

## When NOT to Reverse in the Bidding by Maritha Pottenger

A reverse promises **at least 9 cards** in your two suits and **17 or more high card points**. If you do not meet both qualifications, do NOT reverse!

If you have a hand with two 5-card suits, just open the higher of the two suits and rebid the lower after partner's response. (With 5-5 and 17 HCP, you can jump shift the second round. With fewer than 17 HCP, just rebid your 2<sup>nd</sup> suit at the cheapest level.)

If you have a six-card suit (6-4), you would usually rebid your 6-card suit before showing your 4-card suit. If you can show your 4-card suit without reversing, go ahead and show it first. For example, with 6 clubs and 4 spades, you open 1 club and bid 1S over partner's 1D or 1H response. However, with 6 clubs and 4 hearts (and only 11-15 HCP), you open 1C and rebid 2C if partner's response is 1S. (If partner responds 1D, you can bid 1H.)

If you are 6-5, you can reverse with as few as 14 HCP if all your HCP are in your two long suits. With less, open the higher of the two suits (even if it is the "shorter" 5-card one) and then show the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit. Bid the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit twice if necessary and partner will know you are at least 5-5 and perhaps 6-5.

The problem hands are those hands that have only 9 cards in 2 suits and less than 17 HCP. With a 5-4 hand, your pattern can be 5-4-2-2 or 5-4-3-1, or 5-4-4-0. With the 5-4-4-0 pattern, open your 5-card suit. You will rarely have a rebid problem. (If you open with hearts or spades, you always have at least one lower-ranking 4-card suit for your rebid—unless partner bids one of your suits and you can support. If you open 1D with 4-4-5-0, your only problems are when partner response 1NT or 2C. With 1NT response, pass—partner has at least 4 clubs. With 2C response, bid 2NT even though you hate it. If you open 1C with 4-4-0-5 and partner responds 1NT, rebid your clubs; partner should have at least 4 clubs. If partner responds 1D, bid 1H. If you open 1C with 4-0-4-5 and partner responds one heart, bid 1S. If partner responds 1NT, rebid your clubs. A problem can arise with 0-4-4-5 if you open 1C. If partner responds 1S, you would have to rebid your clubs. With that pattern, if your diamonds are decent and your clubs are so-so or poor, open 1D and rebid 2C over partner's 1S response. If your diamonds are poor and your clubs are good, open 1C and rebid 2C over partner's 1S response.)

With a 5-4-2-2 hand, you will almost always rebid 1NT (if you cannot support partner's response). Sometimes this means bidding NT with a worthless doubleton in an unbid suit. C'est la vie!

With a 5-4-3-1 hand, you have no problem if your 5-card suit is a major or the higher suit. Simply open that suit and rebid the lower one. When you have 4 diamonds and 5 clubs, you have to make a judgment call. If partner bids the suit in which you have only 3 cards, you can raise partner on 3 cards, figuring you have a working singleton. Or, if your 5-card suit is very good, you can rebid your 5-card suit. When you are 5-4-3-1 and partner bids your singleton, you again have a problem. You can rebid NT with a singleton in partner's suit (not attractive) or rebid your 5-card suit (and partner will think you have 6). Depending on the quality of your suit (very good—rebid suit) and other points (lots of points in other suits—rebid NT), make your choice.

Because of these issues when you have specifically 4 diamonds and 5 clubs and a 3-1-4-5 or 1-3-4-5 pattern, many people choose to open 1D and rebid 2C if partner bids their singleton. Some people prefer to open 1C and rebid 1NT even with a singleton in partner's suit.