



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(135) Internal Reverses

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Level: 4

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General

We are familiar with traditional reverses that force the auction a level high and thus show extra values.

Example

1♣ 1♠

2♥ 5+♣, 4+♥, Good 16+ points, forcing to at least 3♣

We can apply this concept of reverses (starting with a lower suit and later bidding a higher suit) to later rounds of the bidding as well. These so-called *Internal Reverses* will help us clarify the strength of our hand as we are “patterning out.” Let’s see how this works.

Internal Reverses

This concept is best understood through a classic example.

Example – Partner Invites with 2NT

Imagine we have exactly 5-0-4-4 distribution with an opening hand. If the auction begins

1♠ - 1NT

___?

Now we can rebid either 2♣ or 2♦. We choose this based on how good our hand is. With a minimum hand, we start with the higher suit (2♦) so we can later bid our lower suit (if needed) and let partner choose between our suits at the same level when we are not reversing:

1♠ 1NT

2♦ 2NT

3♣



With extra values (enough to accept an invite or even more) we start with the lower ranking suit and later bid the higher ranking one – making an internal reverse.

1♠ 1NT
2♣ 2NT
3♦

This shows extra values and 5-0-4-4 (or maybe 5-1-3-4) and lets partner choose what to do next. Partner could still have 5+card ♦ and we might be making a large number of ♦ -- even a slam!

Example – Partner takes a preference

With an even stronger hand we might make an internal reverse when partner has fewer values:

1♠ 1NT
2♣ 2♠
3♦

This shows enough values to be interested in game if partner is at the top of their 6-9 point range.

Conclusion

There are many other auctions where this kind of thinking and preparation applies. The key is to plan ahead when you have a distributional, often 3-suited, hand. Before you make your second bid, try to think about if you will want to make a 3rd descriptive bid showing your shape. If so, then try to think about how the auction may progress and what situation at what level you will put partner in when they are forced to choose between your suits. We can use this concept of an internal reverse to help clarify to partner if we are bidding this third time because we have shape and weakness (correcting the part score) or if we have shape and a strong hand – moving forward towards game!