

An Overview of the Use of Transfers in and out of Competition

by Marc Smith, edited by Steve Turner

<https://sites.google.com/site/bridgequarter/home>

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Revised for clarity and turned into a book by [Pete Matthews Jr](#) – <https://3nt.xyz> – April, 2019. This material did/does not carry a copyright. Please send clarity improvements to Pete.

Reference: <http://www.rpbridge.net/7z69.htm>.

A later but flawed version of (6), found in two places on the web, was consulted as part of a major overhaul of this most important section. The ToC has been added above, and the titles of the parts have been changed to make it easier to differentiate here, what the parts are about. (A call in parentheses is made by an opponent; a call without parens is made by us.)

Introduction to Applications of Transfers

Virtually everyone who plays Bridge seriously will be familiar with the principle of transfer bids. Most of us agree to play transfers over notrump openings and maybe after a 1 NT overcall, but there it stops. This series of articles is a list of scientific ways that may improve your bidding accuracy through the use of transfers.

Opinion of the Editor on use of Transfers

All of the transfer methods described will be beneficial, but only to a serious partnership willing to put in the work. You will probably forget or misapply the ideas until you are fully practiced and you will undoubtedly have some disasters on the way. Of all these methods the author and editor currently use (a)-(e).

You may however wish to go slowly and just add one idea at a time. If so I would recommend the following, in order of importance

- a) Transfers after partner makes an overcall (Article 6) are quite easy and give great accuracy, especially if your overcalls are wide ranging, like mine. Major cost benefit.
- b) Rubensohl, Articles 1-3, are a good area to get used to the idea of transfers in competition and you are unlikely to have a real disaster. Better than Lebensohl but probably not by a huge amount.
- c) Transfers by opener (Article 5) when partner responds 1 NT are particularly useful when using a wide range (5-11) 1 NT response as the author and editor.
- d) Swapping the meaning of the 2 other suits when opposition make a black suit overcall (Article 12) is a big benefit where you have a major but a slight loss if you have a minor suit to show.
- e) Transfers when the opponents double (Article 9 and 10) are a benefit when you get the right hands. It is certainly good to be able to differentiate a weak raise from a good raise at the 2 level.
- f) Transfers when we double for takeout (Article 4, 7 and 8) are of a small benefit, but complicated.
- g) Transfer Jump Shifts (Article 13) - OK where you can transfer into 2M or 3m, but otherwise of limited value.

Lastly I would seriously recommend that any strong club pair play transfers after intervention (Article 11).

1. 1 NT – (2 Suit) – ? [Responder Has Shape]

Setting the Scene

Most established partnerships have developed their methods to the extent that they would bid consistently to the correct contract if opener was always dealt a balanced hand within the notrump range and the opponents passed throughout. The primary reason for this accuracy is that transfers allow us to bid slowly and descriptively with good hands, while still allowing us to reach sensible low level contract with poor hands. After opening with a suit bid, how often do you find that you or your partner jumps to show extra values, only to find that you no longer have adequate space to make sure that you bid the best game or to properly investigate slam.

Moving on from Lebensohl to Rubensohl

In competitive auctions the problem is even more acute. How often do you fail to find a big fit because neither of you had the values to make what would have been a forcing bid?

With transfers over notrump openings now widely accepted, it is curious that more pairs have not expanded their use of these tools. For some reason, the use of transfers in other situations has been limited almost exclusively to expert circles. In this series of articles, I will examine some of the more common situations in which transfers can significantly improve the accuracy of your bidding.

We began the last series (on competitive 2 notrump bids) with the basic principles of the Lebensohl convention in the situation for which it was originally designed: bidding after the opponents intervene over our notrump opening. We start this series with a look at how modern bidding theory has advanced since the advent of Lebensohl.

Transfer methods - Rubensohl

Transfer methods following intervention over 1 notrump are known broadly as Rubensohl, having first been published in Bridge World by Jeff Rubens in the early 1980s. Since then Kit Woolsey, Steve Robinson, Bruce Neill and Brian Senior have outlined their own versions and modifications.

First, some bidding problems. Nobody vulnerable, playing IMPs, your hand is:

♠ A Q 9
 ♥ K Q 7 3
 ♦ 6 2
 ♣ Q 10 8 4

You	LHO	Pard	RHO
1 NT	2 ♠	2 NT	3 ♠
?			

You open a 12-14 one notrump, and over the two spade overcall partner bids 2 NT Lebensohl, showing a wish to compete in one of the other three suits or some kind of strong hand. What do you now bid over RHO's 3 ♠?

The answer is that you probably pass and hope partner has diamonds. Partner might have any of the following hands....

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C
♠ 4	♠ 10	♠ 4
♥ J 6 2	♥ J 6 2	♥ J 8 6 5 4 2
♦ A 10 5	♦ K J 7 5 4 3	♦ A J 10 5
♣ K J 7 6 5 2	♣ A 9 3	♣ K 3

If partner has Hand A, we want to compete to at least 4 ♣ as it is unlikely we can beat nine tricks in spades. Even if we save in 5 ♣ Doubled over 4 ♠, 100 will not be a disaster.

Facing Hand B, we clearly want to defend 3 ♠, which will almost certainly go down and may go as many as three light while we may be unable to make even nine tricks in diamonds.

Opposite Hand C, we want to play 4 ♥, which has ten comfortable tricks while the opponents will probably make eight or nine in spades.

When we decided to play Lebensohl rather than natural methods in this type of auction it was because it enabled us to bid on more hands. With Lebensohl, we could make a competitive bid and a forcing bid in any suit, rather than having to choose to play suit bids as either one or the other. The principle of Lebensohl is that with unbalanced hands we show our strength immediately: a forcing bid at the three level with a game going hand, and the 2 notrump relay with competitive values only.

Using transfers, these priorities are reversed: we first show our suit, and then divulge extra values later, if we have them. This is a much more flexible approach since we can now utilize a second round double to show game going values if the opponents compete further. If they do not, then we can either pass

partner's completion of the transfer when we only wish to compete, or we can make a further descriptive bid with game going values.

There are numerous transfer methods available for this situation, but in the easiest style to understand, two level suit bids (if available) are natural and non-forcing, while bids of 2 notrump through 3 of the suit below the opponents' suit are transfers. Note that the highest of these bids will be a transfer cue bid, and we will discuss that further in the next article.

Consider the three hands above after this auction:

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
1 NT	2 ♠	?	

With Hand, A we bid 2 notrump (transfer to clubs, competitive strength upwards), with Hand B we bid 3 ♣ (transfer to diamonds), and with Hand C we bid 3 ♦ (transfer to hearts; note that this should be at least invitational). If LHO passes and partner completes the transfer opposite Hands A and B we will pass having reached what we judge to be our best spot. Holding the original notrump opening, partner will bid 4 ♠ over our 3 ♦ transfer and we will have reached an excellent game.

How you continue with a good hand after an initial transfer is fairly straightforward. Here are some fast examples:

Opener		Responder	
♠ J 7 3		♠ 8 4	
♥ K 6		♥ A 9 4	
♦ K 8 4		♦ A Q J 7 5 2	
♣ A Q 8 5 2		♣ K 7	
1 NT	(2♠)	3 ♣	(Pass)
3 ♦	(Pass)	3 ♠	(Pass)
4 ♦	(Pass)	5 ♦	(All Pass)

Opener completes the transfer to diamonds. With game values, responder can cue bid to ask for a spade stop. When opener fails to provide one, responder knows there are two spade losers (ruling out any chance of slam) and raises to game.

Opener		Responder	
♠ J 7 4		♠ 6	
♥ A 8 3		♥ K 7	
♦ K 6		♦ A J 9 8 5 2	
♣ K Q 10 8 4		♣ A J 7 2	

1 NT	(2 ♠)	3 ♣	(Pass)
3 ♦	(Pass)	3 ♠	(Pass)
4 ♣	(Pass)	4 ♦	(Pass)
4 ♥	(Pass)	6 ♣	(All Pass)

Six clubs is an excellent contract, and is quite playable even without the ♥ K. It will not always make, but it is still where you would like to be. Note that opener does not know exactly where responder is going, but with a suitable hand he should cue bid the ♥ A to catering to responder having slam interest, as here.

In the next two articles we will see how we can use the transfer cue bid to locate both stops in the opponents' suit and to find 4-4 major suit fits. We'll also see how the system works against artificial overcalls. As the series progresses we will investigate other similar competitive situations in which the same methods can be used when partner has shown or implied a balanced hand.

2. 1 NT – (2 Suit) – ? [Responder Is Balanced]

Introduction

We have looked at how we could use transfers to bid competitive one suited hands and game going one and two suiters after the opponents had overcalled our 1 NT opening. We now consider how to handle balanced hands, now that our former Lebensohl 2 NT bid is being used as a transfer to clubs.

Note that the outline detailed herein is not the only one available and interested theorists will find alternative structures scattered throughout their bridge library. Let us start by looking at the methods established last month. To illustrate, let us assume the auction has started

1 NT – (2 ♥) – ?

- 2 ♠ natural, competitive, non-forcing
- 2 NT transfer to clubs. May be competitive only (responder will pass opener's 3 ♣ bid) or game forcing, in which case responder will either bid a second suit, bid 3 NT with a heart stop, or cue bid to ask for a stop.
- 3 ♣ transfer to diamonds (continuations as above)
- 3 ♦ ?
- 3 ♥ ?
- 3 ♠ ?

Using the bids noted above, we are able to deal with any hand that wants to compete in its own suit and with game going hands on which you want to show a minor suit. With a decent minor suit, no side suit, and no stop in the enemy suit, you should show your minor on the way to asking for a stopper. This way, so that opener is aware of the options, should he have only a tenuous stopper or none at all.

However, if you show a minor and then bid 3 NT yourself, you might well decide that this is best played as showing mild slam interest. With game interest only, you would normally decide to shoot out 3 NT and hope it makes.

I'll begin filling in the blanks above with a look at the transfer cue bid (3 ♦ in this auction) since the principles involved remain constant whether RHO overcalled clubs, diamonds or hearts. This bid is best described as "Stop-Asking Stayman" as it is used both to find out whether we have a stop in the opponents' suit and to locate a 4-4 major suit fit.

The Transfer Cue bid

Using Lebensohl, we saw that we needed four different sequences to show the four possible hand types hands with or without an unbid four card major and hands with or without a stop. ~~Using transfers, the underlying principles are reversed, since responder does not show anything other than game values but, instead, begins by asking opener to do so. [PM: garbled sentence crossed out.]~~

In response to the Transfer Cue bid, the first thing opener does is to show whether or not he has a stop in the opponents' suit. Without a stop, he simply completes the transfer. Over this responder has three options:

1. Bid 3 ♠ looking for a 4-4 fit (if the overcall was in a minor, then opener bids his lowest 4 card major and responder either raises or continues Baron style). With a fit, opener raises, and without one he can bid 3 NT having already denied a stop. Responder will either Pass with a stop or pull to a four card minor.
2. Bid 3 NT. This denies a four card major and shows a half stop in the opponents' suit. Opener passes with a half stop or removes himself to a minor with no help. Note that responder almost certainly has two four card minors for this sequence with 3-3-(3-4) and a strong hand responder would have doubled the overcall rather than look for a dubious game.
3. Bid 4 ♣ showing both minors (4-4) or 4 ♦ (5-4), and nothing in the enemy suit.

