



April (Fools) 2006 BridgeHands Newsletter

Reverse Bidding, Part II - Responder Rebids

April 2006

Dear *BridgeHands* Friends,

Continuing the saga of reverse bidding, this month we will turn our attention to the meaty topic of responder's rebids. Responder's hands can be subdivided into one of five hand patterns, two supporting opener's first or second bid suits, two based on one or two-suited hands, the last expressing a balanced hand. Regarding strength, responder's hand falls in one of three types: minimum, game signoff, slam interest. Using this framework, we will develop appropriate responses to opener's reverses including the addition of the Lebensohl conventional rebid.

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Unauthorized Information, specifically hesitations and a break in tempo lead to frequent appeals at ACBL national tourneys and the Fall 2005 Denver NABC was no exception. Yet this month we will focus on a different issue – misinformation, an issue that also pops up with some regularity in Duplicate Bridge.

Are you looking for an extra edge to literally see through your opponents' cards? Then our April issue has just the device for you! [Step up and be the first at your table to sport your very own xray vision glasses at the table!](#) Better yet, using this approach you do not have to read any Bridge book (Right Through The Pack). Okay, we were just pulling your leg – April Fools! We hope you enjoyed our well-meaning prank.

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Reverse Rebidding – What should I do next?

Reverse Rebidding – Before getting into the nitty-gritty of responder's rebids, let's recap lessons learned from last month's study of opener's reverse.

A. Opener's rebid breaks the 2-level barrier in a higher ranking suit than their initial 1-level opening bid. Since responder cannot support opener's suit bids at the 2 level, opener promises 17+ distributional points (5 Losing Trick Count for those who prefer Modern Losing Trick Count evaluation).

B. Opener's rebid suit guarantees a longer first suit than the second suit bid (excepting a difficult 1=4=4=4 or lopsided 6-3-3-1 shapes); 5-5 suits should not be reversed.

C. Opener's rebid suit is typically 1 card shorter than the initial suit (excepting 5-3-3-2 hands with a worthless doubleton).

D. Most partners play opener's reverse is one round forcing, always promising a rebid.

To begin, responder's hands can be subdivided into one of five hand patterns:

- Fit with opener

1. Responder has 3 or 4 card support of opener's first suit
2. Responder has 4 card support of opener's second suit

- No fit with opener

3. Responder has a two-suited hand in the remaining suits (misfit)
4. Responder has a one-suited hand
5. Responder has a balanced hand.

Additionally, the responder's strength may be categorized as:

- a. Minimum, perhaps 5-7 points or a tad more with "quackers" – Queens and Jacks (secondary honors).
- b. Game signoff, hands with 8-12 useful points.
- c. Slam-interest, typically 13+ working points.

Let's say opener reverses and you hold:

1C – 1S;

2D - ?

i. **K J 3 2 J 3 2 J 3 2 4 3 2**

ii. **K Q 3 2 K 3 2 J 3 2 4 3 2**

iii. **A Q 3 2 2 K 10 9 Q J 4 3 2**

On the first hand, responder would prefer to signoff with soft values and no ruffing power. On the second hand, a Notrump game should be a safe bet and on the third hand, a Club slam should be a strong consideration. Okay, let's start with with the first hand.

Rebids with a minimum hand:

Naturally, responder's suit rebid shows a 5+ card suit and may show a weak hand. Since opener's reverse promises a rebid, responder has no obligation to take "captaincy" to show extra values on rebid. Yet on the first hand above, responder is not in position to rebid and must struggle to find a discouraging bid. Lacking the 5 card suit:

Responder's signoff bid is the cheaper of:

- a. Fourth suit, artificial
- b. Notrump, also artificial

Incidentally, this is a common approach endorsed by professionals following the "Bridge World Standard" (After a one-level new-suit response and opener's rebid-promising reverse, any rebid by responder is forcing to game except two of his original suit and the cheaper of a fourth-suit bid and two notrump.)

We have a two-fold benefit to this approach:

1. Low level bidding is efficient, preserving bidding space.
2. Avoiding Notrump by responder permits opener to make a balancing Notrump call.

