



Bidding Basics

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Responder's rebid after opener's reverse

In the previous installment, as responder, we responded on the one level. Our partner, the opener, made his second bid on the two level, but he didn't show a strong hand (he didn't jumpshift or reverse). This episode, we are still responding on the one level, but opener is going to show a big hand. This month he will reverse. Oh, dear.

Review of "What is a Reverse?"

All aspiring players need to understand what a jumpshift by opener is and what a reverse by opener is and what is the difference. A jumpshift is where the opener not only changes suit, but skips a level. For example, $1\ \diamond-1\ \heartsuit; 2\ \spadesuit$ or $1\ \clubsuit-1\ \diamond; 2\ \heartsuit$ are jumpshift auctions because opener changed suit and skipped a level when he could have legally bid only $1\ \spadesuit$ or only $1\ \heartsuit$, respectively.

A reverse is opener's two-level bid (but not a jump) in a suit higher ranking than the suit he opened. That sentence needs to be read, re-read and digested. For example, $1\ \diamond-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit$: Opener's rebid was on the two level in a suit (hearts) higher-ranking than the suit opened (diamonds), but it was not a jump. $1\ \diamond-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \clubsuit$ is not a reverse because clubs are not higher ranking than diamonds.

We are not considering auctions where the response was on the two level, for example, $1\ \heartsuit-2\ \clubsuit; 2\ \spadesuit$. This is a 2-over-1 auction, where most players using the modern 2/1 GF system don't consider these higher-suit rebids by opener to promise strong hands. We are considering auctions only where

the opening and response were on the one level.

Opener's reverse shows a good hand, i.e., a minimum of a good 16 or 17 points counting useful distribution. It is forcing, but only for one round, not necessarily to game. Are your eyes glossing over? You have to read and reread the above to begin to understand it. Furthermore, you can't say you "don't play reverses." If opener produces one of the auctions below, like it or not, he has reversed. Here are the auctions we are considering:

$1\ \clubsuit-1\ \heartsuit; 2\ \diamond$
 $1\ \clubsuit-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \diamond$
 $1\ \clubsuit-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit$
 $1\ \diamond-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit$
 $1\ \clubsuit-1\text{NT}; 2\ \diamond/2\ \heartsuit/2\ \spadesuit$
 $1\ \diamond-1\text{NT}; 2\ \text{major}$
 $1\ \heartsuit-1\text{NT}; 2\ \spadesuit$

In each case, opener's rebid was on the two level in a suit higher-ranking than the suit he opened. Note that $1\ \diamond-1\ \heartsuit; 1\ \spadesuit$ is not a reverse because opener's rebid is not on the two level.

After opener reverses

What happens after a reverse? This is a tough area of bidding in that there is no "standard." It requires study and partnership agreement which is a lot to ask from readers of this series. I will explain here a simple (and also the most common) way to handle follow-ups to reverses. But it does take study!

If responder raises opener's suit(s), it is natural and forcing to game. Examples: $1\ \diamond-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit-3\ \diamond$ or $1\ \diamond-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit-3\ \heartsuit$.

If responder repeats his own suit it shows at least five cards and it is forcing one round. Examples: $1\ \clubsuit-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit-2\ \spadesuit$ or $1\ \clubsuit-1\ \heartsuit; 2\ \diamond-2\ \heartsuit$. If responder has a poor hand (up to about 7 points) and wants to maybe get out in a partscore, he bids either notrump or the fourth suit, whichever is cheaper. That last bit is a mouthful. After $1\ \diamond-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit$, which is cheaper: 2NT or 3♣? Yes, 2NT comes first on the bidding ladder, so that would be a way to say, "Partner, I am broke—and might pass your next bid."

