

Transferring Into a Minor Suit Over Partner's Opening NT Call

Assuming a 15-17 HCP opening of **1-NT** by Partner, it is almost universally accepted that Responder should transfer when holding a 5-card or longer Major suit (Hearts or Spades). When Responder holds a long Minor suit (Clubs or Diamonds), however, the situation is markedly different. This is due to the fact that when transferring to a Major suit the Partnership can always play, minimally, at the 2-level; but when transferring to a Minor suit the Partnership is forced to the 3-level. For this reason, Minor suit transfers require a 6-card or longer suit, unlike Major suit transfers which require 5-cards or longer. Transfers for either Minor Suit should not be utilized after an opening of **2-NT**, since the level of bidding becomes too high except when Responder's intent is to use "**Minor Suit Stayman**" in order to seek a possible Minor suit Slam.

Having the circumstance and Partnership agreement as to the means by which one transfers into either Minor suit, however, does not necessarily mean that a Responder should always take the occasion to do so, even when Responder holds a long Minor suit. (See Examples 1-3)

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	
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1-NT	????	Example 1: 872 98 974 AJ962
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"Pass" (The Minor suit held, here, by Responder, is not 6-pieces or longer.)

		Example 2: Q42 J8 Q76532 Q6
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"Pass" (A **1-NT** contract, when Responder holds 6-8 HCP's is likely to produce a higher match-point score than three of a Minor suit, which might not even be makeable.)

		Example 3: Q7 Q4 KQJ954 K63
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3-NT (Why announce your 6-card Minor suit to the Opponents when a final **3-NT** contract is likely to be the optimal contract. Minor suit contracts, bid and made, produce a 20 point score per trick, whereas No-Trump contracts, bid and made, are obviously more fruitful, score-wise! Most hands in which either **5C** or **5D** are makeable also produce nine or ten tricks in No-Trump; i.e., producing the same or even better score, while requiring fewer tricks. The reality is that a five-of-a-Minor is the appropriate contract less than 5% of the time, and, thus, if Game is achievable, it is almost always in four of the Major or **3-NT**.)

Conditions Conducive to Responder Utilizing Minor Suit Transfers

1. If Responder, as "**Captain**," definitely feels that three-of-the-Minor is the preferred final contract and that a No-Trump final contract, at any level, is likely to fail.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	
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1-NT	????	872 7 743 QJ9652
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Transfer to 3C (A Suit contract, here, is

likely to be the better contract. In No-Trump, the Club suit, here, is likely to produce zero tricks, but in a Club suit contract, this holding is likely to produce at least three or four tricks.)

2. When transferring to either Minor suit, and then bidding **3-NT**, Responder shows a mild Slam interest in the referenced Minor.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	
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1-NT	????	AJ7 K3 KJ8432 K9
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Transfer to 3D (Then re-bid **3-NT**)

3. Assuming that a Partnership plays that a new suit bid following a “Stayman” request shows a second suit, and is Game-forcing, if Responder were to hold a 4-card Major suit and a 6-card or longer Minor suit, Responder should utilize **Stayman** first and then bid his/her 6-card or longer Minor suit, if a Major suit fit is not found.

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1-NT	???? 5 K752 AQ9643 98

“2C” Stayman If Opener responds 2S, Responder can raise to Game at 4S. If Opener were to respond either “2D” or 2H, Responder can then bid 3D to show his/her 6-card Minor suit rather than to proceed directly to 3-NT. Opener is, thus, brought into the decision-making process with respect to the final contract; i.e., either 4 of the Major, 5 or 6 of the Minor, else 3-NT.

Methods by Which a Responder Can Transfer Into a Minor Suit Following Partner’s 1-NT Opening Bid

1. **4-Way Transfers:** “2D” forces 2H, “2H” forces 2S, “2S” forces 3C, and “3C” forces 3D
(The Opponents, here, are notified by Opener saying: “Transfer.”)
2. **3-Way Transfers:** “2D” forces 2H, “2H” forces 2S, “2S” forces a “Puppet” bid, by Opener, of “3C,” with Responder then accepting, else correcting to 3D
(The Opponents, here, are notified by Opener saying: “Alert.”)
3. **3-Way Transfers:** “2D” forces 2H, “2H” forces 2S, “2S” = “Minor Suit Stayman,” where Opener shows a preference for Clubs by bidding “3C,” else a preference for Diamonds by bidding “2-NT.” Responder then “accepts,” “corrects,” else proceeds to explore for a possible Minor suit slam.
(The Opponents, here, are notified by Opener saying: “transfer” for the first two of Responder’s responses, else, “alert.” for the latter two)
4. **4-Way Transfers:** “2D” forces 2H, “2H” forces 2S, “2S” is a transfer to Clubs, and “2-NT” is a transfer to Diamonds

(The Opponents, here, are notified by Opener saying: “transfer.”)

Note: This 4-way transfer method has the advantage over the other three methods by allowing the Opener to (a) deny {by bidding “3” of the referenced Minor,} or (b) evidence “honor-3rd” in Responder’s referenced Minor suit, {by bidding the interim bid of either “2-NT” or “3C,” respectively,} thereby (a) either ending the auction in three-of-the-Minor, else (b) playing in a 3-NT final contract with a reasonable chance of success, notwithstanding the Partnership holding fewer than 26 HCP’s, should Responder hold something like AQJxxx in the referenced Minor suit, along with two or more other pieces.

SUMMARY

If Responder has no interest in playing in his/her 6-card or longer Minor suit, then he/she should never transfer! If Responder contemplates either the possibility or is certain that the Partnership should wind up with his/her 6-card or longer Minor suit as the Trump suit, then show it by transferring.

Remember, just because one can transfer to a Minor suit, doesn't mean that one should transfer to it. Conditions for doing so must be conducive!