

INTERFERENCE OVER OUR 1NT OPENING

1NT (Double)

when double means something other than penalty, then....
Ignore double, systems on

(Double)

when double is penalty, then....
Redouble = forces 2C, to get out in 2C or 2D
All other systems on

1NT (2C)

when 2C means clubs, one-suiter, etc., then....
Double = Stayman
2D/2H/2S/2N = systems on

(2C)

when 2C is Landy showing the majors, then....
Double = willingness to double one of their majors for
penalty
2D = natural, nonforcing
2H/2S= stopper in the suit bid with values to at least 2N

When the opponents interfere at 2D, 2H, or 2S, the popular convention, Lebensohl is used. If you bid 2NT in this position, it is Lebensohl, which asks opener to bid 3C. You can then describe one of several different types of responding hands.

A weak signoff with a long suit that's lower in rank than the overcalled suit.
Invitational values with a long suit that's higher in rank than the overcalled suit.

Game values with a 4-card major and a stopper in their suit.

Game values with a 4-card major and no stopper in their suit.

Game values with no 4-card major and a stopper in their suit.

Game values with no 4-card major and no stopper in their suit.

When you play Lebensohl, you give up the use of 2NT as a natural notrump invitation. This is not much of a sacrifice, as when you hold this type of

hand – 8-9 HCP's and a stopper in their suit, you can, and usually should, show it with a penalty double.

1NT (2H) ?

Double = Penalty

2S = signoff

2NT = Lebensohl, relaying partner to 3C

3C/3D/3S = natural and forcing

3H = (cuebid of their suit) Stayman (promising 4 cards in the other major) with game values and no stopper in their suit.

3N = game values, no 4-card major and no stopper in their suit.

4D/4H = Texas Transfer

After the 2N bid forcing 3C, then.....

Pass = 5+ clubs, no interest in game

3D = 5+ diamonds, no interest in game

3H = (cuebid of their suit) Stayman with game values and a stopper in their suit

3S = 5+ spades and invitational values

3N = game values, no 4-card major, with a stopper in their suit

If your first bid denied a stopper (direct cuebid or jump to 3NT):

After the direct cuebid:

Opener will bid a 4-card major if he has one. If he has no 4-card major but does have a stopper in their suit, he'll bid 3NT. With no 4-card major and no stopper, he'll run to his cheapest 4+-card suit. You can then pass, raise to game or bid your cheapest 4+-card suit if you don't have a fit for the suit partner bid.

After the jump to 3NT:

Opener will pass if he has a stopper. If he does not have a stopper, he'll bid 4 of his cheapest 4+-card suit.

Lebensohl over Weak 2-Bids

After an auction like:

(2♠) Dbl (Pass) 3♣

Your partner often has a difficult decision if he has extra values. Since there is such a wide point range for your minimum response (0 to about 9 points), he doesn't know whether or not it's safe to bid on. The Lebensohl convention was invented to help you give partner a more accurate description of your strength in these situations.

After an opponent opens a weak two-bid and your partner makes a takeout double, your bid of 2NT is Lebensohl. It says nothing about notrump. It asks partner to bid 3♣, and you can then pass, sign off in a suit, or make another descriptive bid.

Weak Hands (0-7 pts.)

The Lebensohl 2NT is most useful when you have a very weak hand and want to sign off in a suit that is lower in rank than the preempter's suit (i.e., LHO opens 2♥ and you have spades), you make your normal minimum bid at the 2-level. But if you would have to go to the 3-level to make a minimum bid in your suit, you start with 2NT to relay partner to 3♣. You can now pass if clubs is your suit, or bid another suit. The auction will go:

(2♠) Dbl (Pass) 2NT
(Pass) 3♣ (Pass) Pass or 3♦ or 3♥

The doubler will accept your relay with any hand of up to about 18 playing points, but he can refuse it if he has a powerful hand. With a hand that will make game opposite an average of about 4-5 pts. in your hand, he should refuse the relay and make another descriptive bid. If he makes a bid higher than 3♣, but less than game, it is forcing; you must bid again, even if you are very weak.

Medium Strength Hands (8-10 pts.)

If you bid a suit at the 3-level (instead of using the 2NT sequence), it is encouraging, but not forcing. It shows a hand with constructive values but

not enough to jump to game. Doubler can pass with a minimum or bid on with extra values.