Let's look at some examples of this difficult situation. After $1\ \clubsuit-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \diamond$ (a reverse, yes), bid $2\ \heartsuit$ with:

$\spadesuit Q J x x \quad \heartsuit Q x x \quad \diamond x x x \quad \clubsuit J x x$,

the fourth suit, to warn partner you plan to drop him if he doesn't jump to game. Bid $2\ \spadesuit$ with:

$\spadesuit A Q J x x \quad \heartsuit x x x \quad \diamond x x \quad \clubsuit x x x$,

forcing for now. Bid 2NT, natural and forcing, with:

$\spadesuit K J x x \quad \heartsuit K Q x \quad \diamond x x x \quad \clubsuit x x x$.

Bid $3\ \clubsuit$, a forcing raise, with:

$\spadesuit A x x x \quad \heartsuit x x \quad \diamond Q x x \quad \clubsuit K x x x$.

Bid $3\ \diamond$, a forcing raise, with:

$\spadesuit K Q x x \quad \heartsuit A x \quad \diamond A x x x \quad \clubsuit x x x$.

Bid $3\ \spadesuit$, natural and forcing, with:

$\spadesuit K Q J 10 x x \quad \heartsuit A x \quad \diamond x x \quad \clubsuit Q x x$.

Let's examine one more auction with examples. After: $1\ \diamond-1\ \spadesuit; 2\ \heartsuit$, let's see some follow-ups. Remember that a reverse is forcing one round, so passing is not an option.

Bid 2♠ (five-plus spades, forcing for now) with:

♠ K J 10 x x ♥ A x ♦ x x x ♣ A x x.

Bid 2NT, “artificial” with:

♠ J x x x ♥ Q x x ♦ Q J x ♣ x x x.

This is the cheaper of fourth suit or 2NT, and you can pass partner’s next bid. Bid 3♣ with:

♠ A x x x ♥ x x x ♦ x x ♣ A K x x

natural and forcing. Bid 3♦, a forcing raise, with:

♠ K Q x x ♥ A x ♦ K x x ♣ x x x x .

Bid 3♥, forcing, promising four, with:

♠ K J x x x ♥ A 10 x x ♦ K x ♣ x x.

Bid 3♠, forcing with a good six-plus card suit, with:

♠ K Q J 10 x x ♥ A x ♦ x x ♣ x x x.

Bid 3NT, natural, with:

♠ Q J 10 x ♥ Q x x ♦ J x ♣ Q J 10 x.

Writing about this reminds me of what my friend Marty Bergen says: “You should pray that when you play or teach bridge that reverses don’t come up.”

Bidding Basics Quiz on pg. 57

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

What is responder's rebid after

1♣-1♠; 2♦ with:

1. ♠J 6 5 3 ♥J 4 3 ♦J 9 8 ♣K 3 2
2. ♠A Q J 10 9 7 2 ♥K 2 ♦Q ♣Q 7 6

What is responder's rebid after

1♣-1♠; 2♥ with:

3. ♠K Q 7 6 5 ♥5 4 ♦J 7 6 ♣8 6 5
4. ♠A K 5 4 ♥A 5 3 ♦Q 4 3 ♣K 9 7

What is responder's rebid after

1♦-1♠; 2♥ with:

5. ♠K J 8 7 3 ♥A K 7 6 ♦9 2 ♣K 5
6. ♠K 10 7 6 ♥A K 2 ♦K J 2 ♣4 3 2

What is responder's rebid after

1♣-1♥; 2♦ with:

7. ♠K 3 2 ♥Q J 9 8 7 ♦K 7 6 ♣3 2
8. ♠6 5 4 ♥A K 10 6 ♦A 2 ♣Q J 10 2

Answers

1. 2♥. Cheaper of fourth suit or 2NT, as a prelude to passing opener's next bid.
2. 3♠. Natural, good six-card or longer suit, forcing.
3. 2♠. Natural, five or more spades, one round force.
4. 3♣. Set clubs as trump (partner has at least five) and soon head towards slam.
5. 3♥. Natural, four hearts, forcing.
6. 3♦. Support partner's known long suit. Forcing.
7. 2♥. Same concept as No. 3.
8. 3♣. Same concept as No. 6.