



<p><i><b>This series of articles began in January, 2008</b></i></p>	<p><b>What Should we Play?</b></p> <p><b>Part 7a</b></p> <p><b>After Our I-Level Openings – Wrap-up</b></p> <p><b>By Larry Cohen</b></p>	<p><b>Grand Asia Bridge Cruise w/ Larry Cohen</b></p> <p>Larry will give his unique "vu-graph" lectures daily.</p> <p>Enjoy Regent's 6-star luxury cruises with a bridge program hosted by 23-time National Champion, Larry Cohen—Fall 2009.</p> 
		

## 1-Level Openings Wrap-up

In the previous 4 months ([Click here for all the articles](#)) we've examined openings on the one-level in minors and majors. This month and next, we tie up the loose ends with an examination of these oft-confused topics.

We will cover:

- 1) Opener's Jump shift**
- 2) Opener's Reverse**
- 3) Fourth-Suit Forcing**
- 4) New-Minor Checkback**
- 5) Inverted Minors**
- 6) 2/1 GF**

Warning: Some of this material is a little beyond my normal KISS approach. The first three items are "must-reads" for all players up to intermediate level. The latter three items (covered next month) are more on the advanced side.

# 1) Opener's Jump Shift

It continually amazes me how many “intermediate” players have been improperly taught (or improperly remember) this topic. Read carefully: A Jump-shift by opener is GAME FORCING. It shows a very big hand. It does not show a 16- or 17-count. Got it?

Let's look at a few examples:

	Opener		Responder
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	3 ♣		

Opener should have something like:

♠4 ♥A2 ♦AQJ92 ♣AKJ32.

Opener should *not* have:

♠4 ♥J2 ♦KQJ92 ♣AKQ32.

With the latter hand, opener has to rebid 2 ♣ (in tempo, please). He is not nearly strong enough to jumpshift.

	Opener		Responder
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♦
Pass	2 ♥		

Opener should have something like:

♠A3 ♥AQJ2 ♦2 ♣AKJ652.

Opener should *not* have:

♠4 ♥KJ92 ♦A2 ♣AQJ832.

With the latter hand, opener has to rebid 1 ♥ (again, in tempo—don't indicate that you have extras by taking a long time). Opener is not nearly strong enough to force to game with a jumpshift.

So, a jumpshift is a huge bid, showing almost a strong 2-bid. Not only is it forcing

(partner cannot pass), but it is forcing all the way until game is reached. The only way to stop short of game is if responder breaks system and just decides to pass, maybe because he has responded with a 1-count or the like.

**Note:** A 2NT rebid (as a jumpshift) is the obvious exception. That action shows 18-19 balanced, and *can* be passed.

## 2) Opener's Reverse

This can be a complex subject. "What is a reverse?" Technically, there are several ways to describe it, all of them confusing. Here is one way to define a reverse:

*"a nonjump bid by opener at the two-level in a new suit that ranks higher than the suit opener bid first."*

Ugh! Better to look at a few example auctions of a reverse by opener:

Auction 1)

	Opener		Responder
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♦		

Auction 2)

	Opener		Responder
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥		

Notice that in each auction, the opener bid a new suit on the two-level in a higher-ranking suit than his first suit. Such a bid shows extras. Why? Because if the responder now were to go back (take a preference) to opener's first suit, he would have to go up even one more level (to the three-level). Opener had better have a good hand to survive such a preference. How good?

**A reverse shows about 16-18 playing points.** I won't get into how to add for distribution at this point. Suffice to say, that the modern-day treatment is to count extra for *long* suits. Add for short suits, only after a trump-fit has been established.

So, on the two auctions shown above, the hands opener might have (respectively)

are:

Auction 1) ♠5 ♥J43 ♦AQJ9 ♣AKQ54.

Opener should *not* have:

♠4 ♥QJ2 ♦AQJ9 ♣KJ532. This hand is not strong enough to reverse.