When opener does have a stop in the enemy suit, he makes the lowest descriptive bid beyond completing the transfer. After a 2 ♡ overcall, there are only two options: 3 ♠ with a four card suit, in case responder was looking for a spade fit, and 3 NT without four spades. If the overcall was in a minor, then opener would bid his lowest four card major (or 3 NT with no major).

Playing a 12-14 notrump, we might have opened one on any of these hands:

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
♠ A J 9 6	♠ A 9 6	♠ K J 9 6	♠ A 9 6
♥ K Q 6 3	♥ K Q 6 3	♥ Q 6	♥ Q 6
♦ 8 4 2	♦ J 4	♦ A K 4	♦ A K 4
♣ K 7	♣ Q J 3 2	♣ 9 8 6 4	♣ 9 8 6 4 3

1 NT – (2 ♦) – 3 ♣ – (Pass); ?

With Hand A, we have no stop and thus we simply complete the transfer to 3 ♦. Hopefully, responder will now show a four card major and we can raise to game.

Similarly, with Hand B we again bid 3 ♠. If responder has a four card heart suit then we will be able to raise 3 ♥ to game, but if partner bypasses hearts and bids 3 ♣ then we can bid 3 NT safely having already denied a diamond stop. If responder also has no stop then he will bid on and we will either play 5 ♣ in a 4-4 fit or try our hand at 4 ♣ in the Moysian.

On Hands C and D, we have a solid diamond holding and thus we must do something other than complete the transfer. With Hand C we bid a natural 3 ♣ (denying a four card heart suit) while on Hand D we will bid 3 NT denying either major.

The exception to the two way nature of these transfer cue bids is when the opponents have overcalled 2 ♠. Clearly, we cannot use a 3 ♥ bid both to ask for a spade stop and to find a 4-4 heart fit since there is no room below 3 NT for opener to describe his hand adequately. So in this situation, 3 ♥ is Stayman (showing a four card heart suit). Opener raises with four card support. Without heart support, opener can bid 3 ♣ with no stop and 3 NT with a suitable spade holding. Without a four card heart suit, responder simply asks for a stop by bidding 3 ♣, or shows a stop himself by jumping to the notrump game.

All that remains now is to decide on the meaning of jump bids and the direct cue bid. As usual when the opponents have rudely interfered in our auction, we find that we do not have sufficient room to show everything we would like.

Returning to the original auction, there are three hand types left to show: a game forcing hand with five or more spades, either with or without a heart stop; and an invitational hand with a six card spade suit. Since there are only two bids available 3 ♥ and 3 ♣ you must decide which hand to guess with. It seems logical to elect to forgo the invitational sequence, meaning that responder must decide whether to simply compete with 2 ♠ or to bid game. Thus both 3 ♥ and 3 ♣ are both forcing with at least a 5 card spade suit. For ease of memory it makes sense that the actual cue bid should deny a stop, although you can play it either way around.

If the overcall is 3 ♠, then now you have three bids, but two suits to show. I will leave you to work out with your regular partner exactly what each bid should show. One option is for 3 ♠ to show an unspecified five card major without a diamond stop (opener bids his lowest three card major in response) and for 3 of a major to be natural and forcing with a stop in the opponents' suit.

Returning to our original table, we can now flesh out the details:

1 NT – (2 ♥) – ?

- 2 ♠ natural, competitive, non-forcing
- 2 NT transfer to clubs (competitive or game forcing)
- 3 ♣ transfer to diamonds (competitive or game forcing)
- 3 ♦ Stop-Asking Stayman (SAS), fg
- 3 ♥ transfer to spades without a heart stop, fg
- 3 ♠ 5+ spades and heart stop, fg
- 3 NT natural and to play

We will conclude our look at Transfers in interrupted notrump sequences by answering the following questions...

- Does the system still work when the opponents have bid two suits (either RHO has bid a new suit after partner overcalled 1 NT, or they overcalled our opening notrump with an artificial bid)?
- Are there other similar competitive situations, in which the same methods can be used when partner has shown (or implied) a balanced hand?

Opener	Responder
♠ A 7 3	♠ K Q 8 2
♥ 9 4 3 2	♥ 5
♦ K 6	♦ A Q J 9 7 4
♣ A Q 8 3	♣ K 5

How do you bid after

1 NT – (2 ♣) – ?

If the remaining auction is unopposed, then perhaps a sensible auction would be:

West	North	East	South
1 NT	2 ♣	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	5 ♣	Pass
6 ♦	All Pass		

If South had bid 3 ♥ over the 3 ♣ transfer, then this would not affect the remaining auction as, when East now bids 3 ♠ the game-forcing nature of his hand is clear.

Note that having shown a minimum by bidding 3 ♦, West has a suitable hand and once East makes a slam try with 4 ♥ he is happy to co-operate.

The meanings of all other bids after the Astro 2 ♣ overcall retain exactly the same meaning as they have after the natural 2 Heart bid. We do, though, have two extra sequences available. What do you bid on the following hands after

1 NT – (2 ♣) – ?

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
♠ K 8 5 2	♠ K Q 8 5	♠ A 7 4	♠ A 7 4
♥ 7	♥ 7	♥ K J 9 7	♥ K J 9 7
♦ J 9 6 2	♦ A J 6 2	♦ 8 3	♦ K J 8 3
♣ Q J 9 4	♣ K Q J 9	♣ Q J 8 5	♣ 6 2

Clearly, on Hand A, we would like to make a take-out double of hearts. The answer is to bid 2 ♥ immediately over the Astro-type 2 ♣ overcall. Effectively, we are making a take-out double of a natural 2 ♥ overcall. Note that partner should not expect significant values - just a hand that wishes to compete. If LHO

raises to 3 ♥, partner should not double with some fair four-card trump holding expecting us to have much. In fact, with the right shape we might have significantly fewer defensive values than this!

With Hand B, we have to decide whether we want to try to find our best game (or perhaps slam) or try to penalise the opponents. Vulnerability and form of scoring will be factors in this decision. If we elect to aim for our best contract, then we would again start with the 2 ♥ take-out bid, and we would continue with 3 ♥ on the next round after partner gives simple preference between our suits, or with a double if LHO raises to 3 ♥. Both sequences show a good hand with short hearts. Alternatively, we can decide to look for a penalty by doubling 2 ♣. What this says to partner is, "I have a good hand and I am happy to defend 2 ♣ doubled." Obviously, partner is invited to double any other suit the opponents bid with a suitable trump holding. Having said that, although it might be right to defend 2 ♥ doubled on this hand, it would not be my choice.

This brings us nicely to Hand C – in my opinion a much better penalty double since game our way is uncertain and the opponents may well be in deep trouble. However, let's say that you pass 2 ♣, waiting to double 2 ♥, and the auction continues 2 ♦ – Pass – Pass back to you. Are you happy now? Of course not. You must consult partner on this type of hand. Double 2 ♣ for penalties, and if LHO now bids 2 ♦ partner will double that with decent trumps. Now, we are happy. If partner cannot double 2 ♦, and that is passed back to you, then the opponents have found a playable contract and you must try to do the same – bid 2 ♥ and try to find your best spot in hearts, spades or notrump. If your double of 2 ♣ is passed back to opener, and he bids 2 ♦ (his second suit), now you can comfortably make a forcing pass to enable partner to double when he has the trumps or to bid on when he doesn't.

Hand D completes the hand types you might have. Now, you don't really want to defend 2 ♣ doubled, but you are happy to double anything higher. This time you must pass smoothly over 2 ♣ and wait for LHO to either show or deny a heart fit. More or less whatever happens next you are going to start doubling, and keep doubling until the opponents stop bidding.

Note that this delayed double is 100% for penalties. It is *not* a weak take-out double of hearts. Go back to Hand A to see what you should do with that hand.

Using this two-tier double, you will catch the opponents most of the time no matter whether it is opener or responder who has the good trump holding.

Let us look briefly now at how the system copes with another common situation – a 2 ♣ overcall showing both majors. This time we have two take-out bids available – 2 ♥ and 2 ♠. Clearly, both should show both minors, so what is the

difference between them? There are two options. You can decide to use them both as purely competitive (or better) with both minors, with 2♥ showing better clubs and 2♠ better diamonds. Alternatively, 2♥ can show a competitive hand with both minors and 2♠ a game-going hand with five or more diamonds and four clubs. Note that with 4 diamonds and 5 or more clubs and a good hand you will transfer to clubs (2 NT) and then continue with 3♦ next.

With a decent minor suit of our own to show and a game-going hand we can transfer to our minor and then show stops in the opponent's suits. For example:

Opener	Responder
♠ A 9 3	♠ 8 2
♥ 5 3	♥ Q J 7
♦ A Q 7 4 2	♦ K 6
♣ K 10 6	♣ A Q 9 8 5 2

West	North	East	South
1 NT	2♣	2 NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

2♣ showed both majors and 2 NT was a transfer to clubs. Having shown his suit, responder now shows his major suit stop (and denies a stop in the other major). Note that if opener's majors were reversed, then with no spade stop he would bid something other than 3 NT. On this hand, with good controls and a decent club fit, he would be worth a 4♥ Cue-bid just in case responder had a singleton spade.

What about a double of 2♣? We can bid 2 NT (transfer) to take away LHO's two-level preference to a major, so we don't need it to show clubs. With a penalty double of both majors we would pass and wait for LHO's preference before lowering the boom. So, an immediate double should show defensive values and sufficient trumps to double one major but not the other. Partner is invited to double a major if he has trumps or to pass it around to us if he does not. Subsequent doubles from either side of the table are for penalties. Responder's pass in a sequence such as 1 NT – (2♣) – Dbl – (Pass); Pass – (2♥) – ?, now becomes forcing.

We also have to consider how to use our stop-asking bids when the opponents have effectively bid two suits. The best method is to transfer into the lowest suit in which you have no stop. Thus, after a 2♣ overcall showing both majors, 3♦ shows a game-going hand with no heart stop – opener completes the transfer (bids 3♥) with no stop and nothing to say. With a heart stop, opener bids 3♠

without a spade stop or 3 NT with both majors stopped. With no heart stop (and thus 3 NT not a viable contract) opener can also bid a decent five-card minor at the four-level.

Similarly, 1 NT - (2 ♣) – 3 ♥ would show a game going hand with a heart stop but no spade stop. This time, opener bids 3 NT with a spade stop, and without one (as again 3 NT is not a possible contract) he would bid a five-card minor if he has one or just complete the transfer to 3 ♠ with no stop and no suit to bid.

