

# REVERSING REVERSING



“Whenever you choose for your rebid a new suit at a level higher than two of your original suit, you show a very good hand.” (Goren’s *New Bridge Complete*)

Example hands

♠AKXX    ♥AJXXX    ♦XX    ♣XX

This is a hand that is NOT strong enough to reverse. You open 1H, but if partner says 1NT, you pass. (Goren also says that you never say 2♠ if partner says 2♣, but Bergen says that reverses are off after partner bids at 2 level. Goren somewhat contradicts himself later when talking about diamonds and hearts. We’ll see more of what Bergen has to say below. Modern players go with Bergen here.)

♠AQ10X    ♥AKJXX    ♦KX    ♣XX

This is a much stronger hand and worthy of a reverse in any bidding sequence. Goren says “This so-called ‘reverse bid’ shows the equivalent of at least 17 points.”

Although Goren didn’t mention it, please note that when you reverse the bid, you bid your longer suit first and reverse to your shorter suit. Your partner always knows your second suit is shorter. Always!

To continue with Goren with minor suits:

♠XX    ♥XX    ♦AKQX    ♣A10XXX

The trick here is to be prepared. Knowing what you know now about reversing. You know that if you open 1♣ and partner bids a major, you cannot rebid 2♦ because that is a reverse, showing 17+ points, which you do not have.

However, you want to show your partner both minor suits and avoid bidding a 5-card minor twice (generally shows 6). So what you do is open 1♦. When your partner responds with the major, you now bid 2♣, showing both minors and a minimum hand. (You will find some disagreement among bridge players on this one, but I agree with this one, for whatever that’s worth.)

## “The Truth About Reverses”

Excerpts from *More Points Schmoints* by Marty Bergen

**Question:** How strong a hand does opener need to reverse?

**Answer:** With five-four distribution, opener should have at least 17 HCP. With six-four or six-five, he can have less. Here are examples of minimum but acceptable reverses.

West	North	East	South
1♣	P	1♠	P
2♥			
	♠K6	♥AQ76	♦85
	♠8	♥K953	♦K5
	♠7	♥AK732	♦8
			♣AKJ65
			♣AKQ874
			♣AQ10965

**Question:** What about five-five distribution?

**Answer:** Never reverse with five-five. A reverse guarantees that your first-bid suit is longer than your second.

**Question:** Can opener reverse at the one level?

**Answer:** No, one-level bidding is just up the line.

**Question:** How can I recognize opener's reverse?

**Answer:** He must have bid a new suit at the two level—without jumping—which was higher ranking than the suit he bid first.

**Question:** Does opener promise a rebid after his reverse?

**Answer:** Absolutely, unless responder has jumped to game himself.

**Question:** If responder has bid at the two level, does anything change?

**Answer:** Yes. Opener does not need as big a hand to reverse. (*Please note disagreement with Goren*)

**Question:** Are reverses still on in competition?

**Answer:** Yes. The 2♥ bid in the following auction still shows a big hand.

West	North	East	South
1♦	P	1♠	2♣
2♥			

**Question:** Are reverses forcing to game?

**Answer:** No, but they are forcing for one round.

**Question:** Can you give me an example of a good reverse auction?

**Answer:** Here you go.

	North	South	
♠4	1♦	1♠	♠AJ6532
♥AK105	2♥	2♠	♥82
♦AKJ963	3♦	3NT	♦Q4
♣98	P		♣K75

North had only 15 HCP, but look at those two beautiful suits. That is a promotable hand if I ever saw one.

After North's reverse, South knew his side had the values for game. However, he was in no hurry because opener had to take another bid. South used excellent judgment with his economical 2♠ bid. Had he bid 3♠, North would have been forced to bid 4♦ and miss the cold NT game. This was a well-judged auction by both players.

**Question:** What else should I know about reverses?

**Answer:** Auctions that are forcing for one round, but not necessarily game forcing, are tricky. Even experts sometimes find themselves on shaky ground after a reverse.

♠AQ    ♥KQJ5    ♦KJ765    ♣KJ

To avoid a reverse auction of 1♦ by you, 1♠ by your partner, 2♥ by you, opening this hand 2NT does not make you a coward.

*Note: Notrump openings are considered natural if you have no singleton or void and only one or two doubletons. (from New Alert Procedure effective 3/1/2002)*