

The Responder's Reverse



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The Responder can “reverse” their bid order as well as the Opener. Some people call this “breaking the barrier”, to show they have 12 points or more. The bid is usually forcing to game, as it strongly suggests an opening hand. It’s an important bid, because if you not playing 2 over 1, the 2-level new suit 1st response showing 10+ HCP is not in itself enough for opener to bid game.

By bidding 2 different suits starting with the lower denomination suit at the one level, and the higher denomination suit at the 2 level, (e.g. 1♦ followed by 2♠), responder says he’s quite strong (12+ HCP). He has gone through the barrier of 2♦ that he set with his first bid of 1♦. IF you like that language.

Similar concepts apply when Opener reverses. The second suit is higher ranked and at a higher level and appears to be a suit the Responder has bypassed. The same is true for the Responder. The second bid suit is higher ranked than the first, it is at a higher level and opener has bypassed it. If the rank of the second suit is not higher, Responder must jump shift.

Example:

Suppose the opener bids 1♦, and then follows with a NT rebid. Responder has two biddable major suits (♥ ♠), containing 4 cards each. The order and level in which he bids these two suits will tell his partner if he has 12+ plus HCP (go through barrier), or fewer than 12 HCP.

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1NT	2♠ (this bid is the “reverse”)

Here, responder has shown 12 points or more. Responder’s first bid of hearts is up the line. Opener’s rebid of 1NT denies 4 Spades. Why would Responder bid Spades as their second bid when Opener has denied 4 spades? Because they have a game going hand. A hand that might look like this.

♠A743 ♥AK65 ♦52 ♣Q97

If they wanted to show the same suits but fewer than 12 points, they would have bid the other way around as follows:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♥

Here, the responder has not gone through the barrier set by his first bid at the 2♠ level.

Consideration:

To put it another way, a responder's reverse can only be made after opener has re-bid his first suit, or has switched to NoTrump after his first suit bid.

A Responder's reverse might look like this after Opener opens 1♠.

♠74 ♥AK65 ♦52 ♣AQ973

Responder bids 2♣. Opener rebids 2♦. Since these folks were not playing 2 over 1, responder should bid 2♥ which is a responder's reverse and is forcing to game. ♣