Similar methods also apply after a sequence such as (1 x) – 1 NT – (2 y) – ?, where x and y are two different suits.

Next

We will look at how we can use this same transfer structure in other situations where partner has shown (or implied) a balanced hand.

4. (1 NT) or (Multi 2 ♠) – Double – (Pass) – ?

The Story so far

Throughout Part 1-3, we have developed a transfer method for use when the opponents overcall our opening 1 NT. In this article we consider some other situations in which we can use the same structure.

One such auction occurs after partner doubles the opponents' 1 NT opening. Note that although partner will usually have a relatively balanced hand within an expected range (say 15-19), this will not always be true, and thus regular partnerships should consider how to handle breaks of the transfers.

Partner doubles 1 NT and RHO passes

For the sake of completeness, let us start with when opener's partner passes the double. Most of the time, assuming you play sound doubles of 1 NT, you will also pass, but there are two situations in which you will wish to bid – when you are very weak and when you have game interest on a distributional hand.

Most partnerships just bid naturally when pulling the double. This obviously presents a problem when responder is balanced. Perhaps it is your style to pass with a balanced Yarborough. Perhaps you prefer to pull to 2 ♣. The disadvantage of this latter course of action is that partner doesn't know whether to pass with Q-x-x clubs or bid his good 5-card major. Either will work some of the time. When you guess wrong, you may remove a 6-3 club fit to a 5-1 major suit fit, or you'll play a silly 3-3 club fit when two of a major is a comfortable make on the 5-4 fit.

The alternative is to give up the natural run-out and use 2 ♣ as a non-forcing fit-finding bid that asks the doubler to bid his longest (or lowest playable) suit. When you have a weak hand with long clubs, this means of course that you must either play 3 ♣ or play at the two-level in the doubler's suit. Using 2 ♠ and 2 ♥ as non-forcing transfers is also a playable method. You really strike gold when you would run to 2 ♠ (using natural methods) only to find that it is a 5-1 fit and the doubler had a good 6-card heart suit. Playing transfers, of course, 2 ♥ shows a bad hand with spades and the doubler has an easy pass.

This leaves you with a 2 ♠ bid to use for some purpose – perhaps an invitational hand with a good minor (or any suit for that matter), say K-Q-10-x-x-x and nothing outside. Opener can relay with 2 NT to find out which suit and then pass or bid a thin game as appropriate. Bids of 2 NT and higher would now become transfers on game-going single-suited or two-suited hands, enabling you to bid much more accurately than is possible using natural methods.

Openers partner pulls the double of 1 NT

The second variation, and one to which we can apply our newly-developed transfer system, occurs when opener's partner pulls the double. Consider the following three hands after the auction starts:

(1 NT) – Dbl – (2 ♠) – ?

The opening bid is 12-14 and 2 ♠ is natural.

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C
♠ 10 7 2	♠ K 7 4	♠ A 7 4
♥ 8 5	♥ Q 10 8	♥ K 9 8 4
♦ 9 3	♦ J	♦ 7
♣ K Q 10 8 6 3	♣ A J 9 6 3 2	♣ K J 10 6 4

Your partnership must decide the meaning of double (take-out, balanced values, or penalties), whether pass is forcing, and the strength of major suit bids. Those decisions are outside the scope of this series, but the bids from 2 NT and up are ideal candidates for transfer methods.

Assuming that we decide against trying to penalise the opponents in 2 ♠, then we would like to be able to bid 3 ♣ on each of the above hands. Of course, playing natural methods, you have to choose just one of them and guess what to do on the rest. However, this auction lends itself to a virtually identical transfer system to that which we developed for when partner opened 1 NT and RHO made a natural overcall. The Stayman-like stop-ask (the transfer cue-bid) would be used with good three-suited hands not interested in defending.

With Hand A, you intend to bid 2 NT (transfer to clubs) and pass partner's simple completion of the transfer. If either opponent competes to 3 ♠ then you will have nothing more to say and partner will pass, double or compete in clubs well aware of what you have. If partner has an off-shape double with a strong major, then he will bid his own suit instead of completing the transfer and you will let him play there.

On Hand B, you intend to bid game, but do not know which one. In fact, at this point, any game apart from diamonds could be right. Once again, you will start with 2 NT. (If opener competes to 3 ♠, you will double to show your game values having already shown your suit).

If partner breaks the transfer to his strong major, then you will be happy to start cue-bidding controls in support. If he simply completes the transfer, then you will continue with a 3 ♠ cue-bid to show game values and no diamond stop. (Note that a 2 NT transfer followed by 3 NT shows a single diamond card and

asks partner to pick the right game).

Partner might have either of these minimum hands for his double:

Hand B1

♠ A Q 5
♥ J 9 5 3
♦ K Q 8 4
♣ 10

Hand B2

♠ A Q J 5
♥ A 5 3
♦ A 8 4
♣ 8 5 4

Clearly, you want to play 3 NT opposite Hand B1, and that is what partner will bid over your 3 ♦. When he has Hand B2 though, 5 ♣ is clearly better, and you can investigate slam before settling for game.

Finally, if partner has a 5-card major he will bid it over 3 ♦, and you will be happy to raise. Note that the 3 ♦ cue-bid denies a four-card major.

With something like Hand C we again start by transferring to clubs, and then continue with 3 ♥ to show our second suit. Consider this hand for doubler...

Hand C1

♠ K J 10 5 3
♥ A 3
♦ Q 8 4
♣ A Q 8

Opener	Partner	RHO	You
1 NT	Dbl	2 ♦	2 NT*
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	6 ♣	All Pass	

With the ♠Q virtually marked with the opening bidder, 6 ♣ is a fine contract. Although the doubler has a minimum hand (even including a wasted diamond card), he could write down the hand opposite and should be able to count twelve tricks. In fact, the main danger with the jump to slam is that you are 3-4-0-6 and the grand slam is cold.

Other Situations - The Multi

So, what about other situations in which we can apply the same methods? Basically, they can be used almost without change whenever partner shows a balanced hand within a known range and the next opponent bids... A common situation in which even many regular partnerships have few or no agreements is when defending the Multi 2 ♦ and similar openings. Most pairs go as far as agreeing that an immediate double of the Multi shows a balanced hand, usually

somewhere in the 12-16 range. That sounds reasonable, but that is usually the extent of the discussion. So, what happens next?

(2 ♦) – Dbl – (Pass) – ?

What now? Most players tend to pass with a few diamonds and/or some values and wait to see what happens. Most of the time, of course, opener bids his major. Are you and your regular partner agreed on whether double is now for penalties or take-out? Is partner's pass forcing? What do 3-level bids now mean? What would a 3-level bid on the first round mean?

My suggestion is that pass should show either a balanced hand with values or a hand that wishes to compete or invite in its own suit. On the assumption that you have the good balanced hand, partner is invited to double opener's major with decent trumps, and otherwise to pass to allow you to double if you can. Using this method, you will catch the opponents whenever either of you has a penalty double. Obviously, if you have the competitive/invitational distributional hand, you will bid your suit irrespective of whether partner passes or doubles.

What this also means is that you must bid immediately at the 2-level with a weak hand. Not that this is necessarily a bad thing, since opener is probably strong if partner has a Weak NT and you are also weak. This immediate action will enable you to escape a large penalty sometimes, whereas giving the opener time to redouble to show a good hand and then letting them find out on the second round if either of them has a trump stack will virtually ensure that they catch you for a penalty whenever there is one going.

With distributional hands and game-going values, you are better off giving up the chance of a penalty in exchange for being able to conduct a sensible constructive auction. This has the added advantage that you do not allow opener to show his suit and have his partner jump to game to leave you guessing at the 4-level. For this purpose, immediate bids of 2 NT and up should be transfers, allowing you to describe both one-suited and two-suited hands accurately.

There are two ways of bidding the weaker distributional hands. 1 playable method is to pass the initial double and then bid when opener's 2 of a major comes back to you – a natural suit bid at the 3-level to show an invitational hand or via 2 NT Lebensohl with a hand that merely wants to compete. Another option is to pass and then bid single-suiters naturally at the 3-level and use 2 NT to show a two-suited hand. The auctions below are based on the first of the two methods

Let's finish with a look at how this method might work on some actual hands...

Hand D	Hand E	Hand F	Hand G
♠ J 7 5	♠ Q 8	♠ K Q 7 3	♠ K 10 8
♥ 7 3	♥ 7 3	♥ 3	♥ A 5
♦ Q 6 2	♦ J 6 2	♦ K Q 10 7 2	♦ K 9 5 3
♣ K J 10 5 4 2	♣ A Q 10 8 5 2	♣ A 8 3	♣ K Q 7 2

Let's assume that your agreed range for the double of the Multi is 13-15.

With Hand D you just want to compete in clubs, so this would be the auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2 ♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♣	All	Pass

Your actions would remain the same no matter which major opener bids (whether partner passes or doubles to show trumps). 2 NT forces partner to bid 3 ♣. With your minors reversed, you would now convert to diamonds and partner would pass.

With Hand E you are happy to invite partner to bid game with a fitting hand and a stop in opener's major. So...

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2 ♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 NT	All	Pass

This time you bid 3 ♣ directly to show an invitational hand. Once again, it wouldn't matter whether partner passed 2 ♥ or doubled.

With Hand F you give up on the chance to double the opponents in 2 ♥ in exchange for being able to conduct a constructive auction.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2 ♦	Dbl	Pass	3 ♣*
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	5 ♣
Pass	6 ♦	All	Pass

3 ♣ is a transfer and forcing to game. 3 ♠ shows your second suit. Partner's 4 ♣ is either natural or agreeing diamonds and suggests no wasted heart values as he didn't bid 3 NT, so you cue-bid your heart control, and over partner's spade cue-bid show your club control. That's all partner needs to hear.

Perhaps partner's hand is something like:

♠ A J 5
♥ J 8 5
♦ A J 7 2
♣ K 8 4

This is not a particularly easy slam to reach in an unopposed auction, and one that most pairs would find impossible after an opposing Multi opening. Transfers give you the tools to get there confidently.

Finally, a hand on which we are happy to take a large penalty out of the opponent's weak two bid.

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
2 ♦	Dbl	Pass	Pass
2 ♥	Dbl	All Pass	

Once again we pass the original double. Partner's second double shows a suitable trump holding for defence opposite a good balanced hand and we are delighted to defend. Had partner passed 2 ♥ (denying good trumps), then we would have simply bid game (3 NT denying four spades, or a cue-bid of 3 ♥ to look for a 4-4 spade fit).

I will leave you to find other situations in which the same methods work equally well.

Next

In the next article we consider two unopposed auctions in which transfers can add significant definition to our constructive bidding – opener's rebid after a 1 NT response, and responder's second bid over a 1 NT rebid.

5. 1 ♠ – (Pass) – 1 NT – (Pass); ?

