

Lebensohl

Lebensohl was first described by George Boehm in 1970 and called it lebensohl (no capital letter). He attributed it to Ken Lebensold, a mathematics professor, however he denied any responsibility for the convention. Thus, a mystery!

This convention is quite often thought to be too difficult to learn and remember by many players, so we will try to make it as simple as possible and as memorable. If you can remember either "SLOW SHOWS" or "FAST DENIES" it will help greatly. **All doubles over their bids are for PENALTY.**

The great difficulty in describing your hand over opponent's interference after a 1 NT opening is impossible without a plan, a way to show all the different types of hands. The types of hands are:

- 1) To Play
- 2) Invitational
- 3) Game Forcing

Let's start by saying that we all should be playing that systems are on over 2 Clubs and Double (not a penalty Double) by the opponents over our 1 NT opening.

That takes care of all the 2 Club bids and the non-Penalty Doubles and that allows us to take REGULAR action over these. Nothing to remember here except that our systems are on.

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Next, let's go to the hands that are "TO PLAY". Those bids will all be at the cheapest level available. Any 2 level bid will be to play and this starts at 2 **Diamonds**, because we remember that over 2 Clubs our systems are on. Here is how it looks:

Over opponent's bid of 2D, 2H

Double is for Penalty
2H or 2S is to Play

If you instead bid at the 3 level, 3C, 3**D**, 3**H**, 3S it is **GAME FORCING** and shows at least a 5 card suit and game values.

You may still play Texas Transfers and bid at the 4 level with a 6 card suit and game values.

Example Hand

1NT(pard) 2**D**(Opp) ?(you)

QJT863

7

K8

9874

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The meat of the lebensohl convention is the 2NT Relay. This allows you to to all sorts of inviting, giving partner information about whether you have opponent's suit stopped (**remember slow shows!**), and you can drop the bidding in 3C or 3D or even 3H if the overcaller's suit was a higher ranking suit and this is the cheapest way to bid it.

Example:

1NT (pard) 2H (opp) 2NT(you—RELAY) p(opp)
3C(Completing relay) p(opp) 3S(invitational)

KJ972

97

AT97

J4

If you use the 2NT relay over opponent's bid and then bid 3NT, it shows you have a stopper. If you go directly to 3NT, you do not have a stopper. **SLOW SHOWS and FAST DENIES.**

Example:

1NT(pard) 2D (opp) 2NT(relay) p(opp)
3C (forced) p (opp) 3NT (game values+stopper)

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There is good news about STAYMAN!! You can still use it. Stayman now becomes the opponent's suit and you can still show if you have a stopper too. Remember **SLOW SHOWS**.

An immediate bid of opponent's suit to the 3 level is Stayman **without a stopper**. If you go through the relay you are showing a stopper when you then bid opponent's suit for Stayman.

Example:

1NT (pard) 2D (opp) 3D(Stayman, no stopper) p(opp)

Pard will answer stayman and knows you have no stopper.

1NT(pard) 2D(opp) 2NT(relay) p(opp)
3C(forced bid) p 3D (stayman with a stopper)

What about 2 suited overcalls by opponent's? We are not dealing in depth with these today, however if there is a **KNOWN** suit, you may proceed with Lebensohl and just use that suit.

SLOW SHOWS

Lebensohl Questions

"Slow Shows" in Lebensohl means you go through what bid before bidding 3NT to show a stopper in Opp's suit?

"Fast Denies" means you do not have a stopper in what?

To play a suit and have partner pass you should bid your suit at the _____ level.

Double is for _____ when playing lebensohl.

A cue bid in Opp's suit is _____. To show a stopper in Opp's suit, go through the 2NT relay before bidding Opp's suit.

If you show Pard you do not have a stopper in the Opp's suit and he doesn't have one, it is time to

Letting Pard know if you have a "To Play", "Invitational", or "Game Forcing" hand is one of the main benefits of

Pard bids 1NT, RHO bids 2D and you bid 3H. That bid is

Lebensohl Worksheet

What is your plan on these hands over 1NT (Pard) and 2 D by Opp?

T, Q763,43, KJT864 _____

QJT853, 7, 843, T92 _____

KJ53, QJ83,2, A863 _____

KQ5, JT7, A6, T9764 _____

What is your plan on these hands over 1NT(Pard) and 2S by Opp?

QT, A85, KT87, QJ42 _____

96, Q86, T97653, K3 _____

8, KQT765, AJ5, 865 _____

7, AQT5, K763, QT64 _____

What is your next bid on this hand after opening 1NT and the Opp bids 2H and pard bids 3NT?

AJ73, 97, KQ4, AQ83 _____

LEBENSOHL EXAMPLE HANDS

AKT7

Q98

AT

KT72

J84

653

983

A984

952

J7

KQJ542

J6

Q63

AKT42

76

Q53

N
1NT
4H

E
2D
p

S
3H
p

W
p
p

AKT7

Q984

AT

KT7

J84

653

983

A984

952

J7

KQJ542

J6

Q63

AKT4

76

Q532

N
1NT
3H

E
2D
p

S
3D
4H

W
p