

# Showing Two-Suited Hands

The Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club

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<https://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaBidding/TwoSuitedHands.pdf>

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Consider the following Two Over One auction.

W	N	E	S
	1♠	P	2♦
P	2♠		

How many hearts does North have?

**Answer:**

He does not have four hearts unless he has a good seven-card spade suit or longer. He is definitely not 6-4 nor 5-4, and he may not even have six spades.

Consider the following examples.

1. What would North bid with the following hand?

♠AK1098 ♥A32 ♦Q2 ♣543

**Answer:**

1♠ then 2♠. North cannot suggest Notrump with no club stopper, and he certainly does not need opening lead protection. It is incredibly short-sighted to beat partner to Notrump and have the opening lead go through South's club stopper(s) if Notrump is the correct contract. At the risk of not selling as many declarer play books, it is often the lead which makes or breaks the contract not the declarer play. Therefore, it is extremely important to right side as many contracts as possible.

**In Standard American**, there is an additional problem because 2♦ is only 10+, and the opener may be unwilling to show a new suit at the three-level because that accepts an invite (14+ HCP) and is game forcing. He must rebid 2♠ even with four clubs.

2. In Two Over One, how would the following hand be bid?

♠AK10987 ♥32 ♦Q ♣QJ43

**Answer:**

	W	N	E	S		W	N	E	S
		1♠	P	1NT <sup>F</sup>			1♠	P	2♦
	P	2♣				P	2♠	P	2NT
						P	3♣	P	3♠

3. How would the following hand be bid?

♠AK10987 ♥QJ32 ♦Q2 ♣3

**Answer:**

	W	N	E	S		W	N	E	S
		1♠	P	1NT <sup>F</sup>			1♠	P	2♦
	P	2♥				P	2♥	P	2NT
						P	3♠	P	4♠

If North rebids 2♥, he tells his partner about nine cards. If he rebids 2♠, he tells his partner about six cards.

When the opener opens 1♠ and rebids 2♥, with two spades and three hearts, the responder should not rule out spades. Hearts could be five, but spades could be six. The quality of the cards should help guide the decision. With ♠32 and ♥QJ10, hearts are chosen, and with ♠Q2 and ♥432, spades are chosen.

## **Bidding Two-Suited Hands**

Two suited hands with a longer higher ranking suit are the easiest to bid.

### **646**

When six-four, the six card suit is bid first and third. The four-card suit is bid second.

### **655**

The six-five or six-six hand is bid by bidding the six-card suit then the five-card suit twice. This is also the same for a five-five hand.

### **774**

The seven-card suit especially if it is a major is bid twice or three times and the four card minor would not be mentioned. With seven spades and four hearts, the heart suit may be mentioned third, but why risk a bad heart fit when the seven-card suit may play better even opposite a void?

Therefore, the heart suit is left to be shown by the partner or when the seven-card suit is poor and broken. The seven-card suit is bid twice, and the four-card heart suit is bid third. With seven hearts or spades (or longer), a 3NT bid by partner is pulled for four of the major all of the time.

What do you call an eight-card suit? Trump.

The difficult case is when the lower ranking suit is longer, and the strength to reverse is not held. It is better to lie about length, especially in a minor, than strength.

## Basic Definition of a Reverse

A reverse is only made when the lower ranking suit is longer. If equal length, a reverse is not made. A reverse occurs when the lower ranking suit is opened at the one-level, and the higher ranking suit is bid at the two-level or higher.

16+ HCP are needed for a simple reverse at the two-level. 19+ HCP are needed when the reverse is at the three-level. If partner cannot respond, a reverse at the two-level needs 19+ HCP if the opponents keep the bidding alive.

## Five Clubs and Four Diamonds:

With 16 HCP, 1♣ is opened, and a 2♦ rebid is made.

With less than 16 HCP, there are four options:

1. Open 1♦ and rebid 2♣.
2. Open 1♣ and rebid 1NT. The hand is balanced and has two-two in the majors.
3. Open 1♦ and rebid 1NT. The hand is balanced and has two-two in the majors. Diamonds are better than clubs, and 1♦ is slightly more preemptive than 1♣.
4. Open 1♣ and rebid 2♣.

If partner bids the opener's three card major, he will raise with three cards. Three-card raises are rare and are usually made when the alternative bid is a white lie. 1♦ then 2♣ is a white lie since diamonds are not longer, and 1♣ then 2♣ is a white lie since clubs are not six in length or better.

## **Four Clubs and Four Diamonds:**

1♦ is opened with a 1NT rebid. The only problem occurs when the hand is 4-4-4-1 with a singleton in partner's major. The opener plugs his nose and rebids 2♣. It is better to lie about length in a minor than length in a major. 1NT promises at least two cards in both majors.

## **Six Hearts and Five Spades:**

With less than 16 HCP, the normal way to bid the hand is to open 1♠ and rebid hearts twice. However, opening 1♥ and just rebidding 2♥ is slightly better because a six-one fit can be handled adequately especially when the long hand is ruffing a minor. Unless the spade suit is really strong, the hand should be opened 1♥ with a 2♥ rebid. Of course, it would be awesome if partner replied 1♠. The five-four fit would not be missed.

If the suits are playable (no major holes, lots of touching cards) with no wasted honours, some will reverse simply because of the strength of the distribution even without 16 HCP.

What happens if the opponents compete and partner doubles? That is a problem. The opener cannot be that partner with whom nobody wants to play, so he cannot pull partner's penalty doubles especially for a contract which has no hope of making.

If this is a problem, the reverse lie should not be made. It is not really a lie because strength can be high card, but it also can be distributional. Six-five is exceptional distribution. Six-five come alive! A player should be careful not to underbid even with a five-five distribution.

A good player will double when he sees actual tricks in the opponents' suits in his own hand, not some imaginary amount of defensive tricks in his partner's hand he cannot see. These tricks are probably being ruffed (and that is why the opponents are being aggressive), so a double based on tricks in the opponents' suits cannot be pulled. Once in a while, doubled contracts will make. If they do not, the player is

not doubling enough. Nobody should panic and adopt bad bridge practices when the occasional doubled contract makes.

### True Reverse Examples

♠KQJ109 ♥KQJ1098 ♦--- ♣A2

To show six hearts, is the heart suit ever bid twice? No, the heart suit is bid once followed by two bids of spades. That automatically shows five spades and a reverse. A reverse is only done when the lower ranking suit is longer. Therefore, six hearts are shown, and the heart suit is only ever bid once.

♠KQJ109 ♥A2 ♦--- ♣KQJ1098

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1♥
P	1♠		

Does North have a big hand? Is 1♠ 100% forcing?

North has not denied a big hand. He does not have a hand that jumps to 2NT because he would skip the spade suit, but he may or may not have a reverse at this point in the auction. 1♠ is always 100% forcing.

W	N	E	S
	1♣	P	1♥
P	1♠	P	1NT
P	2♠		

Now, after the 2♠ bid, it is known that North has five spades since he bid them twice, and he has a reverse of 16 HCP+. Therefore, he has at least six clubs and five spades. 2♠ is forcing one round.

South replied 1♥ so he is committed to doing what a hand that responds does. He should not bid with a weak hand and short clubs to save partner. Only Jesus saves. If he has a legitimate response with a weak hand (4 or 5 HCP), he likely has four clubs.

The key is that if he must pass, he must do it smoothly as if he has no care in the world. An opponent may save partner from a bad club fit or partner could have a real club suit. I have been saved many times (even in the top field of tournaments) because I did not pause showing I had a problem.