The story so far

In recent months, we have developed transfer methods for use when partner has shown a balanced hand. Transfer continuations are also of use when partner can have a wide range of hand types. Rebidding after a 1 NT response is a case in point. Here are two bidding problems:

Partner	You
1 ♠	1 NT
2 ♥	?

You might hold either of these hands:

Hand A	Hand B
♠ Q 5	♠ 5
♥ Q J 8 4	♥ Q 8 4 3
♦ K J 9 3	♦ K 9 5 3 2
♣ 9 7 2	♣ 9 7 2

The exact range of the 1 NT response will depend to some extent on your partnership style of 2/1 responses, but I think most Acol players would bid 1 NT on both of these hands. Hand A may be close to your maximum, and Hand B would be minimum for most people. I suspect, though, that most players would raise to 3♥ with both hands.

You can hardly bid 4♥ with Hand A since partner may easily have some 5-4-1-3 12-count. Hand B represents more of a courtesy raise based on the 4-card trump support in case partner was close to a 3♥ rebid. Lack of space means that you have to choose between pass and 3♥ on these two hands, or anything in between.

Before we leave this auction, consider these two hands:

Hand C	Hand D
♠ 5	♠ 5
♥ K 3	♥ 7 3
♦ K J 9 7 6 2	♦ K J 9 7 3 2
♣ J 10 3 2	♣ J 10 3 2

Once again, I suspect that most players would respond 1 NT to partner's 1♠ opening. Now what do you do when partner rebids 2♥? Using standard methods, most pairs would probably play a 3♦ bid as a signoff – something like Hand D, although of course you are probably too high already. Many players

would make the same 3 \diamond bid on Hand C hoping to improve the contract, although this time you will miss game if the hands fit well.

As you have no doubt guessed by now, the answer to many of these problems can be a system of transfers over the 1 NT response. The following methods are best suited to a strong notrump base with sound 2/1 responses and thus a fairly wide-range 1 NT response. They will also work with Acol and a weak NT, although there will be some loss of definition because of the need to raise on some strong notrump hand types. This is intended only as a starting point from which you can develop methods that suit your own basic system.

The Transfer rebid

The underlying principle is that opener's rebid is a transfer with at most invitational values. For example, after 1 \spadesuit – 1 NT opener rebids 2 \clubsuit (transfer to diamonds) with at least 4 diamonds, 2 \diamond with at least 4 hearts, 2 \heartsuit with a normal 2 \spadesuit rebid (or 4 clubs and at least 5 spades), and 2 \spadesuit with 5-5 in the black suits and a minimum opening. 2 NT is 18+ balanced and 3-level bids are natural and forcing to game.

Over the transfer rebids, responder generally gives preference but may also make descriptive invitational raises or use a 2 NT relay to show various hand types.

We began this article with opener having five spades and four or more hearts, so let us examine the auction that shows that hand. Playing transfers, the auction will now begin 1 \spadesuit – 1 NT – 2 \diamond . Responder now has many more options. For a start, he can pass 2 \diamond on a weak hand with long diamonds such as Hand D above. He can also give preference between the majors at the 2-level with a minimum hand. Hand B above is a straightforward 2 \heartsuit bid which is, of course, far less committal than passing in the natural auction. If partner has a highly-invitational hand he can bid again, but most of the time you will play at the safety of the 2-level.

The next option open to responder (and this is particularly useful if you play a fairly wide-range 1 NT response) is to make descriptive invitational raises of one of opener's suits. After this particular start to the auction, 3 \clubsuit and 3 \diamond show an invitational raise (of either major) with values in the bid minor. A direct jump to 3 M is invitational with values in both majors. You might choose either 3 \diamond or 3 \heartsuit with Hand A above, for example.

Finally, responder can bid 2 NT which is a puppet to 3 \clubsuit , something like Lebensohl. Obviously, one option over this is for responder to pass with a weak hand containing long clubs. A second option is to show a maximum 1 NT with

long diamonds – such as Hand C above. Lastly, responder can bid 3 M to show a balanced invitational raise without any concentration of honour strength.

Let us finish with a look at a couple of auctions:

♠ A 10 8 6 2	♠ 5
♥ A Q 8 6	♥ K 10 7 2
♦ A 8 3	♦ K J 10 7 4
♣ 8	♣ 9 7 2

Opener	Responder
---------------	------------------

1 ♠	1 NT
2 ♦	3 ♦
4 ♥	Pass

While game is not 100% cold, once responder shows an invitational hand with diamond values, opener can see that the hands fit well. Responder's invitation may have been in either major, so opener jumps to 4 ♥, which responder may convert to spades.

Switch responder's minors and he would now bid 3 ♣ instead of 3 ♦, over which opener would quickly sign off in 3 ♥.

♠ A K 9 7 3	♠ 5
♥ A 10 8 2	♥ K 3
♦ Q 8	♦ K J 9 7 6 2
♣ K 5	♣ J 10 3 2

Opener	Responder
---------------	------------------

1 ♠	1 NT
2 ♦	2 NT
3 ♣	3 ♦
3 NT	

As we mentioned earlier, playing standard methods responder would probably bid 3 ♦ after 1 ♠ – 1 NT; 2♥, which would end the auction. Opener cannot afford to bid on since he might just as easily be facing Hand D above.

In our transfer auction, responder uses the 2 NT relay to show an invitational hand with diamonds. With good controls and a fitting diamond honour opener is happy to accept the game try.

The methods outlined briefly above are not intended as the definitive system for use in these auctions. They do, however, provide the basis of a playable method from which interested readers can develop their own complete system.

Finally

There are many more situations in which transfers can be used facing balanced or semi-balanced hands, and we hope this series of articles has provided the foundation from which readers will be encouraged to experiment. For example, in Australia it is common to find pairs who play Stayman and Transfers over a 1 NT REBID. Next month this column will move on to another area of competitive bidding where transfers are of great benefit – the advancing of overcalls.

[PM: The original text implies that the opening bid could be in any suit. All the examples are for 1 ♠. How does this work over 1 ♥? It does not seem to make much sense over a minor suit opening.]

6. (Suit) – Suit [No Jump] – (Pass) – ?

We begin a new thread with a look at transfer advances of overcalls. Jeff Rubens introduced the concept of using transfer advances of overcalls in *The Bridge World* in the early 1970s. This is one of the most significant bidding innovations, and yet, for some reason, the idea never caught on outside expert circles. This is particularly curious, since transfer advances of overcalls have one major advantage over just about every other convention ever devised – they do not take away a single natural bid.

Here are three bidding problems, with the auction starting as shown:

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C
♠ 5 4 3	♠ 5 4 3	♠ 4 3
♥ 9	♥ 9	♥ K J 9
♦ K J 9 8 6 4 3	♦ K Q J 8 6 5 4	♦ K Q J 6 5 4
♣ 8 6	♣ A 6	♣ A 6

LHO	Pard	RHO	You
1 ♣	1 ♥	Pass	?

You would like to bid 2 ♦ on each of these hands – but for different reasons. With Hand A, you would want 2 ♦ to be non-forcing and non-invitational, since 2 ♦ will surely be a better contract than 1 ♥. Furthermore, if the opponents bid again, you want partner to compete if he has some kind of diamond fit.

When you are dealt Hand B, you want to bid a natural and invitational 2 ♦.

With Hand C, you want to investigate a slam. Ideally, you would like to start with a descriptive and forcing 2 ♦ before supporting hearts.

With your regular partner, you will have agreed to play a change of suit in response to an overcall as showing one of these hand types. On the others you will have to find some other way of bidding your hand. Wouldn't it be nice if you could bid 2 ♦ on all of them, and have it mean whatever you want? Transfers give you that luxury. So, how do they work?

First, when do transfers apply? You can set your own parameters for using transfer advances with your regular partner, but here is one rule that works effectively:

Transfer advances apply after any second-seat, non-jump suit overcall at the one, two or three level.

Next, which bids become transfers?

The cue bid, and any suit bids above the cue bid but below the simple raise, are conventional (rotated).

Thus the transfer into the overcall suit becomes the sound raise. (If this sounds obscure, do not give up – yet!)

Other bids are unaffected, but here is a sound set of principles that works effectively:

- Bids in suits below the cue bid are natural and forcing
- Bids of notrump are natural (notrump is skipped by a spade transfer to clubs)
- Raises of overcaller's suit are always pre-emptive
- Jumps in new suits are fit-showing
- Jumps in opener's suit are splinters [*PM: a jump cue at the 3-level should probably be a mixed raise.*]

Many of you will already follow some variation these rules, but I include them here for the sake of completeness.

The basic concept of transfer advances is that you rotate the meaning of all bids, from the simple cue bid to the bid below the simple raise. That may sound complicated, but a couple of examples should make it clear. Let's say the auction begins:

(1 ♡) – 1 ♠ – (Pass) – ?

Most pairs would use a bid of 2 ♡ as a sound spade raise and 2 ♠ as a weak raise. Playing transfer advances does not change this at all, because there are no bids between the cue-bid (2 ♡) and the simple raise (2 ♠).

Now, let's say the auction begins

(1 ♦) – 1 ♠ – (Pass) – ?

Now there are two relevant bids: 2 ♦ and 2 ♡. Playing standard methods, 2 ♦ (the cue bid) would show a sound spade raise, and 2 ♡ would be natural and either weak, constructive or forcing depending on your preference. Playing transfer advances, you simply switch the meaning of those two bids.

(1 ♦) – 1 ♠ – (Pass) – 2 ♦ becomes a transfer to hearts. (We will see later how the auction continues.)

(1 ♦) – 1 ♠ – (Pass) – 2 ♡ is now the sound spade raise. Think of the 2 ♡ bid as a transfer to spades.

Now let's look at the auction with the most space between the bid suits:

(1♣) – 1♠ – (Pass) – ?

In standard methods, 2♦ and 2♥ would be natural and 2♣ (the cue bid) would be used to show the sound spade raise. Rotating these bids, 2♣ becomes a transfer to diamonds, 2♦ a transfer to hearts, and 2♥ a transfer to spades (i.e. the sound raise).

Notice that no natural bids have been lost: any hand that you could show with your current methods can still be shown, albeit via a different route. We'll see that additional hands can also be shown, due to the power of transfers.

This structure works equally well to give you much-needed extra space at higher levels:

(2♥)* – 3♣ – (P) – ?

* Weak two bid

3♦	natural and forcing
3♥	transfer to spades
3♠	good hand with a club fit

and even higher:

(3♣) – 3♠ – (P) – ?

3 NT	natural
4♣	5+ diamonds
4♦	5+ hearts
4♥	slam try in spades
4♠	normal raise

Continuations after a transfer

Ok, so how does the overcaller respond to these transfers?

In most cases, overcaller will simply accept the transfer. This bid should be considered neutral and suggests that he would have passed a non-forcing bid in the suit.

Accepting the transfer allows advancer to correct the contract when holding a weakish hand with a long suit and no fit for partner's overcall. It also allows advancer to further describe his hand, when having more to say. However, overcaller may break the transfer in these cases:

- Overcaller may rebid his own suit with a good 6-card or longer suit and no fit for advancer's suit. This does not show extra values.

