**(93) Advanced Bidding Tools: Lebensohl Over Reverses**

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**General**

When Opener makes a Reverse (showing a strong distributional hand) at the 2-Level it is extremely unlikely that 2N is going to be the right place to play – in fact, the Reverse is forcing to 3-minor. That means that we will not give much up if we use 2N by Responder after a Reverse as a conventional bid. We will use our same general Lebensohl (or Simple-sohl) structure, where 2N shows a bad hand – a desire to stop the auction below game. Let’s see how it works.

**Lebensohl 2N Over Reverses**

The best way to explain how we will use 2N (and define our agreements) after a Reverse is to start with a common example.

*Example*

1♦ - 1♠ -

2♥ - \_\_

We now use 2N to show a bad hand, usually 5 to 7- points – not enough to game force opposite a minimum reverse. This 2N bid asks partner to bid 3♣ (a relay.) Responder can now show where they would like to play the hand:

* With long ♣, Responder can pass 3♣.
* With a couple of ♦ (2+cards) Responder can relay and then bid 3♦ - to signoff in 3♦.
* With a bad hand with a ♥ fit (4-card) Responder can relay and then bid 3♥. Opener will then know about the Major suit fit and could re-evaluate their hand and bid on to 4♥. (Danger, if this goes down 1 – it will be Opener’s fault.)

**Responder’s Bid Above 2N**

Since 2N is used to show all bad hands that want to play at 3-Level, then any bid above 2N is natural and forcing.

*Example*

1♦ - 1♠

2♥ -

* 3♦ 3+♦, Game Forcing, 7+ points.
* 3♥ 4+♥, Game Forcing (Stronger than 4♥ - Fast Arrival.)
* 3♠ 6+♠, Game Forcing, 7+ points.

**Other Bids By Responder**

Responder can also choose to rebid their suit (in our example 2♠) at the 2-Level. This shows a good 5-card or 6-card suit (if only 5-card if it is good enough to play opposite Hx – Opener should raise on Hx.) This is forcing for one round (1F) and shows not a good enough hand or suit to bid 3♠.

*Example*

♠ AJ10xx

♥ Jx

♦ Qxx

♣ xxx

Responder could also bid the fourth suit. This is Game Forcing and a “catch all” bid. It is Artificial, but frequently natural – since Responder has forcing bids available in all the other suits.

**(Advanced) Ingbergman**

Some players choose to try to optimize their bidding further. They do so by using the cheaper of 2N or the 4th suit as the “bad hand” bid. This allows for a more space-saving auction in certain situations.

*Example*

1♣ - 1♠

2♦ - 2♥\* (Instead of 2N bid to show a bust.)

This agreement is both difficult on memory and adds some complexity for only a small gain. It is best left to experienced players in regular partnerships.

**Conclusion**

Lebensohl 2N (2N as a Relay) is a useful agreement in many situations. It continues the modern theme of 2N as a “convention not a contract.” Specifically, Lebensohl can be very valuable over a Reverse in that it allows us to show many different suits in both forcing and non-forcing manners (as Lebensohl generally does.) This is an excellent gadget that can greatly improve our bidding for both game and slam in these difficult strong distributional hand (Reverse) auctions.