Auction 2) ♠2 ♥AQJ3 ♦AKJ98 ♣K54.

Opener should *not* have:

♠2 ♥QJ32 ♦AKJ65 ♣K32. This hand is not strong enough to reverse.

A reverse is forcing—responder “cannot” pass. However a reverse is **NOT** forcing to game. Note the difference between a reverse and a jumpshift which guarantees a more powerful hand and is game-forcing.

Quick summary:

Opener’s Jumpshift = Game forcing

Opener’s Reverse = One-round forcing

What happens after the reverse? You can just “wing it,” if you wish, but here is a simple (and common) system:

AFTER OPENER REVERSES:

If the responder rebids his suit, it shows 5+ cards and is forcing one round, but not to game. Example: 1♦—1♠—2♥—2♠ (5+♠, forcing one round)

If the responder bids the *cheapest new suit* (or 2NT if that is cheaper), he is showing a weak hand. He can pass opener’s next bid. (Example: 1♦—1♠—2♥—2NT (weak hand—the responder can pass opener’s next bid).

If the responder does anything else, it is natural and forcing to game. (Example: 1♦—1♠—2♥—3♦ (Natural, game forcing)

Notes: There is confusion (rightly so) over other “reverse” auctions. For example, is 1♥—2♣—2♠ a “reverse?” It is, but does it show extras if playing that 2♣ was already GF? There is no universal answer. Also, is 1♠—2♥—3♣ a reverse?

Again, no consensus. There are other auctions where it is not clear if opener has reversed, nor whether he has promised extras. Also, the explanation given in this article is just a summary—it doesn't cover all the nuances. However, it already says more than I wanted to say—this is supposed to be a KISS (Keep it Simple...) summary.

### 3) Fourth-Suit Forcing

When the responder bids the fourth suit (the only suit not bid yet) on his second turn, it means he has a good hand. He does not promise any length or strength in the (fourth) suit he has bid.

How strong a hand? I recommend playing it as a game force. This means the responder has at least opening-bid values (he knows that opposite his partner's opening bid there is enough combined strength for game).

Example:

Opener	Responder
1 ♣	1 ♥
1 ♠	2 ♦

In this auction, responder's 2 ♦ says:

Partner, I have enough for game (I might not have anything in diamonds).

Why make such a bid?

In modern bridge, if responder had jumped at his second turn, for example:

Opener	Responder	or	Opener	Responder	or	Opener	Responder	
1 ♣	1 ♥		1 ♣	1 ♥		1 ♣	1 ♥	
1 ♠	3 ♥		1 ♠	3 ♠		1 ♠	3 ♣	

it would be *invitational*. In general, a second-round jump by responder is invitational. Accordingly, if he has *more* than an invitational hand he needs to make some other bid. Ergo, fourth-suit forcing. In each of the three auctions above, what if responder had a game-forcing hand with either hearts, spades, or clubs? In all cases he'd start with 2 ♦ to set up the game force. On his next turn (he had better get one!) he clarifies his intentions with a natural (forcing) bid.

Notes:

1) I highly recommend playing the 4<sup>th</sup> suit by responder (as an UPH) as 100% game forcing.

2) Look out for the special auction of 1♣—1♦—1♥—1♠: Some players choose to use this as the only exception. The 1♠ bid is treated as a natural call (to try to locate a possible 4-4 spade fit), and the “fourth-suit forcing bid” becomes a jump to 2♠. It is not crucial that you make this exception—but just be aware that many partnerships do so.

3) By a passed hand, the fourth suit should be natural and not forcing at all (a passed hand can't force to game).

4) I recommend that jumps in the fourth suit be played as natural and invitational. So, 1♦-1♠-2♣-3♥ is something like: ♠AQJxx ♥KJ10xx ♦xx ♣x.

Next month – Wrap-up on 1-level openings (new minor, inverted minors, 2/1 GF)

For descriptions of most conventions mentioned in this series, see the [ACBL page](#) on [Commonly Used Conventions](#).

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