

LEBENSOHL – RUBENSOHL – RUMPELSOHL (PART-1)

When your partner opens 1NT and RHO passes, you have no problem in bidding your hand with all types of gadgets. However when your RHO throws a spoke and overcalls with 2D/2H or 2S, you need to have a clear understanding how to proceed further. One of the mostly used convention is LEBENSOHL.

A) LEBENSOHL Convention

Lebensohl convention has been designed to enable responder to bid better his hand after an opponent overcalls over his partner's one notrump opening. True history of Lebensohl is not known. This convention was thought to be the brain child of Mr. Kenneth Lebensold, who denied any involvement in development of this convention. Mr. George Boehm first publicized this convention through an article in The Bridge World magazine in November 1970.

The Lebensohl convention is basically a method for the responder to make competitive as well as forcing bids after an opponent has overcalled over the one notrump opening. However today, the Lebensohl principle is also used to handle responses to takeout doubles of weak two bids and also when opener reverses.

The corner stone of Lebensohl convention is a bid of 2NT as puppet to 3C which allows responder to show various kinds of hands. I remember an incident on this convention. In year 1992 when returning from Ahmedabad nationals, I was explaining this convention to one of my friend. When I told him that 2NT is puppet to 3C, he didn't agree saying how can it be that you can't play 2NT natural Invitational. It was a hard time to convince him the utility of this convention. But today many Bridge players are playing some variation of Lebensohl. The complete Lebensohl structure of responder's bids after a two-level overcall is:

- **Double**, is for take out or penalty or raise to 2NT depending on your partnership understanding.
- **Two-level suit bid**, is natural and non forcing, to play.
- **Three-level suit bid**, is natural and game forcing.
- **Cue-bid of overcaller's suit**, is like Stayman and promises a 4-card major and denies a check in the opponent's suit. The cue-bid is game forcing.
- **Jump to 3NT**, denies a stopper in the opponent's suit and is to play, if opener has a stopper. Without stopper, opener bids a 5-card major to play or looks for a minor suit contract.
- **2NT**, is puppet to 3C. Opener must bid 3C only. Responder then rebids:
 - **Pass**, shows a weak hand and long clubs.
 - **New suit below the overcaller's suit**, is to play.
 - **New suit above the overcaller's suit**, is invitational.
 - **Cue-bid of overcaller's suit**, is like game forcing Stayman and promises a 4-card major and also shows a check in the opponent's suit. Opener bids a 4-card major, otherwise 3NT.
 - **3NT**, shows a stopper in the opponent's suit and is to play.
- **Four-level bids**, as without intervention

The above set of responses enables responder to show various kinds of non-forcing, invitational and game forcing hands and allows search for major suit fits. Also it makes possible to avoid three notrump when neither opener nor responder has a stopper. In the above responses a **Direct** bid (cue or 3NT) **Denies** stopper in the opponent's suit where as a **Slow** action (via 2NT puppet) **Shows** stopper. The acronym for this mechanism is FADS – **F**ast **A**ction **D**enies **S**topper. You can reverse the meanings of two bids i.e. a direct cue bid or 3NT bid shows stopper and via 2NT denies stopper. The acronym for this mechanism would be FASS – **F**ast **A**ction **S**hows **S**topper.

The above Lebensohl structure is applicable when opponent's make a natural call of 2D, 2H or 2S. If they interfere with 2C bid which is either natural or unspecified single suiter, play System on that means :

Double – Stayman, 2D/H – Transfer and all other bids same as without interference.

The only drawback of this convention is that it makes responder declarer when responder makes a 3-level game forcing call. Therefore, many players use transfers in Lebensohl. This variation of Lebensohl is known as **Advanced Lebensohl**. There are other variations on transfer concept – **Rubensohl and Rumpelsohl** which we would be discussing next month.

