

LEBENSOHL IN A NUTSHELL

Lebensohl is a complex convention used after an opponent overcalls your partner's 1NT. This is a very simplified version to get you started.

Remember this phrase slow shows: fast denies.

When your partner's 1NT opening is overcalled at the two-level,

1. Double is for penalty .
2. 2NT is a relay,demands that opener bid 3C

1NT 2H 2NT Pass 3C

3. You can still get to 3NT if you have 10+ points,

a. 3NT directly after the over call denies a stopper 1NT 2H 3NT

b. 2NT then 3NT after partner bids 3C (slow) shows a stopper

1NT 2H 2NT pass
3C p 3NT

4 types of hands:

If the auction begins:

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
—	—	1NT	2♥
?			

There are four possible hand types that you might want to show and, conveniently, four possible sequences to show them. These are the four hand types you might hold:

Hand D

Four spades and no heart stop

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
—	—	1NT	2♥
3♥			

Cue-bidding the opponent's suit promises four cards in the unbid major (or in at least one major if the opponent's suit is a minor). Bidding directly denies a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Hand E

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
—	—	1NT	2♥
3NT			

Bidding 3NT denies four cards in the unbid major (or in either major if the opponent's suit is a minor). Bidding directly denies a stopper in the opponent's suit.

Fewer than four spades and no heart stop

Hand F

Four spades and a stop in hearts

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
—	—	1NT	2♥
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥			

Again, cue-bidding the opponent's suit promises four cards in the unbid major (or in at least one major in the opponent's suit is a minor).

Starting with the Lebensohl 2NT (and then showing a balanced hand by cue-bidding or bidding 3NT) shows a stopper in the opponent's suit. ("Slow Shows" is the way

that many people remember which way around these are played.)

Hand G

Fewer than four spades but a heart stop

You	LHO	Partner	RHO
—	—	1NT	2♥
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3NT			

As above, bidding 3NT denies four cards in the unbid major (or in either major in the opponent's suit is a minor). Starting with the Lebensohl 2NT and then bidding 3NT shows a stopper in the opponent's suit ("Slow Shows").

Four possible hand types, four sequences.

Note that the easy one to forget is when partner jumps to 3NT directly (ie. Sequence E above). Although this may sound like a natural bid he is DENYING a stopper in the opponent's suit.

4. A cue bid of the opponents suit is stayman

a. Directly after the overcall denies a stopper 1NT 2S 3S pass

b. Using the 2NT relay, (slow) then cue bidding shows a stopper 1NT 2S 2NT pass
3C p 3S

c. If the overcall suit was 2 clubs or double, Lebensohl is off. Double 2C for Stayman, otherwise bid as you would have without the interference.

5. With a 5+card major suit and a game-forcing hand, bid your suit at the three level immediately.

1NT 2S 3H P

6. With a 6+card minorsuit and a game forcing hand, bid your suit at the three level immediately.

7. Bidding your suit at the 2level is competitive. 1NT 2D 2H

a. If you have no room to bid your suit at the 2level, bid 2NT i. And pass if your suit is clubs

ii. Otherwise bid your suit; opener must pass 1NT 2H 2NTP
3C P 3D

8. If you have room to bid a suit at the 2 level, but instead bid 2NT and over opener's 3C bid a suit, you are bidding an invitational hand

1NT 2D 2NT P 3C p 3H

You give up bidding a natural 2NT. If that's what you wanted to do, pass, double, or bid 3NT. You give up transfers after interference.

This is Lebensohl over natural interference.

If the interference is one of the many artificial systems, you can still use Lebensohl. If the system has one known suit, base slow shows: direct denies on that known suit. For example, if 2D shows diamonds or some two suited hand, base slow shows; direct denies on diamonds. If there is no known suit, the single suit option is the base suit. For example, if 2C shows diamonds or some two suited hand, base slow shows; direct denies on diamonds.