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# Play & Learn

## Moving forward after opener reverses — part 2

In the past two months, we've been looking at opener's reverse defined as a rebid in a new suit that ranks higher than two of opener's first suit. Here's an example:

West	East
1♣	1♠
2♦	?

Opener's reverse shows two things: an unbalanced hand with more cards in the first suit than in the second suit and more than minimum strength — the general agreement is at least 17 points. Opener's hand in the above auction could be either of these two hands:

♠A ♥72 ♦AKJ7 ♣AQJ964  
 ♠K32 ♥6 ♦KQJ7 ♣AKJ64.

Because opener might reverse with a maximum hand, a reverse is a forcing bid. Last month, we saw that responder can use a 2NT rebid as a denial bid to show a hand that does not want to reach game opposite a minimal reverse. In the above auction, East can rebid 2NT with up to a bad 8 points. Over 2NT, opener's rebid of 3♣ (his first-bid suit) allows the pair to stop below game. Any other rebid by opener forces to game.

With a good 8 or more points, responder does not rebid 2NT after opener's reverse. Using the auction above, how would responder (East) rebid after West's 2♦ reverse with each hand shown below?

1. ♠K743 ♥532 ♦Q742 ♣J4
2. ♠AK73 ♥532 ♦QJ72 ♣64
3. ♠KQ632 ♥K52 ♦Q74 ♣53
4. ♠KQ632 ♥J52 ♦743 ♣65

With No. 1, you have a diamond fit because you expect opener to have four cards in his second suit. You must first use the negative 2NT warning bid, however, to show that you barely dredged up your 1♠ response. If opener rebids 3♣ to show a minimal reverse, you plan on correcting to 3♦.

With No. 2, bid 3♦, a forcing bid. Your 10 points should be enough for game even if partner is at the low end of the reverse range. With a heart stopper, opener is likely to select 3NT as the best game.

Nos. 3 and 4 might have presented you with a problem choosing a rebid. While rebidding a suit partner has not supported tends to show six-card length, rebidding a five-card suit can be your best choice in certain circumstances. One of those circumstances is when your bid is forcing. After a reverse, responder's second bid is always forcing unless it's a game bid. Because it's forcing, responder's rebid of his original major suit guarantees only five cards. Hands Nos. 3 and 4 can both rebid 2♠.

Does it bother you that you haven't differentiated between a hand that is good enough for game even when

opener has 17 points and a hand that should stop in partscore opposite 17 points? It won't if you and partner have an agreement on how opener will rebid after responder rebids his own suit.

Here is how the auction will progress when responder holds either No. 3 or No. 4:

West	East
1♣	1♠
2♦	2♠
?	

It is now opener's third bid. Responder's rebid of two of his first suit (2♠) is ambiguous about strength so opener has to assume the worst — that responder has only about 6 points. Opener can't pass because this rebid of two of responder's major suit is forcing.

With a minimal reverse, opener chooses one of these three bids:

- ♦ Raise responder's major with three-card support. This is not forcing, but most hands that can support responder's major are strong enough to reach game because of distribution points.
- ♦ Bid 2NT with the only unbid suit stopped. It's not forcing — rebid 3NT if you have enough for game.
- ♦ Bid your first suit on the three level — 3♣ in this case. This is not forcing, but responder can bid again.

With a maximum hand, opener makes any bid other than these choices.

These fairly simple agreements are a good starting place. You can refine them as you gain more experience. We'll conclude this series next month with several hand pairs that will let you practice these methods. □