- A jump in advancer's suit is pre-emptive and also does not show extra values. If advancer now returns to overcaller's suit this is non-forcing, but invitational with values in the transfer suit.
- The jump rebid of overcaller's own suit shows a fit with advancer, extra values, and usually a 6-card suit.
- A bid of the fourth suit is natural and shows extra values. Overcaller will often be 5-5 but may be 5-4-3-1 with 3-card fit for advancer.
- A cue-bid shows a good hand with a fit for advancer.
- 2 NT is natural with extra values and usually doubleton support for advancer. If advancer now rebids his own suit, that is non-forcing.

Consider this auction, where partner has transferred to diamonds:

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

2 ♠ As overcaller, in most cases, you simply accept the transfer. Always remember that partner might have a very weak hand, perhaps

♠ 4
 ♥ Q 7 2
 ♦ K J 10 7 6 4 2
 ♣ 9 5

Which do you think would be a better contract: 1 ♠ or 2 ♠? You will be wrong occasionally, but I'll bet you voted for 2 ♠.

2 ♠ Rebid your own suit, if it is at least a good six cards (usually longer), with no fit for partner's suit. This does not show extra values, for example:

♠ A Q 9 8 5 3 2
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ 3
 ♣ K Q 2

3 ♠ Jump-accept the transfer with a good fit and minimum values, for example:

♠ A K 6 5 2
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ K 8 6 3
 ♣ J 5

If you simply bid 2 \diamond , your LHO may take the opportunity to bid with five or six hearts and a weak hand. The preemptive jump to 3 \diamond may shut out the enemy's best suit.

Now for the bids that show extra values...

2 \heartsuit A bid of the fourth suit is natural and shows extra values, often 5-5, but may be 5-4-3-1 with 3-card support for advancer. This hand would be a minimum for such a bid, with no wasted spade values:

\spadesuit A 10 9 3 2
 \heartsuit A K 9 7
 \diamond Q 9 3
 \clubsuit 2

Notice that 5 \diamond is cold opposite the weak advancer hand above.

[PM: having supplied this example, I think it's wrong to bid 2 \heartsuit with both this hand and a 5-5 without support for advancer. This hand should splinter to 4 \clubsuit , instead.]

2 NT Natural with extra values and usually a doubleton diamond. With a weak hand and a long suit, advancer signs off in 3 \diamond .

\spadesuit A J 10 3 2
 \heartsuit A J 7
 \diamond Q 3
 \clubsuit K Q 10

3 \clubsuit The cue bid shows a good hand with a fit for advancer's suit.

Advancer has a good hand

It is when you intend to bid on after transferring that the method offers the greatest flexibility. Assuming overcaller makes the neutral acceptance of the transfer, you can now describe your hand much more accurately than standard methods allow. Let's use the following auction as an example, where partner has transferred to diamonds:

RHO	You	LHO	Partner
		1 \clubsuit	1 \heartsuit
Pass	2 \clubsuit *	Pass	2 \diamond
	?		

2 \heartsuit sound 3-card heart raise with diamond values/length, e.g.

\spadesuit J 7 3 \heartsuit J 8 5 \diamond A Q 10 5 4 \clubsuit Q 5

2 \spadesuit Natural reverse, forcing one round, e.g.

(Suit) – Suit [No Jump] – (Pass) – ?

- ♠ A Q 10 5 ♡ 9 4 ♢ A Q 10 5 4 ♣ 9 2
 2 NT Natural and invitational, e.g.
 ♠ K 8 4 ♡ 9 3 ♢ A Q J 8 3 ♣ K 10 6
 3♣ Stop-asking, e.g.
 ♠ A 9 5 ♡ 8 3 ♢ A K Q 10 8 6 ♣ 9 6
 3♦ Invitational, e.g.
 ♠ 5 4 3 ♡ 9 ♢ K Q J 9 6 5 4 ♣ A 8
 3♡ Invitational 3-card heart raise with diamond value, e.g.
 ♠ J 6 5 ♡ A 8 5 ♢ A Q 10 7 6 ♣ Q 9
 3♠ Splinter with heart support, e.g.
 ♠ 8 ♡ A 9 6 ♢ A Q J 9 7 5 ♣ K 10 9

Transfer advances in action

Let's finish by looking at a few complete auctions. Your side is East-West.

(1)

West		East	
♠ J 7 3		♠ A 8 5	
♡ J 8 5		♡ A Q 7 6 4	
♢ A Q 10 5 4		♢ 9	
♣ Q 5		♣ K 8 6 3	
West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	1 ♡	Pass
2 ♣*	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♡	All Pass		

West (advancer) shows a constructive heart raise with diamond length and values. With a misfit for diamonds, East (overcaller) has an easy pass, despite having some extra high cards.

(2)

West		East	
♠ J 7 3		♠ A	
♡ J 8 5		♡ A Q 7 6 4	
♢ A Q 10 5 4		♢ K 9 6	
♣ Q 5		♣ 8 6 4 3	
West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	1 ♡	Pass
2 ♣*	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♡	Pass	4 ♡	All Pass

West again shows a constructive heart raise with diamond length and values;

but this time with a diamond fit and a non-minimum overcall, East bids game confidently.

(3)	West	East	
	♠ 5 4 3	♠ Q J 6	
	♥ 9	♥ A 10 8 7 5	
	♦ K Q J 9 6 5 4	♦ 10	
	♣ A 8	♣ K 10 5 4	
	West	North	East South
		1 ♣	1 ♥ Pass
	2 ♣*	Pass	2 ♦ Pass
	3 ♦	Pass	3 NT All Pass

On this layout, West transfers and then raises himself, showing an invitational hand with very good diamonds. With stops in the other two suits, overcaller takes a reasonable shot at game.

(4)	West	East	
	♠ 4 3	♠ K 6 5	
	♥ K J 9	♥ A Q 10 7 6	
	♦ K Q J 6 5 4	♦ A 7	
	♣ A 6	♣ 9 7 4	
	West	North	East South
		1 ♣	1 ♥ Pass
	2 ♣ ¹	Pass	2 ♦ Pass
	4 ♣ ²	Pass	4 ♦ ³ Pass
	4 ♥	Pass	4 ♠ ³ Pass
	4 NT	Pass	5 ♠ ⁴ Pass
	6 ♥	All Pass	

1. Transfer to diamonds.
2. Cue bid, good diamonds, heart fit and slam interest.
3. Cue bid.
4. Two keycards with the ♥ Q.

This time, West transfers to diamonds and then jumps to 4♣ to show slam interest with good diamonds, a heart fit and a club control (3♣ would be forcing). Opposite a slam try, overcaller's hand looks good. Once East shows a spade control, advancer can check for keycards and bid the excellent slam. Note that both red suit slams play from the correct side, protecting the ♠ K.

Interference by opener's partner (responder)

When electing to add a new toy to your system, you must always remember to discuss situations that may arise. For example, suppose that responder does not pass. Do transfers still apply? My suggest is that they should apply, so long as responder's bid is below a raise of opener's suit; in other words, all the artificial (transfer) bids are still available.

What if responder makes a negative double? Then you can play that a redouble is a lead-directing raise (a la Rosencranz) showing a top honour in overcaller's suit, while a simple raise denies one. (The transfer-raise says nothing about a top honour.)

If responder bids a new suit below a raise, then double is a normal responsive double showing the fourth suit and at least tolerance for partner's overcall.

[PM: This Snapdragon double should apply regardless of the level, so long as nobody has jumped.]

If opener's partner raises or bids anything as high as or higher than a simple raise, then transfer advances are off, and you bid as you would using standard methods.

[PM: How does transferring and raising differ from a fit-showing jump shift?]

7. (1-Minor) – Double – (Pass) – ?

Introduction

In Part 6, we altered the general direction of this series with an examination of how we can use transfers to advance partner's overcall. Next we continue in similar vein by considering how a transfer structure can be utilized to improve the description of our hand after partner's one-level takeout double.

The basic concept of the methods suggested below first appeared in *The Bridge World* in 1990, although they have been modified by various authors since then. As with the advances to overcalls outlined in Part 6, these concepts have for the most part been ignored by all but a few expert partnerships.

In this article we concentrate on auctions in which an opponent has opened with a minor. When advancing a double of a minor-suit opening there is plenty of bidding room; only slightly less than when our side has opened a minor. It would therefore seem reasonable to expect any method of advancing such a double to get consistently accurate results. Curiously, that is not true of standard methods.

Consider these hands:

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C
♠ K J 4 3	♠ K J 4 3	♠ A 9 7 5 3
♥ Q 9	♥ 9 3	♥ K J 9 7 4
♦ K J 9 4 3	♦ Q 5 4	♦ J 5
♣ 8 6	♣ A J 9 6	♣ 6

In each case, the auction starts:

LHO	Pard	RHO	You
1 ♣	Dbl	Pass	?

Playing traditional methods, you have numerous choices with Hand A. You could elect to make an invitational bid in diamonds, but you are a little good for 2 ♦ and who knows what partner will expect for 3 ♦. Certainly you could easily play in a diamond partial with 4 ♠ cold. Perhaps you prefer to jump in spades, but you would bid 2 ♠ with a lot less if you had a fifth spade, and this hardly looks like a 3 ♠ bid. Perhaps you would decide to cue-bid? Is that forcing for one-round, to suit agreement, or to game? Are you sure that you and your regular partner would both give the same answer? If it's game-forcing then it is a clear overbid on this hand. Even if it's not, does it solve your problems? Say you cue-bid 2 ♣ and partner bids 2 ♥. What now – 2 ♠ or 3 ♦? Any bid you make may work, but it might equally turn out disastrously.

What about Hand B? Ideally, you want to show a balanced hand with the values for 2 NT, a solid club holding, and four spades. Not easy when you have to do that all in one bid. Again, you might decide to start with a cue-bid, but in reality that only delays the problem for one round. Partner bids 2 ♡ and again you will have to choose between 2 ♠ and 2 NT. Either could work, but both could equally easily lead to a silly result.

How do you value Hand C? Let's say you decide you want to bid a major-suit game. However, wouldn't you prefer to do so as quickly as possible while at the same time ensuring that you choose the right major?

Regular readers of this column will have realized that these problems can be easily solved by adopting a system of transfer responses to take-out doubles.

The Structure

In the structure proposed below, some bids retain their traditional meanings. Obviously, a penalty pass will look the same no matter which methods you are using, as will natural non-jump responses since responder must have a way out with a weak hand. The 1 NT is also the same as in standard methods – approximately 6-9 points with a stopper in the opponent's suit and lacking good support for any of doubler's assumed suits.

The transfer structure comes into play when responder bids anything from two of the opponent's suit and upwards. Before we get into details, it is worth noting that these methods will lose their effectiveness if your partnership style is to make undisciplined take-out doubles. The structure proposed below is based on four-card transfers into major suits, but there is little point to this if the doubler will not produce four cards in an unbid major most of the time.

