 7 points)