

## Reverses – 29219V9Я

### Definition:

- ▶ Any non-jump rebid in an unbid suit that forces partner, if he wishes to choose your first suit, to do so at a higher level than if you had simply rebid your first suit (e.g. 1C-1S; 2H – or- 1C-1N; 2H)
- ▶ Usually at 2 level, but can be higher if:
  - ◆ In competition (e.g. 1C-(1H)-1S-(2H); 3D)
  - ◆ In 2/1 auctions playing standard (not 2/1 Game Force (GF))
  - ◆ Note: It cannot be at the one level
- ▶ Reverses are usually by opener. Responder can also reverse, but it is relatively rare.

**NOTE:** There is no such thing as “I don’t play reverses.” Since it forces you up a level, it must show extra values.

### What it shows- HISTORY:

- ▶ It used to show a game force. You can still play it this way, but it was found to be too restrictive – there were too many hands that had no convenient bid if the reverse were a GF.

### What it shows – MODERN TREATMENT:

- ▶ At least a game invitational hand opposite partner’s 1-level response
  - ◆ 6 or fewer losers if unbalanced (i.e. based on distribution)
  - ◆ 16+ HCP if 2 doubletons (Rare except for 4 spades & 5 hearts – else most open 1N or rebid 2N)
- ▶ The first bid suit is ALWAYS longer than the second suit (e.g. 1C-1S; 2H has longer clubs than hearts)
  - ◆ **NOTE:** This is the standard agreement & what I recommend– you can have other agreements with partner – but you’d better have agreed follow-ups to discover that this is not the case
  - ◆ Do NOT “manufacture” a reverse with 5-5 distribution
    - With 5-5, you may have to decide between a simple rebid & a jump shift when neither is ideal – but partner will not get your distribution right if you reverse
  - ◆ You can reverse into a 3-card suit– but that should be your last choice if you have any alternatives
    - Typically done when you have either or both of:
      - A good suit that’s too good for a jump rebid
      - The values to jump raise partner but only 3 card support
    - You’d better have a plan to convince partner that’s what you’ve done later in the auction
- ▶ It is ABSOLUTELY FORCING for one round
- ▶ It is “on” in competition

► **Examples:**

- ♦ 1C-1S; **2H**
  - ♠AKx, ♥KQxx, ♦x, ♣KQJ109 -or- ♠x, ♥KQ10x, ♦Kxx, ♣AKJxx
- ♦ 1H-1N; **2S**
  - ♠AK10x, ♥KQxxx, ♦Axx, ♣x (partner doesn't have 4 spades, but what else can you do? Hope partner can rebid NT). Note: if you play Flannery & bypass a 4-card major over 1 heart, you really might have a spade fit.
  - ♠AK10xx, ♥KQxxxx, ♦Ax, ♣--
  - ♠AQxxx, ♥AQxxxx, ♦x, ♣x (not many points but great playing strength)
    - Most (not all!!) 6-5 hands that are good enough to open qualify for a reverse based on loser count
- ♦ 1S-2H; **3D** (Definitely shows extras if not playing 2/1 GF – discuss with partner if playing 2/1 GF)
  - ♠AQJ10x, ♥x, ♦KJ10xx, ♣Ax
- ♦ 1D-2C; **2S** (Definitely shows extras if not playing 2/1 GF - almost never if playing 2/1 GF)
  - ♠KQ10x, ♥Axx, ♦AQJ10x, ♣x
  - If playing 2/1 GF, can simply be ♠KJ10x, ♥xxx, ♦AQJ10x, ♣x
- ♦ Reverse into 3 card minor: 1C-1S: **2D**
  - ♠Kxx, ♥x, ♦AKx, ♣AQJxxx (There's really no better choice here. 3C & 2S are underbids, you only have 3 spades so you don't know if that's the best spot, and NT is insane)
- ♦ With Interference: 1C-(1H)-1S-(P); **2D** or 1C-(1H)-1S-(2H); **3D**
  - ♠xx, ♥xx, ♦AKxx, ♣AKQxx
- ♦ Reverse by responder:
  - Example: 1C-1H; 1N-**2S** (or 1C-1H; 2C-**2S**)
    - ♠KQJxx, ♥AQxxxx, ♦x, ♣x ; **Note:** This must be distributional as partner doesn't have 4 spades
  - Reverses by responder are only possible if opener rebids 1N or 2 of the original suit.
    - After any other rebid it would be 4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing
    - The reverse must be into a major. If it is a minor, it is New Minor Forcing, not a reverse
  - Responder's reverse is game forcing.

