

## REBID ISSUES WITH MINORS by Maritha Pottenger

**It is important to consider your rebid before you make your opening bid.** Basic bidding principles will keep you on track for most hands (e.g., with 5-5, start with higher suit so you can bid lower suit next time around and partner can take a preference at the same level). However there are some “special cases” that require thinking, discussion, and partnership agreement.

**A common problem is hands that are 5-4 or 4-5 in the minor suits.** If you are 2-2-4-5 OR 2-2-5-4 with an ordinary opening hand, you have to decide between (1) opening 1D and rebidding 2C leaving partner in the dark as to whether you are 5-4 or 5-5 or 5-4 (or, occasionally, 4-4) in the minors; (2) rebidding 1NT with a doubleton in an unbid major and risking the opponents taking 5 quick tricks in the major; (3) rebidding your 5 card suit which will make partner think you have six of them. The first option, called “the prepared rebid” was traditional for many years (including when I first learned bridge). Nowadays, people are much more likely to rebid 1NT with any “balanced hand” even when it includes two doubletons.

If you are in favor of the NT rebid, you and your partner should agree on how weak that doubleton can be. With Kx xx AQxx KJxxx, if you open 1D (in case partner bids 1S), you can easily bid 1NT when partner bids 1H over your 1D. How do you feel if your spade holding is Qx or Jx or 10x? Are you fine with a worthless doubleton (e.g., 64)? Still like bidding 1NT? There are no “correct” or “incorrect” answers here. Style and partnership agreement are important here. You can, for example, make an agreement that you will rebid NT with a Jx or better in the unbid major—or whatever you two choose to do.

Judgment also comes into play if your hand is xx KJ xxxx AKQxx, if you do not like the NT rebid when partner responds 1H, then opening 1C and rebidding 2C on your chunky suit is probably better than opening 1D and rebidding 2C. Similarly, with: xx KQ AKQx 10xxxx, opening 1D and rebidding 2C is reasonable, whereas opening 1C and rebidding 2C makes no sense.

Similar issues arrive when you are 3-1 or 1-3 in the majors rather than 2-2. Normally, you would NOT rebid 1NT with a singleton—the NT rebid by Opener specifically shows a balanced hand. So, with x Kxx QJxx AQJxx, you have options. If you open 1D and partner bids 1H, you can make the prepared rebid of 2C. Or, you can open 1C and bid 2C over partner's 1H response. Or, you can open 1C and raise partner 1H to 2H even though s/he might have ONLY a 4-card major. Choices, choices! Discuss with your partners. [Most experts play Spiral which allows Responder to ask Opener if s/he has raised the major with 3 or 4-card support, and whether Opener is minimum or maximum in HCP.]

Some players will even rebid NT with a singleton in Responder's major. I don't care for it, but some people will. Discuss with your partners! (E.g., with x KQxx Kxxx AQxx, 1D is the normal opening bid. If Responder bids 1S, 2C is normal rebid, but some people choose to rebid 1D on these 1-4-4-4 hands.

**Please note that if you have 17 or more HCP, you have enough values to reverse.** In that case, you can show your exact shape. With xx Kx KQJx AKJxx, you open 1C and bid 2D over partner's 1H OR 1S OR 1D response. You are showing: (1) at least 5 clubs; (2) at least 4 diamonds; (3) at least 17 HCP and your bid is forcing one round.

**Reverses ONLY take place at the 2 level and above in bidding.** There are no reverses at the one level. At the one level, you are just bidding up the line, e.g., 1C-P-1H-P-1S.

If you go to the 2 level in a suit that is higher than your original suit, you are making a reverse. Do NOT do it unless you have 17 HCP. Find another bid.

**If Responder goes to the 2-level, most people agree that Opener's 2-level bids are JUST shape showing. They are no longer reverses,** because Responder has already promised 10 or more HCP (or opening hand in 2 over 1 system).

So, 1D-P-1S-P-2H is definitely a reverse: 4 diamonds; 4 hearts; 17+ HCP.

1D-P-2C-P-2S is NOT a reverse. Responder has gone to the 2 level, so Opener is showing 4 spades and 4 diamonds and still looking for NT.