(Contributed by Sudhir Aggarwal)

LEBENSOHL – RUBENSOHL – RUMPELSOHL (PART-2)

Your partner opens 1NT and RHO overcalls 2S. You had agreed to play Lebensohl with your partner and you held S-x H-Kxxxxxx D-Kxxx Cxx. Since you didn't think the hand is Game Forcing, you dutifully bid 2NT planning to show your heart suit after Opener rebids 3C. Your plans were immediately dashed as your RHO jammed the auction by bidding 4S. Your partner and RHO passes the buck back to you. Your partner's hand: S-xxx H-AQxx D-Qx AKxx. You are cold for 5H but your partnership is poorly placed to judge what is right for you. When opponents have a great fit they will always preempt you. That is why it is important to get your suit in the bidding to enable a better judgement.

Most of the players play transfers over 1NT, the main advantage is to make the stronger hand declarer. You lose this advantage playing Lebensohl and many times responder becomes declarer. The answer to this problem is to play **RUBENSOHL**.

B) RUBENSOHL Convention

Rubensohl convention has been named after Jeff Rubens. Rubensohl is basically a combination of Rubens Advances and Lebensohl. Rubensohl was named by Bruce Neill of Sydney and was described in The Bridge World magazine in May 1983. However similar ideas to replace Lebensohl were also developed by Ira Rubin. That is why this convention is also called RUBINSOHL.

In Rubensohl all bids from 2NT to 3S are transfers. The bids are either sign-off in the suit shown or game forcing. After opener has accepted the transfer, responder can sign-off by passing or bids again with a GF hand. 3NT is natural to play with stopper in the opponent's suit. Transfer to opponent's suit is stayman and shows 4-cards in the major suit, with or without stopper in opponent's suit. The general Rubensohl structure of responder's bids after a two-level overcall is:

1N – 2S – ? Further developments are 2N – Transfer to Clubs, weak or GF 3C – Transfer to Diamond, weak or GF 3D – Transfer to Hearts, weak or GF 3H – Stayman, shows 4 hearts, GF 3S – Transfer to 3NT, denies 4-card major and no stopper in opponent's suit 3N – To play with stopper in Spade suit	1N – 2H – ? Further developments are 2S – Natural, Non forcing 2N – Transfer to Clubs, weak or GF 3C – Transfer to Diamond, weak or GF 3D – Stayman, shows 4 spades, GF 3H – Transfer to Spade, atleast invitational 3S – Trf to 3NT, no stopper, no major. 3N – To play with stopper in Heart suit
1N – 2S – 2N – 3C – ? 3D – Natural GF with 5+ clubs and 4 diamonds 3H – Natural GF with 5+ clubs and 4 hearts 3S/N –GF with Clubs, 3S no stopper, 3N stopper	1N – 2H – 3D (stayman) – ? 3H – No stopper in hearts and no 4-card Spade 3S – 4-card Spade 3N – To play, shows Heart stopper

The above structure is definitely an improvement over simple Lebensohl. However you don't have invitational bids available in suits unless you could bid your suit naturally at 2-level. If opponents overcall with 2D over 1NT, both 2H and 2S are natural and non-forcing. Accordingly transfers at 3-level are atleast invitational. A similar convention which incorporates Lebensohl with transfers is **Advanced Lebensohl**. In this convention you can invite in all suits however for weak hands you have to go through 2NT relay. We will discuss in detail Advanced Lebensohl next month.

Rubensohl after One of a suit Opening Bid

Another use of Rubensohl which I strongly recommend is after one of a suit opening bid and overcall at two level (with or without jump) by opponents. Here also all bids from 2NT onwards are transfer to next higher suit. Since the opener has to bid at 3-level, the responder has to be careful and must have atleast invitational hand. Opener simply transfers if he doesn't accept the game invitation otherwise he bids naturally. 3S (only after minor suit opening bid) and 3N bids show a stopper in the opponent's suit. 3S asks opener to bid 3NT. With no stopper, responder will double first and then cue bid opponent's suit.

In case of major suit opening bid transfers apply upto opener's major suit only. Transfer to opponent's suit is 3-card limit raise and transfer to opener's suit is 4-card raise.

