

Simple Lebensohl Over Weak Twos

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Introduction

Lebensohl was originally invented in the late sixties for 1NT auctions. But forget about that for now – it's best used when partner doubles a weak two.

Problem

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2♠	Double	Pass	??

After a weak two opening and a takeout double, partner is forced to bid at the 3 level. There is no room to show how weak or medium the hand is. For example: with four hearts, 3♥ must be bid even with zero points – in fact especially with zero points.

Solution – Simple Lebensohl

Lebensohl is used to provide a better indication of the strength of the responder to the doubler.

After 2♠ – Dbl – P – ??:

- With 0-7 points, you bid Lebensohl 2NT which forces a relay of 3♣
 - This is either passed or corrected to the best suit (4+ cards)
- With 8-11 points, suits are bid at the 3 level – invitational 4+ cards, non-forcing
- With 12+ points, game is on and there are three main options:
 - Cue bid the oppo's suit – forcing to game
 - Imagine this is a bit like Stayman and FSF combined
 - Guarantees four cards in the other major (or very strong)
 - With a five card major or six card minor go straight to game
 - 3NT is to play
 - Includes a good stop in oppo's suit and denies four of the other major
 - This is known as FASS – Fast Approach Shows Stop (natural style)
 - [Advanced players prefer FADS – Fast Approach Denies Stop]

If they opened 2♥ (or 2♦) then there is the extra option to bid spades (or hearts) at the 2 level – this is a natural weak suit, no need to bid Lebensohl 2NT.

After 2♥ – Dbl – P – ?? and you have four (or more) spades:

- With 0-7 points bid 2♠
- All other bids are the same as before – for example, 8-11 points bid 3♠
 - Note – Wikipedia article has a more complicated system

With a super strong hand the doubler can choose not to bid 3♣ after Lebensohl 2NT.

What if partner doubles in fourth seat?

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		2♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	??

Keep it simple - Lebensohl works exactly the same.

How to remember all these point ranges?

Let's compare with when partner doubles at the one level.

1♠ – Dbl – P – ??

- With 0-7 points, bid cheapest natural suit – e.g. 2♥
 - Partner must pass, unless they've got nearly "half the deck"
- With 8-11 points, jump bid – invitational 4+ cards, non-forcing – e.g. 3♥
 - Remember – only shows a four card suit at this stage
- With 12+ points game is on and usually cue bid the oppo's suit – e.g. 2♠

Simple Lebensohl follows a very similar pattern – good consistency.

Examples

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2♠	Double	Pass	??

Hand 1

♠ Q 7 2
♥ 7 3
♦ J 9 7 5 3
♣ 9 6 3

Hand 2

♠ 9 8 6 3
♥ K 9 8 6 3
♦ 4
♣ K Q 5 4

Hand 3

♠ K 6 4
♥ J 2
♦ A Q 6 4
♣ K J 6 3

Hand 4

♠ K 4
♥ Q J 10 8 6
♦ A Q 6 4
♣ 7 3

Hand 5

♠ Q 6
♥ Q J 10 8 6
♦ A Q 6 4
♣ J 9

Hand 6

♠ Q J 2
♥ 7 3
♦ K J 10 5 3
♣ K 6 3

Hand 7

♠ J 8 6 3
♥ 9 8 6 3
♦ 8 4
♣ Q 5 4

Hand 8

♠ J 6 4
♥ K 8 7 2
♦ A Q J 4
♣ A 3

Hand 9

♠ 8
♥ K Q J 8 2
♦ 9 7 6
♣ A Q J 7

Hand 10

♠ 8 6 4
♥ 7 2
♦ Q 7 6 4
♣ J 7 6 3

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2♥	Double	Pass	??

Hand 11	Hand 12	Hand 13	Hand 14	Hand 15 (also 8)
♠ 10 5 2	♠ K Q 7 6 3	♠ A Q 6 4	♠ A 10 6 4	♠ J 6 4
♥ 7 3	♥ 6 3	♥ 7 2	♥ J 7 2	♥ K 8 7 2
♦ J 9 7 5 3	♦ 10 4	♦ A Q 6 5 4	♦ A Q 6 5	♦ A Q J 4
♣ K 6 3	♣ J 9 5 2	♣ 9 6	♣ J 6	♣ A 3

For the Future

Once you're comfortable using Lebensohl over weak twos, you can consider using it in other similar cases when partner forces you to bid over other weak 2-level bids:

- **Weak Jump Overcalls** where opener makes a re-opening double:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
	1♣	2♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	??

This is almost exactly the same as a weak 2 opener. Normally a re-opening double at this level should be showing extra values (upper teens) – if Lebensohl is available then opener can re-open double with slightly less (lower teens) – knowing that a weak responder can bid 2NT Lebensohl to duck out at the three level.

- When oppos make a **very weak doubled major raise** and partner doubles a second time in the protective (fourth) seat:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♠	Double	2♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	??

We're in the same situation as if they have opened a weak 2 – so Lebensohl applies. Just like the previous case, normally a second double at this level should be showing extra values (upper teens) – Lebensohl enables opener to double again with slightly less (lower teens).

- When the oppos make a **very weak major raise** (you know that they play quite aggressively) and partner doubles with their first bid:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
		1♠	Pass
2♠	Double	Pass	??

Again we're in the same situation as if they have opened a weak 2 – so Lebensohl applies. If the oppos only have 15-16 points between them, then we're close to game and partner wants to find out how close.

In a few weeks, Nick's next seminar will look at Lebensohl over 1NT plus interference.

Sources

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebensohl#After_a_Weak-two

https://www.bridgebum.com/lebensohl_over_weak_two.php