► **Examples of bids that are not Reverses:**

- ♦ 1D-1S; **2C** does not force to higher level (can still bid diamonds at 2 level)
- ♦ 1D-(1S)-\*(P); **2H** is essentially a raise of partner's promised heart suit
  - But 1C-(1S)-\*(P); **2D** may or may not be reverse – need to discuss with partner
- ♦ 1C-(P)-1S-(2D); **2H** is not a reverse. It is actually the cheapest bid you can make.
  - Note that if you play support doubles, this is the only way that you can show hearts
  - Although not a reverse, it is a very good hand – you must be willing to play 3C opposite crap. Without some extras, pass.
- ♦ 1D-(1H)-P-(2H); **2S** is not a reverse, but it is distributional and has great playing strength (partner couldn't show spades over the 1H bid so is either weak or doesn't have 4 spades).

► **Examples of hands that should not reverse:**

- ♦ ♠xx, ♥KQ10x, ♦AJxxx, ♣Kx is not strong enough. After 1D-1S, bid 1N.
- ♦ ♠Kx, ♥AQxx, ♦AQ, ♣KJxxx: 2N is a better description than 2H after 1D-1S. Partner can always check back to find a heart fit.

## Responses to partner's reverse:

There are several options – you may hear Lebensohl, or Ingberman or something else. Don't worry about the name – sources differ on details of those conventions - just make sure you agree with partner on exactly what you play.

**The following applies when responder's first bid was a suit (not 1N) and the reverse is at the 2-level:**

**NOTE 1:** If you are playing "old-fashioned" reverses (i.e. absolute game force), this doesn't apply – just bid naturally.

**NOTE 2:** There are other options than the one listed below. This is what I play with most partners and is also "Bridge World Standard". I've briefly listed a couple of others at the end.

- ▶ Reverser guarantees another bid
- ▶ Cheapest of 4th suit and 2N is nominally weak (may pass reverser's next bid)
  - ◆ Weak auction examples: 1C-1S; 2D-2H – or - 1D-1S; 2H-2N
  - ◆ Advantages of 4th suit (when available, e.g. 1C-1S; 2D-2H)
    - You may be able to play 2N – and – may allow the strong hand to be declarer
    - Allows 2N to show stoppers in the unbid suit (& be game forcing)
    - If 4th suit is hearts (1C-1S; 2D-2H), reverser can show 3 card spade support at the 2-level (useful when responder is weak)
  - ◆ Bid this when worse than constructive (<8 points) with fewer than 6 cards in your major
    - Examples: ♠KJxx ♥Jxx ♦Jxx ♣xxx - or - ♠KJxxx ♥Jxx ♦Jxx ♣xx
      - With both hands, bid 2N over 1D-1S; 2H
      - With both hands, bid 2H over 1C-1S; 2D (with the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand you may get lucky and hear 2S from partner, which you will happily pass)
  - ◆ **Reverser Beware:** If partner makes a bid that indicates he/she might pass your next bid, and you have a game force, don't make a bid that can be passed below game! For example, after 1D-1S, 2H-2N:
    - After 1D-1S; 2H-2N with ♠xx ♥AK10x ♦AKJ10xxxx ♣\_\_ bid 4D
    - After 1D-1S; 2H-2N with ♠x ♥AK10xx ♦AKJ10xx ♣x bid 4H
    - After 1C-1S; 2D-2H with ♠Q, ♥AQx, ♦AJ10x, ♣KQJ10x bid 3N
- ▶ Rebid of 2 of your major is ambiguous (may be weak or not) & shows a 6+ card suit.
  - ◆ Example: After 1D-1S; 2H, bid 2S with ♠Qxxxxx, ♥xx, ♦Kx, ♣Jxx and pass partner's next bid
  - ◆ The reverser beware note above applies here as well.
- ▶ All other bids are game forcing:
  - ◆ Generally, fast arrival applies. Jump to game only when you are absolutely sure where you want to play the hand and have no slam interest. This will be extremely rare.
  - ◆ All examples below start with the auction 1D-1S; 2H
    1. Rebid a 6+ card major (priority 1 unless opener's 2<sup>nd</sup> suit is a major & you have 4 card support for it):
      - With a long, solid suit with little outside: jump to 4 of the major. This gives partner a complete picture of your hand (an exception to fast arrival): Bid 4S with ♠AKQxxxx, ♥xx, ♦xx, ♣xx
      - With a better hand & a good suit: bid only 3 of major to leave room to explore for slam:  
Bid 3S with ♠KQ10xxx, ♥xx, ♦Kx, ♣Axx
      - With a worse suit or a worse hand: bid only 2 of the major (not initially a game force – clarify later): Bid 2S with ♠J10xxxx, ♥Ax, ♦Kx, ♣Kxx then force to game after opener's rebid

