

# Lebensohl III: Further sequences

Last time we saw how Lebensohl allows you to distinguish between a weak and a strong hand in two situations: (1) When the opposition overcalls partner's 1NT and (2) the opposition opens a weak two and partner doubles. In particular Lebensohl allows you to stop at the three level:

1NT 2♥ 3♣ P FORCING

and

1NT 2♥ 2NT P  
 3♣ P P P SIGN  
 OFF

The possibility of introducing 2NT before other bids greatly expands the range of sequences available. This week a couple of new sequences that come with Lebensohl.

Suppose partner opens 1NT and RHO overcalls 2♠, what do you bid with these two hands:

♠K104	♠94
♥KQ83	♥KQ83
♦AJ107	♦AJ107
♣94	♣K104
Hand A	Hand B

In both cases it looks like you want to be in game (at least 25 points between the two hands); the question is which is the best game. If partner has four hearts in either case then 4♥ should prove to be the best contract.

For hand A, if partner does not have four hearts, 3NT should come home with the KS acting as a stopper.

For hand B, suppose partner does not have four hearts, there is no guarantee 3NT is making.

How do we distinguish between A and B: can we show a hand with four hearts and a spade stop, and four hearts and no spade stop?

The answer is to cue bid the opponents' suit:

- Bidding a direct cue shows game values, a stop, and four hearts.
- Bidding a cue via Lebensohl shows game values, 4 hearts, and no stop.

This is just the same as bidding 3NT: direct shows a stop, via Lebensohl denies one. Of course entirely the same applies after a 2♥ overcall.

Over a cue bid, the 1NT opener should be in a good position to judge the best game (3NT/4Major). In the case where neither hand has a stopper and there is no eight-card major fit then it is possible to wiggle to 4 minor (or 5 minor with 27+ points).

Less useful is playing this treatment over double of a weak two. With four cards in the other major, you would only cue with a real doubt about where the best place to play would be.

2♠ X P 3NT

and

2♠ X P 3♠

The first auction expresses no doubt about the final contract. The second auction suggests 3NT and 4♥ as possible contracts. A suitable hand to bid this might be:

♠ KQJ
♥ K983
♦ QJ7
♣ Q104
Hand C

Interposing Lebensohl and more auctions. Just by way of example consider these two sequences:

1NT 2♠ 4♥ P

and

1NT 2♠ 2NT P

3♣ P 4♥ P

It would be sensible to make one of these a slam try and the other one a sign-off. There are several similar sequences; in a regular partnership it's worth discussing what the bids mean via Lebensohland direct.

Lots of problems to finish with:

After partner's 1NT is overcalled 2♥ what do you do with these hands, playing Lebensohl:

♠AJ85 ♥AJ3 ♦104 ♣KQ92	♠K853 ♥KQ10 53 ♦7 ♣J82	♠AK92 ♥8 ♦KQ1074 ♣A54	♠AKJ105 ♥9 ♦K754 ♣K102
Hand1	Hand2	Hand3	Hand4

Partner opens 1NT. The next hand overcalls 2♠. What do you bid?

♠KJ9 ♥108 ♦73 ♣KJ10852	♠AQ ♥QJ108 ♦AJ1073 ♣J4	♠AQJ ♥K1085 ♦KQ5 ♣Q 102	♠83 ♥AKQ8 ♦J1064 ♣KJ3
Hand5	Hand6	Hand7	Hand8

Partner double the opposition's weak 2 ♠ and then the next hand passes. What will you bid?

♠AJ108 ♥KQ108 ♦K7 ♣J103	♠KQ10 ♥KQ83 ♦Q104 ♣Q96	♠K102 ♥AJ1032 ♦103 ♣KJ8	♠A62 ♥AQ108 ♦K743 ♣93
Hand9	Hand10	Hand11	Hand12

**Answers:**

- Hand 1: Bid 3♥ to show game values, four spades, and a heart stop.
- Hand 2: Pass is probably best. There is no guarantee that game is making. If you double, partner will bid 2NT or 3NT and probably struggle. Good things can happen if you pass. The opposition may bid on. Partner may even find an opening double...
- Hand 3: Make a cue bid via Lebensohl: 2NT and then 3♥ to show game values, four spades, and no heart stop. 3NT, 4♠, 5♣, or 5♦ could be making. This is the best way to investigate.
- Hand 4: Bid a forcing 3♠ with this hand, showing game values and five spades.
- Hand 5: Bid 2NT (Lebensohl) and pass partner's 3♣ bid.
- Hand 6: Show game values, four hearts, and a spade stop by bidding a direct 3♠.
- Hand 7: You'd like to end up defending 2♠ doubled. This is unlikely to happen. But partner may pass if you double. Double. (Initially showing an 11 count - but you're in control of the auction here) And then bid 3NT if partner pulls it to 2NT.
- Hand 8: Game values. No spade stop. Four hearts. Make a cue bid via Lebensohl: 2NT and then 3♠.
- Hand 9: Pass. This might depend on the vulnerability. But passing looks good.
- Hand 10: Is 3NT or 4♥ the best game? You can show four hearts and offer a choice of games by bidding 3♠. A very flat hand with no ruffing potential and a good spade stop - these are the reasons for offering the choice of games.
- Hand 11: A easy 4♥ bid.
- Hand 12: A again a easy 4♥ bid. There is ruffing potential and only one spade stop. 3NT is not as attractive as a potential contract.