(Contributed by Sudhir Aggarwal)

LEBENSOHL – RUBENSOHL – RUMPELSOHL (PART-3)

We have discussed Lebensohl and Rubensohl so far. Both of these systems are fine and many partnerships play these only. However the main problem is that both these systems don't cater to Invitational hands. The Transfer Lebensohl and Rumpelsohl conventions cater to invitational hands as well.

Transfer Lebensohl (also known as Advanced Lebensohl) is a modification of Standard Lebensohl where Jacoby Transfers have been integrated in the response structure. By using transfers, responder is able to show various types of hands which are difficult to show using standard methods: invitational hands in all the three suits not shown by the overcall, two-suiters with game or slam potential.

C) Transfer Lebensohl Responses after Opponents interfere over 1NT Opening

The corner stone of Transfer Lebensohl convention also is a bid of 2NT which is transfer to 3C (not puppet). The responder may have, weak or invitational or game forcing hand in clubs, weak hand in other suits below the overcaller's suit or check in opponent's suit with or without 4-cards in the other major. The various responses are:

- **Double**, is for Penalties or take out or raise to 2NT depending on partnership understanding.
- **Two-level suit bid**, is natural and non forcing, to play.
- **Cue-bid of overcaller's suit**, is like Stayman and promises a 4-card major and denies a check in the opponent's suit. The cue-bid is game forcing. (same as in Standard Lebensohl)
- **Three-level suit bid**, is transfer to next higher suit, by passing opponent's suit and shows at least game invitational hand. If opponent has bid 2D, then 3C is transfer to 3H where as if opponent bids 2H, then 3D is transfer to spade.
- **Jump to 3NT**, denies a stopper in the opponent's suit. (same as in Standard Lebensohl)
- **2NT**, is transfer to 3C. Opener bids 3C only if he has a hand with which he wants to reject game invitation in clubs. Other wise he bids 3D. Over 3D responder with weak hand can bid 4C and with invitation hand with clubs can choose a game. Over 3C bid by opener, responder's rebids are:
 - **Pass**, shows a hand with long clubs (weak or invitational).
 - **New suit below the overcaller's suit**, is to play and shows a weak hand with that suit.
 - **New suit above the overcaller's suit**, is Natural shows clubs and the new suit, GF.
 - **Cue-bid of overcaller's suit**, is like game forcing Stayman and promises a 4-card major and also shows a check in the opponent's suit. Opener bids a 4-card major, otherwise 3NT.
 - **3NT**, to play and shows stopper (same as in Standard Lebensohl). May also have clubs.
- **Other major at 3-level or 3S (over 2D)**, shows a game forcing hand with both minors. Opener to bid 3NT with a check other wise look for a minor suit game.
- **Four-level bids**, as without intervention, 4C – Gerber; 4D/H – Texas transfer; 4S – Minors etc.

B) Examples: (assumes 15-17 NT)

♠ Qxx ♥ x ♦ QJ9xxx ♣ xxx	♠ xxx ♥ AKJxx ♦ Qxx ♣ xx	♠ Kxx ♥ AQxx ♦ xxx ♣ Axx	♠ xxx ♥ AQxxx ♦ Qxx ♣ xx
After 1NT Opening & 2H overcall, bid 2N which is transfer to 3C. Over 3C bid 3D which is sign-off. If opener bids 3D, pass to show weak hand.	After 1NT Opening & 2S overcall bid, 3D which is transfer to heart and at least invitational. After opener bids 3H bid 3S to force to game.	After 1NT Opening & 2S overcall bid 2N transfer to 3C. Over 3C bid 3S as spade stopper and 4 hearts, GF. This bidding is same in both the versions of Lebensohl.	After 1N Opening & 2S overcall bid 3D as transfer to 3H. If opener bids 3H, pass to show an invitational hand. This bidding is better than in normal Lebensohl.

We will continue our discussion on Rumpelsohl convention in next month's bulletin. In case of any doubts or clarification, kindly contact me.

