

# Fun Without Lebensohl

When The Shirt and PANT are off

## Show and Tell

Some types of interference over 1NT call for a treatment other than Lebensohl. A good example of such interference is the Hamilton 2 Diamond bid. As you recall, this bid says nothing about diamonds, but instead is a takeout bid for both majors. So what sense would it make to use Lebensohl to discuss diamond stoppers when the opponent has in essence overcalled both major suits and is not threatening diamonds at all?

Notice that, when the Hamilton 2 Diamond bid has been made by the opponent, we will no longer be interested in playing in a major suit ourselves because the opponent has substantial major suit holdings. Although we may seek to play in a minor, our first ambition, given the opening bid of 1NT, will be to evaluate our chances for a notrump contract. The issue becomes “can we control the major suits and, if so, how many notrump can we bid?” What we need is an agreement that I like to call “Show and Tell.”

Playing Show and Tell, responder expresses her points by the level she bids at. If responder has 8 or 9 points, she bids at the two level. If she has 10 or more points, she bids at the three level.

If responder bids 2 hearts, she shows a heart stopper and denies a spade stopper. If responder, instead, bids 2 spades, she shows a spade stopper and denies a heart stopper. If responder, on the other hand, were to bid 2NT over 2 diamonds, then she shows 8 or 9 points with stoppers in both majors. At the two level, responder shows stoppers and invitational values.

If responder's bid over 2 diamonds is 3NT, she has points for game and stoppers in both majors. With points for game and only 1

major stopped, she bids 3 of the suit that she cannot stop. She is telling opener to bid 3NT if opener can stop this suit. Bidding the suit that cannot be stopped is consistent with Western Cuebid, and that is why responder is bidding what cannot be stopped. Major suit bids by responder at the 3 level tell opener to bid 3NT with a stopper in the suit bid.

On occasion, responder will just want to compete in a minor for a partscore, having no interest in notrump. In this case, over the Hamilton 2 diamonds, responder bids her minor suit, either 3 clubs or 3 diamonds, expecting opener to pass.

Show and Tell can have other applications that go beyond the scope of this article. Let it suffice to say that the more you play bridge, the greater the variety of interfering overcall systems you will encounter. If you are building a polished partnership, you will want to discuss each in detail with your partner, deciding when to apply Lebensohl and when to apply Show and Tell. Since Lebensohl is equipped to handle one suit only, while Show and Tell can handle two suits, Show and Tell may be better whenever both of the opponent's suits are known specifically. Lebensohl, however, can express a greater variety of hand types.

You may want to discuss with your favorite partners, for instance, whether you want to play Lebensohl or Show and Tell when DONT bidders interfere with a call of 2 Hearts. In favor of Lebensohl is simply the ability to distinguish between weak minors and invitational minors. A direct call in a minor would show invitational quality minor suits, while 2NT would precede a run out to a weak minor. In favor of Show and Tell is the ability

to check stoppers in both suits while still showing points, with some qualification. Using Show and Tell, you might agree that, over 2 Hearts, your call of 2 spades would show a spade stopper with 8 or 9 points, but deny a heart stopper. You could agree that a call of 2NT, instead of 2 spades, showed a heart stopper and denied a spade stopper. Using this agreement, you would not be able to show a hand that had 8 or 9 points and both majors stopped, but this is the least likely case. A call of 3 hearts over 2 Hearts would show a spade stopper but no heart stopper with game values, while a direct call of 3 spades would show a heart stopper and no spade stopper. Direct calls to a minor should be runouts, these hands being more plentiful than invitational hands. In all cases of Show and Tell, double by responder should be reserved for penalty.

View Show and Tell as a tool that you employ standardly over Hamilton 2 Diamonds, but which you employ otherwise only after specific conversation with your partner.

## **Negative Doubles at 3 Level**

On occasion, an opponent will interfere over 1NT not with a 2 level call, but with a 3 level call. Daring of this sort involves a long suit of good quality. The 3 level overcaller will have a good playing hand. His hand may play well enough even to make, or it may fail by one trick only. Even if you are able to make a penalty double, you may not be collecting more than 100 points for a 1 trick nonvulnerable set, resulting in a likely low score. Since you cannot expect to get rich by doubling 3 level interfering calls for penalty, it is preferable for responder's double to be negative:

Q1084 52 KJ8 Q985

If partner opens 1NT and the opponent jump overcalls to 3 hearts, double with invitational values or better to show your spade suit. If partner next bids 3 spades, pass.