You can also use the Lebensohl 2NT to invite when your suit is higher in rank than the preempter's suit. If LHO open 2♥ and you have spades, you can sign off in 2♠ if you're weak. If you instead use the Lebensohl 2NT sequence, it shows invitational values (8-10 pts) with exactly four spades. A direct 3♠ bid would be invitational with 5 spades. This full auction would be:

(2♥) Dbl	(Pass)	2NT	
(Pass) 3♣	(Pass)	3♠	Invitational with 4 spades
(2♥) Dbl	(Pass)	3♠	Invitational with 5 spades

If LHO opened 2♦, you can use the sequence to invite in hearts or spades.

Forcing Hands (11+ pts.)

The Lebensohl 2NT sequences above all showed limited values. If you have invitational or forcing to game strength, your jump responses all retain their standard meaning.

Immediate 3NT – Good stoppers in the opponent's suit. Usually denies 4 cards in the other major.

3NT after going through 2NT Lebensohl – More tenuous stoppers in opponent's suit. Doubler is allowed to consider other contracts.

Immediate cuebid – Asks doubler to bid descriptively. Doubler would tend to bid 3NT with a stopper.

Immediate jump cuebid – Both minors if the weak-2 was a minor, both majors if the weak-2 was diamonds.

Lebensohl over Reverses

Some of the most difficult and awkward of all bridge auctions are those after a reverse. A reverse is opener's 2-level rebid in a higher-ranking suit than his opened suit (1♣-1♠-2♦ or 2♥). A reverse always shows extra values and at least 5-4 distribution in the two suits. The first suit is always longer than the second suit.

A reverse is forcing for one round, but it may be made with as few as 16-17 pts., so it does not promise forcing-to-game values. Stopping below game, though, can sometimes be a problem. Because the reverse uses up so much bidding space, it can often propel the auction into an unmakeable game when both responder and opener have minimums.

To solve this problem, many partnerships have adopted a convention called Lebensohl over Reverses. After opener's reverse, responder uses a 2NT rebid to show a weak hand (5-7 pts.) that wants to stop in a 3-level partscore if opener has minimum reverses values. Here's how it works:

Responder's use of 2NT Lebensohl

Lebensohl 2NT is used at your second bid after opener makes a reverse to the 2-level (1♣-1♠-2♥). In this situation, 2NT by you usually shows weakness (5-7 pts.) and is a relay bid, asking partner to rebid 3♣ if he has a minimum. After this auction you have two ways to show weakness:

Pass = In this auction, clubs is the unbid suit, so you would pass the relay to 3♣ only if you had a 6+-card suit and no support for either of partner's suits – Qxxx, Jx, x, QJTxxx. If partner's first suit was clubs, a pass here would show a weak hand with a preference for clubs – KJxxx, xx, QJx, xxx.

3 of one of partner's suits (3♦ or 3♥) = a preference to play in a partscore in that suit. A retreat to 3♦ would be made with a hand like – JTxx, Kx, Jxx, Qxxx. You would bid 3♥ with QJxxx, xxx, xx, Kx or even Kxxx, QTx, x, Jxxx.

3 of your suit (3♠) = a preference to play in a partscore. A hand like – KQTxxx, xx, x, Jxxx

Since the Lebensohl 2NT is used to show a weak response, bidding directly at the 3-level is positive and game forcing.

Note that if opener refuses your relay and bids past 3♣, he's showing significant extra strength. You must keep bidding to game level, no matter how weak you are.

Opener's rebid after 2NT

If responder bids 2NT over your reverse, it's the Lebensohl convention, which asks you to bid 3♣. You should accept the relay and bid 3♣ if you have minimum values (16-18 pts.). However, with stronger hands, those where you want to be in game even if partner has a bare 5-7 pts., you can refuse the relay and bid past 3♣.

After the auction: 1♦/1♠/2♥/2NT

3♦ = Extra length in diamonds, probably with extreme shortness in clubs. You can use this bid to show a hand that has extra playing strength, but not necessarily a powerful high-card-point holding. Jx, AKTx, AKJTxxx, void

3 or your second suit = Extra length in your second suit. A reverse promises greater length in your first suit, so a rebid of your second suit here shows 5 hearts and 6 diamonds. X, KQTxx, AKQxxx, A

3 of partner's suit = 3-card support. It's advisable to stretch somewhat if you have secondary support for partner's major, so you may refuse the relay here with a good 17-18 pts. QJx, AKxx, AKxxx, x

3NT = Strong hand with at least one good stopper in the unbid suit. Q, AJTx, KQJTxx, AQx