This is a workable structure for responding to a double of 1♣:

1 ♠/♡/♠	natural <8HCP non-forcing
1 NT	6-9 HCP balanced with club stop(s)
2 ♣	transfer, 5+♠, 9+HCP, F1
2 ♠	transfer, 4+♡, 9+HCP, F1
2 ♡	transfer, 4+♠, 9+HCP, F1
2 ♠	transfer to NT, no 4-card M, 10+ HCP balanced, F1
2 NT	transfer cue-bid, 4+♡ & 4+♠, invitational+, F1
3 ♣	stop-asking FG
3 ♠/♡/♠	natural and weak, non-forcing
3 NT	natural and to play
4 ♣	weak 5+♡ & 5+♠
4 ♠/♡/♠	natural and weak, non-forcing

You will note that a transfer into a major is based on a suit of at least four cards, and a transfer into the unbid minor shows at least a five-card suit. With a minimum double, partner simply completes the transfer and advancer may now pass. Thus, with a stronger hand the doubler must find a different bid. When the doubler accepts the initial transfer, the advancer can then describe his hand further.

To make it easy to describe two-suited game-going hands with slam potential, if advancer initially transfers into the unbid minor and then continues with a natural major-suit bid, this creates a game-forcing auction. Let's see how this works on a pair of hands:

West	East
♠ A Q 7 4	♠ K J 9 3
♥ A 9 8	♥ K 7 5
♦ A 9 6 5	♦ K Q 10 4 2
♣ 9 4	♣ 7

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Dbl	Pass	2 ♣ ¹	Pass
2 ♦ ²	Pass	2 ♠ ³	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
6 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. 5+♦, 9+points
2. Minimum
3. Game forcing with 4 ♠ & 5+ ♦

West's 3 ♠ sets trumps and a series of cue-bids follow. West uses Blackwood not to make sure he can bid the small slam but to check that an ace is missing.

Playing traditional methods, presumably East would cue-bid in response to the double and either West would never discover the 4-5 shape opposite or, by the time he did, the bidding would be at such a level that East would not get the chance to cue-bid twice below game. You might reach 6 ♠ playing traditional methods, but it would be with far less assurance.

Now let's look at the various ways advancer can continue the auction after transferring into a major. The auction begins:

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

1♣

Dbl	Pass	2♥ ¹	Pass
-----	------	-----------------	------

2♠ ²	Pass	?	
-----------------	------	---	--

1. 4+ ♠, 9+ points
2. Minimum

Pass	no further interest facing a minimum double
2 NT	natural, balanced, invitational with (probably) only 4 ♠ and a club stop
3♣	cue-bid – either FG balanced asked for a club stop or FG with 5+ ♠
3♦	4 ♠ & 5+ ♦, non-forcing
3♥	weak 5 ♠ & 5 ♥, invitational
3♠	5+ ♠ invitational
3 NT	natural with club stop offering a choice of games (3 NT or 4 ♠)
4♣	self-agreeing splinter
4♦/♥	self-agreeing fit bid (values in bid suit forcing to 4 ♠)
4♠	to play

Note the canape nature of the 3♦ bid. There is an expectation that doubler will usually have 4-card support for a major, but with only invitational values and 4 M & 5+ ♦, advancer offers the doubler a choice of contracts using this sequence.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the 2♠ bid – the transfer to NT. This is really more of a relay than a transfer, which is why the Dutch author van Rijckevorsel named it the RUNT (Relay Under NoTrump). Basically, the 2♠ bid shows at least invitational values in a balanced hand with no 4-card major; it asks the doubler to pick a denomination. These are doubler's options:

West	North	East	South
------	-------	------	-------

1♣

Dbl	Pass	2♠	Pass
-----	------	----	------

?

2 NT	Minimum with a club stop
3♣	Relay, either denying the ability to bid anything else or showing a very strong hand
3♦	natural 4/5 ♦ and minimum
3 M	natural 5+ M FG
3 NT	Extra values with a club stop

Note that after 2 ♠ there are numerous ways to reach 3 NT depending on who has the club stops. The 2 ♠ bid itself is neutral with regard to stops. All it shows is an unbalanced hand unsuitable for a direct 3 NT bid.

To conclude, let us return to the three problem hands with which we began:

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C
♠ K J 4 3	♠ K J 4 3	♠ A 9 7 5 3
♥ Q 9	♥ 9 3	♥ K J 9 7 4
♦ K J 9 4 3	♦ Q 5 4	♦ J 5
♣ 8 6	♣ A J 9 6	♣ 6

On Hand A advancer bids 2 ♥, transfer to spades, and if doubler now shows a minimum by simply accepting the transfer, advancer bids a non-forcing 3 ♦ to complete the description of his hand. Doubler should then be able to select both level and strain for the final contract. So:

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Dbl	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
?			

Hand B is also now very simple. Advancer transfers into his 4-card spade suit and then bids a natural 2 NT. Doubler can then select the final contract – 2 NT, 3 NT, 3 ♠ or 4 ♠. Thus:

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Dbl	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	2 NT	Pass
?			

Finally, if we decide that we wish to play in game on Hand C, we have a bid that both gets us to the 4-level quickly and ensures that we land in the best suit.

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Dbl	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
?			

8. (1 Major) – Double – (Pass) – ?

Introduction

Last month we set out a transfer structure for advancing a take-out double of a minor-suit opening. In this article, we complete that topic by considering what changes are needed when the opening bid is in a major. While it may seem that we can use the same methods whichever suit the opponents open, there are considerable differences. For a start, there will only be one unbid major. The main difference though, is the lack of bidding space, particularly after a 1 ♠ opening.

To illustrate the problem, let's say partner opens 1 ♠. The opening bid has significantly more pre-emptive value than 1 ♣ in terms of keeping the opponents quiet, but responder is also pre-empted when he has a fair hand. Indeed, many pairs relinquish their natural 1 NT response just in order to keep the bidding manageable. Now compare advancing a double of 1 ♠ with responding to an opening 1 ♠ bid. There is even less space, since you can seldom afford to pass. In addition, responder knows for sure that partner has at least four spades. For the advancer of the double, there is not much solace to be taken from the knowledge that partner probably has hearts since he may have anything from a good three-card holding to a weak five-card suit.

The Transfer Structure

Before jumping right in at the deep end, let's dispose of how we should advance a double of 1♥. In this case, we can employ a similar structure to that used to advance a double of a minor since the other major (spades) can be bid at a level lower than is the case when the opening is 1 ♠. This leaves advancer room to show the full scope of hands. The only tricky aspect of this structure is the transfer cue-bid (3♦), which must be used to show numerous hand types – invitational hands with at least four spades as well as various game-forcing hands with spades, either balanced with at least four spades or hands with exactly four spades and a longer minor.

Here is the basic structure:

LHO	Pard	RHO	You
		1♥	Dbl
Pass	3♦	Pass	?

3♥	no heart stop and not four spades
3♠	four spades and minimum, non-forcing

- 3 NT heart stop but not four spades
- 4 ♣/♦/♥ cue bid agreeing spades
- 4 ♠ to play opposite an invitational hand

Advancer has numerous options over both the 3♥ and the 3♠ response. Here are the options after the 3♥ "fudge":

LHO Pard RHO You

1♥ Dbl Pass 3♦

Pass 3♥ Pass ?

- 3♠ minimum, non-forcing
- 3 NT to play
- 4 ♣/♦ natural 5+m & 4♠, FG
- 4♥ hand too strong to limit
- 4♠ to play

This hand is not easy playing traditional methods, but becomes a breeze using transfer advances:

West

♠ K J 8

♥ 5

♦ Q 9 8 6 3

♣ A Q 8 3

East

♠ A Q 6 3

♥ A 8 4

♦ 5

♣ K J 9 7 4

West

North

East

South

1♥

Dbl

Pass

3♦

Pass

3♥

Pass

4♣

Pass

5♣

Pass

6♣

All Pass

When he bids 3♥, West denies both a heart stop and four spades. Now 4♣ shows at least four spades and five clubs. The doubler is now well placed, since 5♣ can show some slam interest in a hand that cannot cue bid: 4 NT is available for discouraging hands (it cannot be natural having already denied a heart stop).

Now let's move on to advancing a double of 1♠. Transfers are relatively ineffective in this position, perhaps only one and a half times better than traditional approaches, which is poor compared to the gains available in other situations.

Let's lay out the basic responses before discussing the less obvious ones:

LHO

Pard

RHO

You

1♠

Dbl

Pass

?

1 NT	natural and constructive, non-forcing
2 ♣/♦/♥	natural and non-forcing
2 ♠	two-way relay
2 NT/3 ♣/3 ♦	transfer
3 ♥	transfer cue bid, exactly 4♥ and a good invite, non-forcing
3 ♠	stop-asking
3 NT	to play
4 ♣/♦/♥	to play
4 ♠	minors

This is consistent with the methods used to advance a double of a minor, but now as a transfer to hearts is available only at the three-level it must for safety reasons show at least a five-card suit.

As you can see, there are three ways to show hearts – 2 ♠ with game values and four hearts, 3 ♥ with a 4-card invite, and via a 3 ♦ transfer when advancer has at least a 5-card suit.

Since the space available is very limited, the 2 ♠ bid which was previously used as a relay to notrump has become a two-way bid – either a balanced hand with at least invitational values 4 ♥ (which is the same as in the other auctions) or a game-forcing hand with exactly four hearts.

Unlike in the earlier sequences, the transfer cue-bid is now non-forcing. This is restrictive since doubler will pass or raise to 4 ♥ most of the time, but there is not enough room to explore every possibility in this auction. Only when the doubler has significant extra values, and can either cue-bid 3 ♠ or make some other slam-going move, will advancer be able to describe his hand fully.

The primary reason for playing 3 ♥ in this manner is that advancer is three times more likely to have an invitational hand than a game force. On grounds of frequency it is therefore better to give up some of the more obscure game-forcing auctions to permit advancer to differentiate between 4-card and 5-card heart invites.

Thus all game-forcing hands with exactly four hearts, whether balanced or containing a longer minor have to be lumped into the 2 ♠ response together with the balanced invitational hands without four hearts. Whenever advancer has the FG hand with hearts, his next bid will be a forcing 3 ♥ (assuming doubler has not jumped to game).

Here are two examples of how this works:

West	East
♠ K 5	♠ 9 7 2
♥ K Q 8 4	♥ A J 3
♦ A 9 7 4	♦ K Q 8
♣ J 8 4	♣ A 7 3

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Dbl	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

In this case, East has the 10+ without 4 ♥ version of the two-way 2 ♠ bid. As doubler has a spade stop but only minimum values, he bids 2 NT, and now advancer can raise since he has extras. As in the other auctions, notrump can be found irrespective of who has the stopper.