On our first problem hand, responder's rebid 2H since bidding the fourth suit is the cheapest bid in this auction. Forewarned, opener's options after responder's signoff attempt include:

2S (3 of responder's major suit) – Showing 3 card support and minimum reverse values (17-18 HCP).

2N - Showing a minimum reverse (17-18 HCP) with a stopper in the fourth suit.

3N – Promising game values (19-21 HCP) with a stopper in the fourth suit.

3C (3 of opener's first suit) – Usually shows a 6 card suit with 4 in rebid suit, lacking a stopper in responder's artificial fourth suit. See discussion for Lebensohl conventional treatment later in this lesson.

3S (3 of responder's major suit) – Showing 3 card support and extra reverse values (19-21 HCP).

3D (3 of opener's rebid suit) – showing a 6-5 hand with minimum reverse.

3H (3 of the fourth suit) – forcing with extras, ostensibly with a half-stopper asking responder to bid 3 Notrump with a partial or full stopper.

4C (4 of opener's first suit – showing a 6-4 maximum hand, non-forcing).

4D (4 of opener's rebid suit – showing a 6-5 maximum hand, non-forcing).

When responder's cheapest bid is 2 Notrump instead of the fourth suit, opener's rebids are slightly different:

1C – 1S;
2H – 2N;

With a balanced minimum reverse (17-18 HCP), opener typically rebids initial suit (5 or 6 cards), allowing responder to either pass or continue bidding to find game. In situations where Notrump is not appropriate, the partnership might even settle for partscore in opener or responder's second suit with a reasonable fit. Remember, responder's 2 Notrump "cheapest rebid" call is artificial and does not promise a stopper. With 19-21 HCP, opener may either signoff in 3 Notrump or bid fourth suit forcing to probe responder for a partial stopper.

Rebids with a medium hand:

Let's revisit our prior sequence when responder has 8-12 points.

1C – 1S;
2D - ?

- i. K J 3 2 3 2 K 10 9 Q 4 3 2
- ii. A K 3 2 Q 3 2 Q J 3 2 3 2
- iii. K Q 3 2 K 3 2 J 3 2 4 3 2
- iv. K J 3 2 2 K 10 9 Q 5 4 3 2

Recalling the cheapest of fourth suit or Notrump shows a weak hand. On this bidding sequence and with game going values, we do not want to signoff in partscore. Thus, responder shows extra values, rebidding:

- a. 3 level of opener's first bid suit – game forcing (first hand)
- b. 3 level of opener's second bid suit – game forcing (second hand)
- c. Notrump with a stopper in fourth suit (third hand)
- d. 4 level jump in opener's first bid suit, showing slam interest. While this hand has the same honors as the first, responder is very excited to have little wasted values with a singleton in the fourth suit and great trump support.

Rebids when responder can support opener's second suit:

Now we will examine hands where responder can support opener's second suit, particularly a major suit where game requires only a 4 level contract.

**1C – 1S;
2H - ?**

i. K J 4 3 2 5 4 3 2 Q 2 3 2

Game looks unlikely so responder begins with a signoff request, 2 Notrump here, planning to rebid 3H; opener then passes with 17-18 working points.

**ii. Q 5 4 3 2 A Q 3 2 3 2 3 2
iii. K Q 4 3 2 K Q 3 2 J 3 2 2**

Responder can immediately rebid 3H and 4H respectively. If you play "slow shows – fast denies", perhaps you considered exchanging these bids. True, the third hand has extras, however the nice hand is somewhat flawed, missing first round controls and shortage in opener's long suit.

iv. A K J 3 2 A 4 3 2 2 Q 3 2

Finally, we have all the requirements to explore slam, appreciating our three rounds of control in the majors. This time we begin with 3H, allowing opener to cuebid controls, ala our "slow-shows" approach. Even if opener is ready to signoff in 4H, responder can initiate Blackwood slam asking sequence.

Rebids when responder can support opener's second suit:

Not surprisingly, when opener has a two-suited hand (reverse bidding), responder often has complementary length in the remaining suits.