(Contributed by Sudhir Aggarwal)

LEBENSOHL – RUBENSOHL – RUMPELSOHL (PART-4)

We have discussed enough conventions Lebensohl, Rubensohl and Transfer Lebensohl. You may ask – Are these conventions not enough in handling opponents’ interference over 1NT Opening? I think they can certainly handle and most of the Bridge players are satisfied with Lebensohl alone. Then what is need for so many conventions? The reason is simple – it is the quest for greater accuracy in bidding that search for newer and newer methods will continue. One such convention is Rumpelsohl.

D) RUMPELSOHL Convention

Rumpelsohl convention is part of the **Kaplan-Sheinwold** System. This convention has been given this very strange name as it combines the advantages of Lebensohl and Rubensohl. The basic transfer system in Rumpelsohl is like Rubensohl except that 2NT is not a transfer. The 2NT bid is some what like Lebensohl. The main advantage of Rumpelsohl is that it distinguishes between weak/game forcing hands or invitational hands. The various responses are:

- **Double**, is for Penalties (except when opponent has bid 2C, the double is Stayman).
- **Two-level suit bid**, is natural and non forcing, to play.
- **2NT**, is puppet to 3C. Over 3C bid by opener, responder’s rebids are:
 - **Pass**, shows a hand with long clubs
 - **New suit**, Invitational hand with atleast 5-cards in the bid suit.
 - **Cue-bid of overcaller’s suit**, is like game forcing Stayman and promises a 4-card major and also shows a check in the opponent’s suit. Opener bids a 4-card major, otherwise 3NT.
 - **3NT**, to play and shows stopper (same as in Standard Lebensohl).
- **Three-level suit bid (3C, 3D, 3H)**, transfer to next higher suit, either signoff or game forcing hand. Responder will bid over opener’s response with a game forcing hand. A transfer into opponent’s suit is like Stayman and promises a 4-card major and denies a check in the opponent’s suit.
- **3S**, shows a game forcing hand with no 4-card major, a partial stopper (like Jxx) in opponents’ suit and usually length in both minors. Opener to bid 3NT with a check otherwise show his better minor.
- **Jump to 3NT**, denies a stopper in the opponent’s suit. (same as in Standard Lebensohl).
- **Four-level bids**, 4C – Void in opponent’s suit with slam interest; 4D/H – Texas transfer. Transfer into opponent’s suit shows singleton and slam interest. 4NT by opener is signoff otherwise suits are bid up the line-forcing to the 5-level.

The above set of responses as part of Rumpelsohl convention is definitely an improvement. However somehow I don’t prefer Relay of 2NT for invitational hands. Therefore I suggest that if opponents overcall in a major suit, then transfer into opponents’ suit is natural and shows invitational hand in the suit bid. For stayman with or without stopper you can go via 2NT. Basically it is just swapping the meanings of direct transfer cue or transfer cue via 2NT. The following structure is what I would like to recommend:

1N – 2S – ? Further developments are 2N – Puppet to 3C 3C – Transfer to Diamond, weak or GF 3D – Transfer to Hearts, weak or GF 3H – Natural, Invitational 3S – Both minors, slamish 3N – To play but no stopper in Spades	1N – 2H – ? Further developments are 2S – Natural, Non forcing 2N – Puppet to 3C 3C – Transfer to Diamond, weak or GF 3D – Natural, Invitational 3H – Transfer to Spade, atleast invitational 3S – Both minors, slamish 3N – To play but no stopper in Hearts
1N – 2S – 2N – 3C – ? 3D – Invitational hand in Diamonds 3H – Transfer cue, stayman without stopper 3S – Cue bid, 4 hearts and spade stopper 3N – GF with stopper in Spades	1N – 2H – 2N – 3C – ? 3D – Transfer cue, stayman without stopper 3H – Cue bid, 4 spades and heart stopper 3S – Shows 5+ clubs and 4 spades 3N – GF with stopper in Hearts

If opponents overall 2D, then 3C is stayman and 3D/H are transfers with atleast invitational hand. 1N-2D-2N-3C (puppet)-3D is stayman with stopper and 3H/S shows 4-card suit with 5+ clubs.

(Contributed by Sudhir Aggarwal)