Now let's see an auction in which advancer has the game-forcing 4-card heart version of 2 ♠:

West	East
♠ K 5	♠ 9 7 2
♥ K Q 8 4	♥ A J 3 2
♦ A 9 7 4	♦ K Q 8 5 2
♣ J 8 4	♣ A

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Dbl	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	5 ♣	Pass
6 ♥	All Pass		

As before, opener rebids 2 NT. This time though, advancer had four hearts so he shows the nature of his hand with 3 ♥. Since advancer is unlimited doubler cue-bids enroute to 4 ♥. Knowing there is a short spade stop opposite (which must therefore be the ace or K-x) advancer can safely venture to the five-level. With good trumps, doubler is happy to accept the try.

Opener's partner makes a bid

The final question on the subject of advancing take-out doubles is what to do if opener's partner bids. This is a fairly academic subject, since with three players bidding before the auction reaches advancer, he will seldom have much by way of values anyway. However, if responder makes a bid below a raise (i.e. he does not take away any of your artificial bids) then all bids retain the same meaning

as they would if responder passed. It is up to you to decide how you want to play a double, but penalties is the normal meaning and I see no reason to change that.

If responder raises opener's suit or makes a jump bid, then transfers should no longer apply. This allows you to use a responsive double to show more than one suit just as you would playing traditional methods. Having said that, if only one artificial bid is removed (i.e. responder raises) it is equally playable to use a double to replace the missing transfer bid and keep other bids the same as after a pass by responder.

9. 1 Major – (Double) – ?

Introductory discussion

In previous articles we have concentrated on transfer advances of overcalls and take-out doubles. Now we move back around the table to look at other situations in which the opening side can utilize transfer bids.

We begin with a common situation: partner opens 1♥ or 1♠ and RHO doubles. Most partnerships muddle through, but transfers can add considerably to your accuracy in these auctions. Here are some bidding problems:

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C
♠ J 8 6 3	♠ J 8 3	♠ J 8 3
♥ 8 7 2	♥ 10 8 7 2	♥ 10 8 7 2
♦ Q 7 5 3 2	♦ Q 7 5 3	♦ Q 7 5 3 2
♣ 5	♣ 5 2	♣ 5

Pard	LHO	You	RHO
1♠	Dbl	?	

Holding Hand A, most players would be happy to jump to 3♠, particularly non-vulnerable. Certainly the LAW suggests that the three-level should be safe with the expected 9-card fit. This pre-emptive raise is made doubly safe since partner knows that with a decent 4-card spade raise you have 2 NT available.

With Hand B or C, there are many benefits to a 2♠ bid. You might consider Hand C a minimum raise and Hand B not good enough. However, not only might a raise deter RHO from introducing his 5-card club suit on moderate values, but consider LHO's position in the following two auctions:

Pard	LHO	You	RHO
1♠	Dbl	Pass	3♥
Pass	?		

or

Pard	LHO	You	RHO
1♠	Dbl	2♠	3♥
Pass	?		

In the first auction, RHO clearly has game interest and with a little better than a minimum double LHO will raise to game, which is likely to be very playable looking at your hand.

In the second auction, the 3♥ bid covers a very wide range – anything from the

same invitational hand that would have jumped to 3♥ in the first auction down to a 3-4 count with six hearts that wishes to compete the partscore. (Yes, your opponents may be able to differentiate between these two hand types by using responsive doubles, but only if you are playing against a fairly sophisticated regular partnership).

Two good things can happen in the second auction. Perhaps the doubler passes 3♥ because he is worried his partner is simply competing and a cold game is missed. Alternatively, doubler raises and the contract is a hopeless one. True, sometimes you will push the opponents into a game they would not otherwise have bid, but on balance it pays to take up the opponents' bidding space whenever possible. This is particularly true when you have a fit.

One problem with raising to 2♠ on these hands is that the safety net provided by 2 NT (when compared with the pre-emptive jump to 3♠) is not present here if you are playing traditional methods. Consider these hands:

Hand D		Hand E	
♠ K 9 5		♠ Q 8 7 6	
♥ A 9 7 4		♥ J 10 6	
♦ J 8 5		♦ K 9 2	
♣ 7 5 3		♣ 6 3 2	
Pard	LHO	You	RHO
1 ♠	Dbf	?	

Hand D offers a number of unattractive options. You could redouble I suppose, in an attempt to show some strength, intending to bid 2♠ on the next round. That might work although partner is likely to expect about a king more for that sequence. Besides, things will really get out of hand if LHO jumps to 3♣ or 3♦. When that comes back to you are you going to bid 3♠ now? Partner will almost certainly raise to game and that could easily be -800 when you have enough defence to ensure the opponents cannot make game.

Alternatively, you could bid 1 NT. Of course, that doesn't show your spade fit and partner will be wary of competing with Q x x x x facing a likely shortage. Again you will be left with an unsolvable problem if the auction is at the three-level by the time you get another turn.

What's left? Right – 2♠.

Hand E offers similar problems. It is clearly not a pre-emptive 3♠ bid for numerous reasons, and yet neither is it good enough for 2 NT. The problem is that despite four-card support the ODR (offence to defense ratio) make this a

fairly poor hand.

The other alternative? Right – 2 ♠ again.

Clearly, partner is going to have problems deciding what to do in a competitive auction if you are going to bid 2 ♠ on all of Hands B, C, D and E.

Before suggesting a solution to this dilemma, let's consider one other problem:

♠ K Q 8 6 4
♥ A 7
♦ K 8 6 3
♣ 9 3

You	LHO	Pard	RHO
1 ♠	Dbl	Rdbl	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
?			

You are not considering bidding on, are you? Do you agree with partner's bidding?

Hand F	Hand G
♠ A J 3	♠ A J 3
♥ 9 6	♥ 9 6
♦ A J 9 7 4	♦ 7 4 2
♣ 7 4 2	♣ A J 9 7 4

If partner has Hand F, the double fit in diamonds means you want to reach 4 ♠, whereas you will be lucky to make nine tricks facing Hand G.

Perhaps you think partner should make a natural 2 ♣ or 2♦ bid with these hands and then raise spades at his second turn. Perhaps, and that would be my personal choice, but many people play change-of-suit at the two-level as non-forcing after a double, and they may be right on hands such as:

Hand H
♠ –
♥ J 9 6 4
♦ Q 10 9 8 6 5
♣ 9 6 4

Pard	LHO	You	RHO
1 ♠	Dbl	?	

Most of the time, LHO will have short spades for his double. You have a void. Are

you not a little (or quite a lot) worried, particularly if you are vulnerable, that if you pass so might the next two players? Wouldn't you rather take your chances that 2 ♠ is a better spot than 1 ♠ doubled? You might be wrong, but chances are that even when the opponents have a penalty available they may not find it easy to double and they may just settle for bidding game.

The Transfer Structure

How would you like to be able to cater to all of the possibilities discussed above? Regular readers will have worked out that you can by using transfers. The structure is similar whichever major partner opens:

Pard LHO You RHO

1 ♥ Dbl ?

- Pass denies 3 ♥ unless really terrible (e.g. a 3-3-4-3 Yarborough).
- Redouble Standard type – looking for a penalty (may also include balanced hands without three spades)
- 1 ♠ Normal – natural and forcing
- 1 NT transfer to clubs
- 2 ♣ transfer to diamonds
- 2 ♠ transfer to hearts
- 2 ♥ weak raise

Pard LHO You RHO

1 ♠ Dbl ?

- Pass denies 3 ♠ unless really terrible (e.g. a 3-3-4-3 Yarborough).
- Redouble Standard type – looking for a penalty (may also include balanced hands without three spades)
- 1 NT transfer to clubs
- 2 ♣ transfer to diamonds
- 2 ♠ transfer to hearts
- 2 ♥ transfer to spades
- 2 ♠ weak raise

Note the transfer into partner's suit: this shows something like Hand C or D above – ie. a sound raise with 3-card support (or 4-card support unsuitable for a 2 NT bid, usually because of poor shape). Note that this is an unlimited bid. For example, with a 3-card raise to the 3-level you would transfer to opener's suit at the 2-level and, if partner simply completes the transfer, you can raise. This suggests a fairly balanced hand with general all-around values.

The side effect of being able to show these sound raises to the 2-level via the transfer to opener's suit is that it is now much safer to make a simple,

obstructive raise on something like Hand B or C above. Opener will know you have a bad hand and will compete when he should but be wary of proceeding further just because he has a fistful of high cards.

When you transfer into a new suit, partner will usually just complete the transfer unless he is very strong or has an excellent fit for your suit. Bear in mind that responder might easily have something like Hand H above. Opener is allowed to jump in responder's suit with a good fit and this should be treated as a pre-emptive raise.

With something like Hands F & G above (and perhaps a little weaker), responder would transfer into his minor and then support spades at the appropriate level at his second turn. A jump to the 3-level would be highly invitational and invite opener to bid on with a fitting hand.

If responder bids a new suit at the initial transfer, the auction continues just as if he has begun with a natural and forcing bid in his real suit.

Playing transfers:

Pard	LHO	You	RHO
1 ♠	Dbl	2 ♣*	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	

This is natural and forcing just as if you had made a natural and forcing 2♦ bid at your first turn. Note, however, that thanks to transfers you can now bid your second suit at the 2-level since opener has not had to find a space-consuming rebid at his second turn.

10. 2/3/4 Suit – (Double) – ?

Introduction

We have examined ways to use transfers after RHO has doubled partner's 1-level major-suit opening bid. Next we extend those same principles to auctions that have opened with a higher bid from partner.

As usual, let's begin with some bidding problems:

Hand A

♠ –
♥ 8 7 5
♦ Q 10 9 8 6 5 3 2
♣ J 7

Hand B

♠ A 8 7 3
♥ 7 3
♦ A J 10 8 6
♣ A 7

Hand C

♠ A J 9 7
♥ 8 7
♦ K Q 9 8 6 3
♣ 7

In each case, partner opens a weak 2 ♠ at love all, and RHO doubles.

If you pass when you have Hand A, it is a dollar to a doughnut that the auction will end right here. I don't know about you, but I would not want to watch my partner declare two spades doubled. It will surely be better for you to play 3 ♦ or for the opponents to bid a non-vulnerable game (or even slam).

So, you have to be able to bid with Hand A.

When you have Hand B, you intend to bid 4 ♠ with some expectation of making it. However, if the opponents bid 5 ♣ or 5 ♥ you would quite like partner to bid on to 5 ♠ with a diamond fit and decent trumps: e.g. ♠ K Q x x x x ♥ x ♦ Q x x ♣ x x x. Clearly, the ♦ Q is like gold dust; whereas the ♣ Q may be working on defence but is of much less value in a high spade contract.

Holding Hand C, you could jump to 4 ♠ but then you will have to make the final decision if the opponents bid 5 ♣ or 5 ♥. Making a fit-jump to 4 ♦ at least allows partner to join in the decision-making process although it does have the significant disadvantage of allowing LHO a cheap 4 ♥ bid. Alternatively, you may choose to play a jump to the 4-level as a splinter on a hand with slam aspirations.