2. Support reverser's second suit with 4+ card support:
  - With no slam interest: jump to 4 of opener's major: Bid 4H with ♠AQxxx, ♥Jxxx, ♦xx, ♣xx
  - With a better hand: bid only 3 of major to leave room to explore for slam:  
Bid 3H with ♠AQxxx, ♥K10xx, ♦Kx, ♣xx
  - With a better hand bid & shortness in the 4th suit: jump in 4th suit as a splinter:  
Bid 4C with ♠AQxxx, ♥K10xx, ♦Kxx, ♣x
    - **Exception:** 1C-1S; 2D-3H is natural, game forcing, and at least 5-5 in the majors
      - Reason: Need to be able to show a weak 5-5 major hand by bidding 2H (weak bid) and then bidding 3H (non-forcing) on next bid
3. Support reverser's first suit with 3+ cards in that suit:
  - BUT: with only 3 card support:
    - With 5 cards in your major, temporize with the 4<sup>th</sup> suit to allow reverser to show 3 card support
    - With stoppers in your major and the 4<sup>th</sup> suit, bid NT instead (if this is the weak bid, you have to correct the impression on the next bid)
  - With slam interest & great support, jump in opener's minor: Bid 4D with ♠Axxx, ♥x, ♦Q10xxx, ♣AJx
  - With no slam interest or normal (not super) support, bid only 3 so as not to bypass 3N (note that with normal support and slam interest, you can correct 3N to 4 of the minor to convey that message – you should be safe at 4N if reverser is not interested or control bidding indicates a problem):  
Bid 3D with ♠Axxx, ♥xx, ♦Kxxx, ♣Qxx
4. Bid NT with a semi-balanced hand and stoppers in both your own major & the 4<sup>th</sup> suit:
  - Bid 2N with ♠AQxxx, ♥J10x, ♦xx, ♣Kxx
    - Even though this is nominally weak, you want to leave room for partner to show 3 card spade support. Since partner promises another bid, you can correct the misimpression on your next bid.
    - Reverser's first priority is to show 3 card support for responder's major
  - Bid 3N with ♠KQxx, ♥xxx, ♦xx, ♣KJxx
    - This is RARE. Your major must be only 4 cards long and have good stoppers, you must have good stoppers in the unbid suit, and you must have no slam interest.
    - Some literature disagrees & suggests bidding 3N with specifically 11-13 HCP...your choice, but I think it takes up too much room.
5. When responder has values, but no stopper in the 4<sup>th</sup> suit, no 6-card suit of his/her own & no fit, bid the 4<sup>th</sup> suit waiting:
  - **NOTE:** Bidding the 4<sup>th</sup> suit does promise any values or length in that suit
  - Reverser's first priority is to show 3 card support for responder's major
  - Bid 3C with ♠AQxxx, ♥J10x, ♦Kx, ♣xxx (clearly GF as 2N is the weak bid)
  - Over 1C-1S, 2D bid 2H with AQxxx, xxx, Kxx, xx, (even though it is nominally weak, you have no idea what else to say – you will correct the impression by bidding game somewhere (hopefully partner's bid will indicate where) on your next bid.

- ▶ Other common options for responses to partner's reverse when responder's first bid was a suit (not 1N) and the reverse is at the 2-level:
  - ◆ Option 2:
    - 2N "forces" 3C and may be weak (may pass reverser's next bid)
      - Only forcing bid after 3C is 3 of responder's major which promises 5 or a bad 6 with a game force
    - Rebid of 2 of responder's major is weak & non-forcing (only bid that can be passed)
    - All other bids are game forcing (& most are similar to my preferred system)
  - ◆ Option 3:
    - Reverser promises another bid
    - 2N "forces" 3C and may be weak (may pass reverser's next bid)
      - All 3-level bids after 3C are non-forcing
    - All other bids are game forcing (& most are similar to my preferred system)

***The following options apply when responder's first bid was 1N:***

- ▶ Responder's weak bids (which can be passed) are:
  - ◆ 2N (e.g. 1D-1N; 2H-2N with ♠Kxx, ♥Jxx, ♦xxx, ♣Qxxx)
  - ◆ 3 of opener's first suit (e.g. 1D-1N; 2H-3D with ♠Kxx, ♥Jxx, ♦xxxxx, ♣Qx)
  - ◆ 3 of any suit ranking below opener's first suit (e.g. 1D-1N; 2H-3C with ♠Kx, ♥Jxx, ♦xx, ♣QJxxxxx)
- ▶ All other bids are game forcing

**Jump Reverses:**

A jump reverse is a splinter in support of responder's suit, not a natural bid. If a jump reverse is available below 3 of the suit, you can agree to play either:

- ▶ The 3-level bid is a mini-splinter (game invitational) and the 4-level bid is a game forcing splinter OR
- ▶ The 3-level bid is a game force & the 4-level bid is exclusion keycard OR
- ▶ The 3-level bid is a game force & the 4-level bid doesn't exist
- ▶ Sample auction: 1C-1H; 3D – since 2D is a reverse, this must be a splinter in support of hearts.
  - ◆ But...1C-1H; 2S is a jump shift showing a big hand with spades since 1S is not a reverse (3S would be a splinter)