

Fifth Chair



Responder's Reverses

1c p 1d p

2c p 2s ????

Responder's reverses, as in the sequence referenced above, do two things. First, they create an absolutely game forcing auction. Thus, neither opener nor responder is forced to leap about to show extra values, and thus jumps can be assigned specific meanings. Two popular ones are fast arrival (jumps to game show minimum values) and picture jumps (jumps to game show unexpected trump strength without controls in the unbid suits). In addition, creating a game force might be the first step in a slam investigation.

Second, the reverse normally shows a concern about the fourth suit and need not be natural in the sense of having genuine length. Any of these hands might be considered a 2S reverse by responder on this auction:

A) AJxx; x; AKxxx; Qxx

Responder wants to show diamonds, spades, and clubs while hoping that opener can show support for diamonds. Opposite a hand like x; Axx; QJx; AJTxxx, 6 of either minor is cold and a grand slam in either minor is possible if the club finesse works.

B) QJxx; xx; AKxx; Qxx

Responder wants to show diamonds and spades in the hope that opener can show a heart stopper. Opposite a hand like xx; KQx; Qx; AKxxxx 3nt is the best spot and 5c is down off the top.

C) AJx; xx; KQxxx; Axx

Responder isn't sure whether nt, clubs, or diamonds is the right strain, so he creates a game force with a semi-natural 2s rebid and allows opener to continue describing his hand.

Notice that in all three auctions, responder had a heart weakness. Change responder's hand to:

D) Jxx; KQx; AK9xxx; x

and responder would reverse into 2h, suggesting a spade concern. Even with a hand with a spade stopper, like:

E) Qxx; KQx; AQxxxx; x

Responder might reverse into 2H because he needs additional spade help since his diamond suit isn't running.