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This Week in Bridge

(295) Transfers Over Transfers

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Level: 6

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General

Responding to 1NT is a balancing act of showing both strength and shape while keeping the auction at a low enough level. With a game forcing hand (10+ points), the goal is usually to be able to describe our hand below 3NT, particularly with hands that are strong enough to be interested in slam. This is not a problem with relatively balanced hands, but with distributional hands it may be more difficult for Responder to show their shape and explore slam without getting the auction too high (going past 3NT). Transfer bids allow Responder to show their shape while using space efficiently. After making a transfer bid, Responder usually gets to make a second bid without the auction getting much higher - one of the most valuable parts of playing transfers. A way to further improve our use of bidding space is to play transfer bids not only on the first round of the bidding, but on the second round also after a Major-suit transfer. Let's see how these *Transfers Over Transfers* work on Responder's second bid after a Responder starts with a Jacoby Transfer.

Transfers Over Transfers

Let's look at some examples to see how Transfers Over Transfers work.

Example 1

1NT 2♥*

2♠ ___?

- 2NT* Transfer, 4+♣ (usually 5-card ♣), GF
- 3♣* Transfer, 4+♦ (usually 5-card ♦), GF
- 3♦* Transfer, 5-card ♥, GF
- 3♥* Re-Transfer, 6+♠, 2/3 top honors, 1F (Opener bids 3NT with fitting honor)
- 3♠* Wants to play 4♠ if 5-3 fit (usually 5422, 5431), GF
- 3NT Natural, willing to play 3NT even if 5-3♠ fit (usually 5332)
- 4♣ Splinter, 6+card ♠, 0-1♣, Slam Try
- 4♦ Splinter, 6+card ♠, 0-1♦, Slam Try
- 4♥ Splinter, 6+card ♠, 0-1♥, Slam Try
- 4♠ 6+c♠, Usually Semi-Balanced, Slam Try



Example 2

1NT 2♦*

2♥ ___?

- 2♠* Delayed Size Ask
- 2NT* Transfer, 4+♣ (usually 5-card ♣), GF
- 3♣* Transfer, 4+♦ (usually 5-card ♦), GF
- 3♦* Re-Transfer, 6+♥, 2/3 top honors, 1F (Opener bids 3NT with fitting honor)
- 3♥* Wants to play 4♥ if 5-3 fit (usually 5422, 5431), GF
- 3♠* Splinter, 6+card ♥, 0-1♠, Slam Try
- 3NT Natural, willing to play 3NT even if 5-3♥ fit (usually 5332)
- 4♣ Splinter, 6+card ♥, 0-1♣, Slam Try
- 4♦ Splinter, 6+card ♥, 0-1♦, Slam Try
- 4♥ 6+c♥, Usually Semi-Balanced, Slam Try

Delayed Size Ask

Transferring to ♥ and then bidding 2♠* asks Opener about their strength and shape.

Example 3

1NT 2♦*

2♥ 2♠*

___?

- 2NT* Min, 2-card ♥
 - 3m Natural, To Play
 - 3♥ 6c♥, To Play
 - 3NT Slam Try, To Play
 - 4♥ 6+card ♥, Slam Try, To Play
- 3♣* Max, 2c♥ (Responder shows side suits, LMH)
 - 3♦* 4+card ♣
 - 3♥ 4+card ♦*
 - 3♠ 4-card ♠
 - 3NT To Play
 - 4♥ 6+card ♥, To Play
- 3♦* Max, 3+c♥, GF
- 3♥* Min, 3+c♥



After Transfer Over Transfer

After Responder makes a Transfer over Transfer (especially showing a Major and minor) , then Opener needs to show their fit for Responder's suit.

Example 4

1NT 2♥*

2♠ 2NT*

- 3♠ 3+card ♠, maximum values
- 4♠ 3+card ♠, minimum values
- 3♣* 2-card ♠, 4+card ♣ or Hxx (Honor third), Interested in ♣ slam
- 3♦ Natural, 5-card ♦, 2-card ♠
- 3♥ Natural, 5-card ♥, 2-card ♠
- 3NT Misfit, no ♠ or ♣ fit. Most values in other suits.

Some partnerships choose to use a step-based response after the second transfer. In this case supporting Responder's first suit is not a step (it is natural, showing 3+card support).

- Step 1 4+card or Hxx
- Step 2 xxx
- Step 3 xx

Invitational with 5-card ♠

Since we can no longer transfer to ♠ and rebid 2NT to show a 5-card suit and invitational values (this is now game forcing with ♣), then we must show this is the old-fashioned way. With a 5-card ♠ suit and invitational values, we bid Stayman and then rebid 2♠. Opener usually passes with a minimum (leaving us to play in our 5-2 or 5-3 fit at the 2-level) and bids game with maximum values.

Conclusion

Responding to 1NT is something that we do frequently (all partners like to open 1NT) and this makes it a part of the game where we should spend time working to improve our bidding. Transfer bids are an effective tool for describing our hand, but if you add further transfers (Transfers Over Transfers) to your system, you and partner will improve your bidding. Take a look at how to upgrade your structure after partner opens 1NT.