1C – 1S;
2D - ?

i. K J 4 3 2 Q 5 4 3 2 3 2 2

As we've already learned, we begin a signoff by bidding the cheaper of the fourth suit or 2 Notrump. Coincidentally, the fourth suit happens to be our secondary suit, but this is our initiation of the signoff sequence. Assuming opener accepts the signoff request and bids 2 Notrump, responder may now rebid 3H, showing a true two-suited hand and asking opener to pick the best major.

ii. K J 10 3 2 K Q 4 3 2 3 2 2

With game going values on the second hand rebid 3H straight away, definitely a game forcing auction.

iii. A K 4 3 2 A Q 4 3 2 3 2 2

With 3 outstanding controls, responder has visions of a slam. Yet until opener shows a fit with responder, care should be exercised bidding 6 Notrump if the partnership has a misfit.

Responder has a one-suited hand

After opener's reverse, one-suited hands include 6+ carders and 5 card suits (5-4-2-2, 5-4-3-1, and 5-3-3-2) lacking a stopper in the fourth suit:

1C – 1S;
2D - ?

i. K Q 5 4 3 2 J 3 2 3 2 3 2

This hand certainly qualifies as a one-suiter; with a weak 5-7 HCP hand, we can simply rebid our major, 2S

ii. K J 4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 2 Q 2

Begin the "cheapest rebid" sequence by bidding 2H, attempting to signoff.

iii. K J 10 3 2 K 3 2 4 3 2 3 2

With a stopper in the fourth suit and game going values, 2 Notrump is our best rebid anticipating 3 Notrump from partner; jumping to 3 Notrump straight away would show close to an opening hand with slam interest.

iv. A Q 5 4 3 2 3 2 4 3 2 3 2

Here we hold a fine 6 card major suited hand and can jump to 3 of the major, 3S here. A sound criterion for jumping is a 5 card suit with an abundance of top honors (3 of 4) or a 6+ card suit with at least Ace and Queen. Incidentally, responder's jump is forcing so it's best not to make yourself unpopular with partner by unilaterally jumping to 4S – reserve the major game jump call for the next hand.

v. A K Q J 4 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2

Responder's game jump should show a super-solid 6+ card running suit with strong interest in slam, such as fifth hand.

vi. K J 10 9 3 2 4 3 2 K J 2 2

Show your broken 6+ card major with 2 losers by rebidding your major suit, planning a game jump on your third bid.

vi. K 10 9 3 2 4 3 2 K J 2 2

Some players use a fancy gadget to differentiate a 2 loser major with a 6+ carder from a "moth eaten" suit like this one. They do this by beginning our familiar signoff sequence (cheaper of fourth suit or 2 Notrump), followed up by a surprising 3 level rebid of the major suit. Tricky - save this advanced treatment for your seasoned partners!

Responder has a balanced hand

**1C – 1S;
2D - ?**

i. K J 4 3 2 J 4 3 2 J 2 3 2

As expected, responder tries a signoff bidding 2H.

ii. K J 4 3 2 K 3 2 3 2 4 3 2

Holding 8-10 HCP or a good 7 pointer with 2 controls, respond 2 Notrump in preparation for a 3 Notrump game.

iii. K Q 4 3 2 K J 2 Q 3 2 3 2

Responder jumps to 3 Notrump promising 11-13 HCP.

iv. A Q 10 3 2 K 3 2 K 3 2 Q 2

Finally, we actually begin with 2 Notrump; after partner's 3 Notrump rebid, we continue with 4 Notrump to show our 14-15 HCP hand (most play non-forcing quantitative); if you are familiar with Good-Bad 2 Notrump sequences, this will look familiar.

Lebensohl at last! While the above approach is completely workable, some prefer gadgets to differentiate signoff and game going hands. For those diehard Lebensohl lovers, it's time to discuss Lebensohl over openers reverse (technically Ingberman with a slight twist). If you are not familiar with Lebensohl, advocates also enjoy this versatile convention when opponents' overcall partner's 1 Notrump opening bid as well as over opponents' preemptive weak two opening bid followed by responses to partner's double. Let's explore Lebensohl after a reverse using some of the auctions earlier in this lesson:

