

## The Reverse

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A reverse is defined as an unforced rebid at the level of two (or more) in a higher ranking suit than bid originally. Now as partner will have to go to the three level to give preference to your 1<sup>st</sup> suit, you obviously need a strong hand. 17+ points is the norm. Also, a reverse *guarantees* more cards in the 1<sup>st</sup> bid suit. Let's have a few examples (and check that you would bid them as I suggest), in all cases you play a strong NT and 5 card major system: -

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4	Hand 5	Hand 6
♠ Q7	♠ 2	♠ A	♠ -	♠ AQ	♠ A
♥ KQ87	♥ AK864	♥ AQ74	♥ K765	♥ KJ75	♥ AKJ4
♦ A10964	♦ AKJ74	♦ AQJ763	♦ K765	♦ K9875	♦ AKQ964
♣ Q4	♣ K9	♣ J5	♣ AQ954	♣ KJ	♣ 105

1. Open 1♦. If partner responds with a black suit or 1NT, do not bid 2♥. That would be a reverse, advertising values that you do not have. Pass 1NT, over 1♠ bid 1NT and over 2♣ bid 2♦.
2. This time you have values for the reverse, but it is incorrect as opening 1♦ and rebidding 2♥ *promises* more ♦'s than ♥'s. Correct is to open 1♥ and then jump to 3♦.
3. A classic reverse. Open 1♦ and rebid 2♥ over 1♠, 1NT or 2♣.
4. Here is where I disagree with many people. I open 1♣ and then support a red suit and bid 2♣ over 1♠. Over 1NT it's not so easy, but 2♣ is still best. Insufficient values to reverse.
5. You have the values for a reverse, but with the high cards outside the long suits, I prefer a (strong) 1NT opening. Two doubletons, but that's where the points are.
6. This is tricky. It is really too strong for a 1♦ opening. If you play strong two's or Benjamin twos, then fine. Otherwise it has to be a 2♣ opener (also fine). A 2NT opener is out with two short suits and the hand has too much playing strength.

So, got the hang of it? When I was explaining the reverse to one of my students we came up with a definition of bidding a suit that partner has denied (bypassed) – that's another way of defining the reverse.

### Is a reverse forcing? And if so, for one bid or one round or to game?

Not everybody agrees upon this and we really need some examples: -

- (a) 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥
- (b) 1♦ - 2♣ - 2♥
- (c) 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♣

(a) 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥

This is a simple reverse and some people do indeed play that it is non-forcing. But 'standard' is that it is forcing and so we'll go along with that; but let's consider the continuations.

- (i) 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 2♠ This 2♠ bid is weak, generally a 6-card suit, with no game ambitions. Opener should generally pass unless very strong.
- (ii) 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 3♦ This is responder's other weak option. It is simple preference back to opener's 1<sup>st</sup> suit and in no way implies strength or support.
- (iii) 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 3♣ This is 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing, asking for a ♣ stop for 3NT. Game forcing
- (iv) 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 3♥/♠ Any other suit at the 3 level (so 3♥/♠ in this situation) is (game) forcing.
- (v) 1♦ - 1♠ - 2♥ - 2NT This one is up to partnership understanding. Traditionally it promises a ♣ stop with insufficient values to insist upon game.

But consider this hand: ♠Q643 ♥43 ♦3 ♣KJ9876; you correctly responded 1♠ and now you want to play in 3♣. But 3♣ is forcing (whether you play it as 4<sup>th</sup> suit or natural) and the way round this problem is to play Lebensohl after partner's reverse.

Now let's consider opener's options after responder has shown a weak hand.

In sequence (i) if opener bids 2NT then it's non-forcing, I would play 3♠ as invitational and any other bid as forcing.

In sequence (ii), I again play 3♠ as invitational and any other bid forcing.

(b) 1♦ - 2♣ - 2♥

This is simple. Partner has bid at the two level and so a reverse has to be game forcing. But there is a twist if you play a strong NT or two-over-one. Playing 2/1 the 2♣ bid is game forcing and many players play that a reverse does not necessarily show extra values.

(c) 1♦ - 1♠ - 3♣

This is called a high reverse (rebid at the three level) and is again game forcing.

### **Lebensohl after partner's reverse.**

Hand 7 I mentioned this above but here is a much better example. Partner opens 1♣ and you respond 1♥ and partner then reverses into 2♠. You don't like either of his suits and simply want to bid a non-forcing 3♥, but 3♥ would be forcing. The solution here is to play Lebensohl after partner's reverse. Playing this treatment, you bid 2NT which requests that partner bids 3♣ (automatic puppet) and you then bid 3♥ – non-forcing.

### **Reverses by Responder**

Hand 8 A reverse by responder is forcing and probably best played as game forcing. With Hand 8 partner opens 1♣ and you respond 1♦. Partner rebids 2♣ and your best bid is 2♥, showing a powerful red two-suiter. If partner has a ♠ stop then he will bid 3NT; otherwise 5♣ or 5♦ may be there.

♠ 7  
♥ KQ87  
♦ AKJ642  
♣ 94