

Pair - combined HCP for "safe" contract with modest fits

HCP-pair	NT	♣	♦	♥	♠
16-18		1 ♣	1 ♦	1 ♥	1 ♠
18-22	1NT	2 ♣	2 ♦	2 ♥	2 ♠
23-25	2NT	3 ♣	3 ♦	3 ♥	3 ♠
25-27	3NT	4 ♣	4 ♦	4 ♥	4 ♠
28-31	4NT	5 ♣	5 ♦	5 ♥	5 ♠
32-35	5NT/6NT	6 ♣	6 ♦	6 ♥	6 ♠
36+	7NT	7 ♣	7 ♦	7 ♥	7 ♠

- If you have 12 HCP to open and responder has 6 HCP to respond, you should always be pretty safe at the 1 and 2 level.
 - If you each have the minimum and only 18, the opponents have 22 and can probably also make something at the 1 or 2 level
 - Usually better off declaring at the 1 and 2 level; tough to beat low level contracts
 - Board 15 last week – 4 N/S pairs played 1NT and all made it
 - 3 E/W pairs played 1, 2 or 3 NT...and all made it!

♠ JT
♥ T96
♦ Q9832
♣ 632

♠ Q86
♥ Q72
♦ 765
♣ AJ54

♠ K42
♥ AKJ3
♦ T4
♣ QT97

♠ A9753
♥ 854
♦ AKJ
♣ K8

At four tables, South opened 1NT and that was passed out. West led her fourth best club and South took 1 club, 1 spade and 5 diamonds for +90.

At other tables, East played NT and got a fourth best spade lead. East then had 1 spade, 4 hearts, and 4 clubs for +150.

The above chart says that you need around 23 points at the 2NT/3 level to feel safe.

If the auction starts 1♣ – 1♠, you have 3 invitational bids that show around 16-19 points

1. 2NT (18-19 balanced)
2. 3♣ – 6 or more clubs, unbalanced or semi-balanced, 16-18 points*
3. 3♠ – 4 spades, unbalanced or semi-balanced, 16-18 HCP
 - a. Balanced 16-18 should have opened 1NT!

Responder can only pass any of these bids with a dead minimum of 5-6 HCP, but even then you should be close to the 23 HCP you need for that level to feel safe.

What is a reverse?

1. A reverse is always a rebid by opener after opening a minor
2. It is almost always a bid of 2♦ or 2♥
3. It shows 16+ points and an unbalanced hand
4. It shows 5+ cards in the minor opened and 4 cards in the suit bid at the two level
5. It is forcing!

Reverse auctions:

1. 1♣-1♥; 2♦
2. 1♣-1♠; 2♦

3. 1♣-1♠; 2♥

4. 1♦-1♠; 2♥

5. 1♣-1NT; 2♦/2♥/2♠

6. 1♦-1NT; 2♥/2♠

For all these auctions, responder needs to bid at the 3 level to go back to partner's suit with a minimum.

Responder should bid game with 8+ HCP.

Responder bypassed opener's second suit on the first round, so the chances of a fit in that suit are slim (but not impossible!).

Sample hands (1♦-1♠; ??):

♠ 6

♥ AKJ5

♦ KQ9842

♣ A3

This hand is a classic reverse if partner responds 1♠ to 1♦. With 17 HCP and a strong four card heart suit, bid 2♥.

♠ 6

♥ A962

♦ KQ963

♣ A43

This hand only has 13 HCP and while it was worth opening, you're not strong enough to bid 2H. Your flawed choices are 1NT (one spade short) and 2D (one diamond

short). Either of those calls is better than 2H. This auction will be hard for everyone sitting in your seat so don't worry too much!

♠ 9
♥ AJT93
♦ KQJT82
♣ A

You will sometimes have hands with a little extra shape where reversing is OK. Here you have only 15 HCP but with 6-5 and great suits, you are easily worth a 2♥ reverse. You will plan to bid 3♥ over partner's bid to show a hand with 5 hearts and 6+ diamonds.

♠ 9
♥ AQ843
♦ KJ7632
♣ K

This hand isn't strong enough to bid 2♥ over 1♠. Your only choice is to rebid 2♦. Most experts would open 1♥ planning to rebid 2♦ to show both suits.

♠ KJ
♥ J643
♦ AJT42
♣ AQ

This one fits the minimum requirements for a reverse – 16 HCP, longer diamonds than hearts. Experts however would probably open 1NT rather than plan to bid 1D-1S; 2H. Reverses ideally should have lots of strength in the two suits bid.

♠ 87
♥ AKJ3
♦ AQJT5
♣ J9

Same shape and HCP as the hand above it, but this one looks like a 1♦-1♠; 2♥ reverse auction is right. You “live” in diamonds and hearts.

Conclusions

Keep in mind that when you open and are about to reverse, partner bypassed that suit on the one level.

- ♥ For instance, if the auction starts 1♣-1♠; partner won't have 4 hearts if partner has only 4 spades (she would have bid a four card heart suit “up the line”).
- ♥ Partner might have 5 spades and 4 hearts so you will occasionally find a great fit, but most of the time, you won't.
- ♥ Think about slam as responder with about an opening hand and a fit for partner's minor.

♠ 8
♥ KQ92
♦ AQ3
♣ KQJ93

♠ A7432
♥ T5
♦ K6
♣ AT42

1♣; 1♠
2♥; ??

These are the hands where reverses pay dividends. When partner opened 1C, East didn't even know if they had a game or a real club fit. Now after 2♥, East knows partner has 16+ HCP, 5+ clubs and 4+ hearts. Will all that information, East can make a move toward the excellent club slam.