**1C – 1S;
2H - ?**

i. **K J 4 3 2 5 4 3 2 Q 2 3 2**
ii. **Q 5 4 3 2 A Q 3 2 3 2 3 2**

With the first hand, responder seeks to signoff in partscore; on the second hand, responder envisions a Notrump game. To signoff, responder makes an artificial 2 Notrump call (below see exception after opener's 2D rebid). Bidding 2 Notrump requests opener to "transfer" to 3C – of course, with 19-22 points opener is free to ignore the request. Opener normally obeys by bidding 3C, allowing responder to either pass with support or rebid 3 of a previously bid suit. These auctions might go:

First	Second
1C – 1S;	1C – 1S;
2H – 2N;	2H – 3H;
3C – 3H;	4H – AP;

Since we are short on space, let's recap showing a few more constructive auctions where responder shows interest in game or slam:

1C – 1S;	1C – 1S;	1D – 1S;
2H – 3C;	2H – 2S*;	2H – 3D;

* Some confuse responder's suit rebid as a signoff, but using the cheaper of fourth suit forcing or 2 Notrump, a suit rebid is game forcing.

Okay, we've avoided opener's 2D rebid long enough, so let's tackle the exception to the rule. When opener begins with 1C and reverses with 2D, it's clear opener is minor suit bound. Playing Lebensohl in this auction, responder bids fourth suit (instead of 2 Notrump) to begin a Lebensohl signoff sequence! Here are the two Lebensohl signoff examples after opener's 2D reverse rebids with signoff and forcing responder rebids:

Signoff	Signoff	Forcing	Forcing
1C – 1H;	1C – 1S;	1C – 1H;	1C – 1S;
2D – 2S;	2D – 2H;	2D – 2N;	2D –
2N			

You may ask, what's the big deal here – why not continue to use Lebensohl's 2 Notrump conventional treatment? Actually, we have several reasons to make the exception worth the effort for opener to declare Notrump:

1. The opening lead comes around to the 17+ point opener's hand.
2. The stronger hand is not exposed, making it harder to defend.
3. When opener is top heavy in the minors with a strong hand and long minors, the auction is often headed for 3 Notrump.

For those who would prefer not to play the fourth suit Lebensohl treatment (Tim Bourke called this "Modified Blackout") after opener's 2D reverse rebid, we have just the convention for you. The Ingberman convention (Tim Bourke's original "Blackout") works just like Lebensohl but does not include this treatment! So if your partner wants to play Lebensohl after reverses but always uses 2 Notrump as a signoff, technically they are referring to Ingberman, not Lebensohl.

Whew, that was quite a lot to cover – hopefully now you are well versed on responses after opener's reverses. If you would like to research legacy and modern treatments further, please see:

[More Points Schmoints \(pg 91\)](#)

[Kantar Lessons # 64](#) and ACBL Bulletin (Nov-Dec 1999 and May-Jun 2000)

[The Lebensohl Convention Complete \(pg 79\)](#)

[Standard Bridge Bidding for the 21st Century \(pg 93\)](#)

[25 More Bridge Conventions You Should Know \(pg 91\)](#)

[Bridge Conventions In Depth \(pg 21\)](#)

[Modern Bridge Conventions \(pg 45\)](#)

[OKBridge Spectator](#) Vol. 6, No. 5 (2/03) & 12 (9/03).



Marty Bergen speaks

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More Points Schmoints! Pages 91-93

Truth About Reverses

No topic causes as much anxiety as the reverse. It may not be anyone's favorite, but it cannot be ignored. There is nothing wrong with hoping/praying that reverses do not occur, but all players need a basic understanding of the concept. Besides, what is so bad about having a good hand?

Question: why didn't you write about reverses in Points Schmoints?

Answer: I was trying to avoid this very complex topic. However, after receiving so many questions about the reverse in the last few years, I felt that my students deserved an answer.

Question: How strong a hand does opener need to reverse?

Answer: With five-four distribution, opener should have at least 17 HCP. With six-four or six-five, he can have less. Here are examples of minimum, but acceptable, reverses.

West	North	East	South
1C	P	1S	P
2H			

K 6	A Q 7 6	8 5	A K J 6 5
8	K 9 5 3	K 5	A K Q 8 7 4
7	A K 7 3 2	8	A Q 10 9 6 5

Question: what about five-five distribution?

