(35) Constructive Bidding: Reverses and Jump Shifts

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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* in order 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♠ 1NT
3♦

1♠ 1NT
3♥

1♥ 1♠/1NT
3♣/3♦

1♦ 1♥/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 at a later date.

Special Case Notes

- 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 in order 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 two-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 3-level (three of Opener's first-bid suit.)

Examples – All the Reverse Auctions

1♣ 1♥/1♠/1NT
2♦

1♣ 1♦/1♠/1NT
2♥

1♣ 1♦/1♥/1NT
2♠

1♦ 1♠/1NT
2♥

1♦ 1♥/1NT
2♠

1♥ 1NT
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 that 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+ points (good 7 points)
3♥	4+c♥, Game Forcing, 8+ points (good 7 points)
3♠	6+c♠, Game Forcing, 8+ points (good 7 points)