



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(35) Reverses and Jump Shifts

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Level: 1

Robert S. Todd

robert@advinbridge.com

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* to show our values.

Jump Shifts

If we have 18+ points and a 2-suited unbalanced hand, we 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♠ 1NT

3♣

1♥ 1♠/1NT

3♣/3♦

1♠ 1NT

3♦

1♦ 1♥/1♠/1NT

3♣

1♠ 1NT

3♥

These jump shift auctions generally show a 5+c Major and a 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 later.

Special Case Notes

info@advinbridge.com

PO Box 14915 ♠ Tallahassee, FL 32317
850 570 6459

- With 6331 distribution, 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 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 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 2-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 the 3-level (three of Opener’s first-bid suit.)

Reverse Auctions

1♣	1♥/1♠/1NT	1♦	1♠/1NT
2♦		2♥	
1♣	1♦/1♠/1NT	1♦	1♥/1NT
2♥		2♠	
1♣	1♦/1♥/1NT	1♥	1NT
2♠		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 own suit at the 2-level, it 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 who already play Lebensohl/Simplesohl over 1NT, this is another application of the 2NT 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 2NT are natural and game-forcing, while 2NT is a relay to 3♣ to show a desire to end the auction at the 3-level.

1♦ 1♠
2♥ __?

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

Conclusion

Hands that contain both a lot of HCP and a lot of distribution are often difficult to describe to partner without getting the auction too high. Knowing how to handle the "tricky ones" and having some agreements with partner can help put you ahead of the game when these fun hands come up. Do some work with partner and make sure you both have the same understanding of what is going on in these auctions.