Answer; Never reverse with a five-five. The reverse guarantees that your first bid suit is longer than your second.

Question: Can opener reverse at the one level?

Answer: No, one-level bidding is just up the line.

Question: How can I recognize opener's reverse?

Answer: He must have bid a new suit at the two level-without jumping-which was higher ranking than the first suit he bid first.

Question: Does opener promise a rebid after his reverse?

Answer: Absolutely, unless responder has jumped to a game himself.

Question: If responder has bid at the two level, does anything change?

Answer: Yes. Opener does not need as big a hand to reverse.

Question: Are reverses still on in competition?

Answer: Yes. The 2H bid in the following auctions still shows a big hand:

West	North	East	South
1D	P	1S	2C
2H			

Question: Are reverses forcing to game?

Answer: No, but they are forcing for one round.

Question: Can you give me an example of a good reverse auction?

Answer: Here you go.

	North	South	
4	1D	1S	A J 6 5 3 2
A K 10 5	2H	2S	8 2
A K J 9 3 2	3D	3N	Q 4
9 8	P	P	K 7 5

North had only 15 HCP, but look at those two beautiful suits. That is a promotable hand if ever I saw one.

After North's reverse, South knew that his side had the values for game. However, he was in no hurry because opener had to take another bid. South used excellent judgment with his economical 2S bid. Had he bid 3S, North would have been forced to bid 4D and miss the cold Notrump game. This was

a well- judged auction by both players.

	North	
	4	
	A K 10 5	
	A K J 9 6 3	
	9 8	
Q 8 7		K 10 9
9 7		Q J 6 4 3
8 7 5		10 2
A 10 6 3 2		Q J 4
	A J 6 5 3 2	
	8 2	
	Q 4	
	K 7 5	

After winning the opening club lead, South had no trouble taking 10 tricks. No other game would have made.

Question: What else should I know about reverses?

Answer: Auctions that are forcing for one round, but not necessarily game forcing, are tricky. Even experts sometimes find themselves on shaky ground after a reverse. Opening 2 Notrump with ...

A Q K Q J 5 K J 7 6 5 K J

... to avoid a reverse auction after 1D by you, 1S by partner, definitely does not make you a coward in my book.

Denver ACBL, Fall NABC: Appeals

Tourney: Denver, Fall ACBL NABC

Blue Ribbon Pairs, first day, second session

Subject: Misinformation

Appeals: Case 5

J 9 8 5
Q J 9 5 3
K
A K J
K 7 A Q 4 2
10 7 6 4 2 A 8
J 8 4 A 7 3 2
Q 9 8 7 5 3
10 6 3
K
Q 10 9 6 5
10 6 4 2

W	N	E	S	
		1N	P	Announced 14-16
P	2C*	P	2D	*Capp=weak & Suction=strong,
2H	AP			(Explained 2C as "one-suited")

At the table, West went down two, 200 for N/S. The Director was called and found N/S did not have an agreement whether opponents' 14-16 Notrump was weak or strong; the Director let the result stand with E/W appealing the decision.

At the appeal, West claimed bidding 2H was a logical alternative based on South's explanation – it would be highly unlikely North had six Hearts to justify the supposed one-suited call.

The appeals committee determined N/S agreed to play Suction over opponents' 14-16 Notrump, thus West was given misinformation (*BridgeHands* note – after play, North should reveal this fact). Interestingly, North pre-alerted their Suction agreement before they began play.

Regardless of the pre-alert, the appeals committee found South's "at the table" misinformation (one-suited hand) relevant, thus damaging West. With no other result deemed probable had South not provided misinformation, E/W would go down two for 200. The committee reversed the Director's ruling, 200 for E/W and -200 for N/S.

When you have a moment, drop by *BridgeHands* and review the recently released [Appeals articles](#).

BridgeHands Archive

If you missed a back issue of a ***BridgeHands*** Intermediate-Advanced eMag newsletters, here are the links:

[Issue 0 - Finesses](#)

[Issue 1 - Forcing Pass](#)

[Issue 2 - Leads on Notrump Doubled contracts](#)

[Issue 3- Opener Reverses](#)

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Sincerely,

BridgeHands



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