



Pat Harrington

# Play & Learn

All of the responding hands shown below will continue the above auction opposite this hand by opener:

♠6 ♥AK52 ♦KQ1074 ♣AJ6.

1. ♠QJ73 ♥64 ♦853 ♣K942.

Rebid 2NT, the artificial weak denial bid. Since 2NT is artificial, opener must bid again. With the above hand, opener doesn't want to be in game either and returns to 3♦, his first-bid suit. Opener's rebid of his first suit in this auction is not forcing and as responder, you pass since you know you have a fit. Remember, opener's reverse shows an unbalanced hand with more cards in opener's first suit than in his second suit. You expect opener to have five diamonds and four hearts.

2. ♠KQ753 ♥743 ♦J6 ♣754.

You still do not want to be in game unless opener is maximum, so you rebid 2♠, which shows five or more spades. This rebid does not deny strength, but it doesn't show any extra strength either. Opener assumes for now that responder is weak. The opening hand above rebids 2NT, a non-forcing bid that shows a stopper in clubs, the only unbid suit. You can and will pass.

3. ♠K7542 ♥J643 ♦62 ♣Q4.

Even though you have a heart fit, you won't raise hearts yet. A 3♥ raise is game forcing so you have to issue a weak-hand warning first. You have a choice of bidding 2♠ or 2NT. Since you'd rather see partner play this hand in hearts than play it yourself in spades, ignore the five-card spade suit and use 2NT as your warning bid.

Opener will bid 3♦ with the example hand and you sign off in 3♥.

Let's conclude with some brighter scenarios: responding hands that are strong enough for game or even slam opposite opener's reverse.

4. ♠QJ73 ♥64 ♦A852 ♣Q92.

You have a diamond fit and can support diamonds directly. Bidding 3♦ without a weak warning bid is game forcing. Opener will settle into 3NT with the example hand, which is fine with you.

5. ♠AK542 ♥QJ63 ♦J2 ♣74.

I hope you are thinking that slam is possible if opener has a maximum opening hand. You could rebid 2♠, which is forcing for one round, but it's best to set hearts as trump now. A 3♥ bid is game forcing so it's safe. The above opening hand will just bid 4♥ to show a minimum reverse with no slam interest. With a stronger reverse, opener could show a control to look for slam.

6. ♠KJ753 ♥Q43 ♦J6 ♣Q105.

You want to reach game but there is no rush when you aren't sure of the best game. It could be 4♠ or 3NT. We've used a 2♠ rebid with a weak hand and that is what opener will assume for now, but both our weak bids are forcing for one round so you will have time to correct that picture next. Opener will rebid 2NT, non-forcing, and you can raise to 3NT — not a weak hand after all.

Be aware that many players use other methods for continuing after reverses. Be sure you and your partner are on the same wavelength. □

## Practice your bidding after opener reverses

Opener's rebid in the auction below is a reverse:

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥			

West's 2♥ rebid is a reverse because responder has to go to the three level to take a preference to diamonds. A minimum opener and a minimum responder can't afford to bypass 2NT. Since opener created this situation, opener must have a medium opening hand or better. All reverse hands are unbalanced (at least 5-4), but not all strong unbalanced hands end up reversing. It depends on how the bidding proceeds and the suits opener holds.

Let's see how various responding hands would continue the above auction. First, let's look at responding hands that do not want to be in game opposite a medium opening hand, *i.e.*, a minimum reverse. These hands will try to slow things down using one of responder's warning bids (as suggested last month).

- ❖ An artificial weak 2NT rebid or
- ❖ A rebid of responder's first suit on the two-level to show a five-card or longer suit.