Whichever meaning you elect to assign to 4 ♦, it is not available for use on Hand B. Since we also decided earlier that a 3 ♦ bid is needed to cater for something like Hand A, that is also unavailable for Hand B. Or is it?

The Transfer Structure

Regular readers will have realized that transfers can be employed to solve this dilemma as well as a number of other problems. Here is a workable structure:

2 ♠ - (Dbl) - ?

Rdbl	replaces the normal 2 NT enquiry;
2 NT	transfer to clubs
3 ♣	transfer to diamonds
3 ♦	transfer to hearts
3 ♥	transfer to spades
3 ♠	weak raise

If the opening weak two bid is in hearts (or diamonds), then a 2-level suit bid should be natural (and either weak, constructive or forcing as you see fit).

The redouble is always used to replace the normal 2 NT enquiry. This has the added advantage, particularly if you use the Blue Club (or Ogust) methods, that opener's responses start at a lower level than usual.

With Hand A above you would simply bid 3 ♣, transfer to diamonds. Assuming LHO does not make a positive bid, opener will just complete the transfer and await further developments. Of course, when you have Hand A there will be none from your side. When you have Hand B, you will also start with 3 ♣, but this time you plan on jumping to 4 ♠ at your second turn.

You can also start with a transfer to diamonds with a slightly weaker hand and then bid an invitational 3 ♠ next. Of course, this is dangerous as you will not get a chance to show your intentions if the opponents can get the auction beyond 3 ♠ by the time you get a second turn.

Using the same principles established last month after a 1-level opening is doubled, a transfer to opener's suit (3 ♥ in the case above) is used to show a good raise – in this auction, an invitational 3 ♠ bid. The direct raise is then available as a purely obstructive maneuver.

It is also possible that responder has a strong 2-suited hand without support for opener:

♠ 7
♥ K Q 10 8 7
♦ A Q 10 8 6 3
♣ 4

2 ♠ - (Dbl) - ?

Playing standard methods, you are immediately in trouble. You might choose to start with a pass or a redouble, but neither will work well if there is no further bidding! Perhaps you prefer a natural 3♦, intending to bid 4♥ next. That may

work out, but will partner necessarily know that you have a fifth heart? Might you not be 2-4-6-1?

Although that is still an option, let us assume that you decided not to try to penalize the opponents. The advantage of playing transfers with this type of hand is that opener does not have to make a space-consuming bid at his second turn. Over a natural 3 \diamond (assuming it is forcing) partner is likely to rebid his spades. Over a 3 \clubsuit transfer, he is guaranteed to bid 3 \diamond , allowing you to bid 3 \heartsuit next. When you then bid 4 \heartsuit at your third turn, partner will know you are at least 5-6.

With a 2-4-6-1 shape you might try 4 \clubsuit as a kind of "pick a suit" bid after the auction begins:

2 \spadesuit	(Dbl)	3 \clubsuit^*	(Pass)
3 \diamond^*	(Pass)	3 \heartsuit	(Pass)
3 \spadesuit /3 NT	(Pass)	?	

Unlike many transfer situations, this is one in which you do not have to give up a natural bid. The only bid that you cannot now use is the redouble. Perhaps you currently play that as saying, "I have a good hand and want to double the opponents." Playing transfers, you can simply pass with that hand and then double when LHO's bid comes back around to you. If you currently use redouble to show a sound spade raise, then you now have the 3 \heartsuit transfer to do that, with the additional pre-emptive value that LHO cannot now bid 3 \clubsuit or 3 \diamond .

You can also use similar methods after partner opens at the 3-level, although do not forget that you need 3 NT as a natural bid in those auctions. In those cases, you have to start the transfers with redouble, and I will leave those of you who are so inclined to work out the details.

11. 1♣ [Strong] – (Bid) – ?

Introduction

This article concentrates on how strong club pairs can use transfers to negate the effect of multi-meaning interference over their 1♣ opening bid, and the same concepts can also be used by Acol players. Our discussions here will concentrate on helping responder to a strong club opening, but if you play natural methods you can use the same structure after a 2♣ opening is overcalled.

These days, more and more pairs are intervening over Acol 2♣ openings, and many of them use the same defence as they employ against a strong club but a level higher. What this means is that you often do not know which suit(s) the opponent has.

Let's use the following situation to illustrate:

Pard RHO You LHO
1♣* 1♥* ?

The 1♣ is strong and artificial, and the 1♥ overcall shows either both red suits or both black suits – a fairly common defensive method against a strong club. Here is a workable structure using transfers (which can be applied irrespective of the meaning of the intervention):

The Transfer method

Pass	a normal negative response
Dbl	balanced with positive/game-forcing values and 3-4 hearts
1♠	natural (5+♠) with positive/game-forcing values
1 NT	transfer – 5+♣ with positive/game-forcing values
2♣	transfer – 5+♦ with positive/game-forcing values
2♦	transfer – 5+♥ with positive/game-forcing values
2♥	1-2 hearts with positive/game-forcing values and no 5-card suit – effectively a take-out double of hearts
2♠	6+♠, semi-positive, invitational
2 NT	transfer – 6+♣ and semi-positive values
3♣	transfer – 6+♦ and semi-positive values
3♦	transfer – 6+♥ and semi-positive values

Bids from 3♥ and up are available to describe any specific hand that you like, perhaps two-suited. Since the low-level transfers show game-forcing values, opener can simply complete the transfer on all but the most extreme distributional hands. Responder can then describe his hand further by rebidding

his suit, bidding notrump, bidding a second suit, etc.

Note that:

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
1 ♣*	1 ♥*	2 ♣*	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	

responder has shown 5+♦ and 4♥. The effect is that the opponents' interference can effectively be ignored and, indeed, it actually assists responder's description of his hand in many auctions. Note also that there is now no confusion when responder actually has the suit in which the opponent has overcalled. Even if the overcall is natural (but potentially psychic), responder can brush this effort aside by showing the suit via a transfer to it.

What about when the overcall is at a higher level?

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
1 ♣*	2 ♥*	?	

The 1 ♣ is strong and artificial, and this time the overcall shows either hearts or a 3-suited hand with short hearts – again a not uncommon method against a strong club. Here is a workable structure using transfers:

Pass	a normal negative response
Dbl	a balanced positive with 3-4 hearts
2 ♠	natural and forcing to game
2 NT	transfer – 5+♣ with positive/game-forcing values
3 ♣	transfer – 5+♣ with positive/game-forcing values
3 ♦	transfer – 5+♥ with positive/game-forcing values
3 ♥	1-2 hearts with positive/game-forcing values and no 5-card suit – a take-out double of hearts
3 ♠	6+♠ semi-positive, invitational

I will leave you to work out the meaning of the bids from 3 NT and up. As 3 NT is not needed in a natural sense (all balanced good hands start with a double), you can use it either as a transfer with invitational values or as a semi-positive with both minors.

In this structure, bids below the next level of notrump are natural and forcing. Bids starting with the next available notrump bid and up to those below a cue-bid are transfers. This leaves the direct cue-bid available for use as a take-out double.

These methods work in the same way after a strong 2 ♣ opening is overcalled.

12. 1 Suit – (Suit) [No Jump] – ?

Introduction

To finish this series, we will look at two situations in which you can use transfers by responder to broaden the repertoire of hands you can show. As usual, we start with some bidding problems. In each case, the auction begins:

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
1♣	Pass	?	

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D	Hand E
♠ K 8 6	♠ K 8 6	♠ 8 6 4	♠ K 8 6	♠ 8 6 4
♥ K Q 7 3	♥ K Q 7 3 2	♥ K J 7 4 3 2	♥ J 3 2	♥ J 3
♦ 8 6 5 4	♦ J 6 5	♦ 8 6	♦ K Q 6 5 4	♦ K Q 8 6 5 4
♣ Q 4	♣ Q 4	♣ Q 4	♣ Q 4	♣ Q 4

This is not so tough: you can comfortably bid 1♥ on Hands A, B and C, and 1♦ on Hands D and E. Now let's alter the position slightly by inserting a 1♠ overall:

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
1♣	1♠	?	

It is surprising how much more difficult a simple overcall can make things. Hand A would have presented a serious problem a quarter of a century ago, and the negative double was devised to resolve just this position. Hand B is also not a problem, since you are strong enough to bid a forcing 2♥, although as we shall see later that does not mean your problems are over. Hand C is an entirely different kettle of fish. You do not have enough to bid 2♥ as it is forcing, but you also hate to pass. Partnerships usually agree to solve this type of conundrum in one of two ways: one possibility is to make a negative double, intending to bid a non-forcing 2♥ on the next round of the auction. That works if the auction continues in such a way as to allow you to describe your hand later. Frequently of course, it will not do so. The other option is to play 'negative free bids' — using these, 2♥ becomes non-forcing and all good hands have to start with a negative double. That solves this particular problem, but creates a whole pile of others.

The problem is no easier when you have diamonds rather than hearts. With Hand D you can bid a forcing 2♦, but you have no sensible bid on Hand E. You have to choose between Pass and a flawed 1NT, or perhaps in your partnership you can jump to 3♦ to show this type of hand.

Regular readers of this column will already have guessed that a form of transfers

can be used to help solve these problems. Let's look at how transfers work in the auction we have been discussing here.

Transfers after an overcall

After the auction begins $1\clubsuit - (1\spadesuit) - ?$, the bids that are effected are $2\diamond$ and $2\heartsuit$. Rather than using these two bids as natural and forcing, think about swapping their meanings. Thus, $2\diamond$ becomes a transfer to hearts, and $2\heartsuit$ shows diamonds. Note that you do not have to give up any natural bids here, since you are merely switching the meanings of the two bids. After the $2\diamond$ bid, opener simply completes the transfer with any hand that is not interested in game opposite a non-forcing $2\heartsuit$ bid, such as Hand C above — i.e. most opening bids without a big heart fit.

Now let's go back to the problem hands above and see how the auctions might go. We can ignore Hand A, since we can start with a negative double whether or not we are playing transfers. You do not have the additional burden that a negative double might include a weak single-suiter though, which makes things easier on opener if the auction becomes more competitive.

It is easy to see that when you have Hand C above, you can show your suit immediately by playing transfers. Partner is well aware that you might have this hand for your $2\diamond$ transfer bid, so he will tread cautiously. If he has no game interest, he will simply complete the transfer and you will pass. If the fourth hand raises to $2\spadesuit$, partner will compete only on the basis that you hold this minimum hand type.

What about Hand B:

♠ K 8 6
 ♥ K Q 7 3 2
 ♦ J 6 5
 ♣ Q 4

Let's see what might happen playing traditional methods...

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
$1\clubsuit$	$1\spadesuit$	$2\heartsuit$	Pass
$3\clubsuit$	Pass	?	

This is hardly an unexpected continuation. Do you pass, or do you guess to punt $3NT$? Either might be right. Now let's see how transfers help here:

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
$1\clubsuit$	$1\spadesuit$	$2\diamond^*$	Pass
$2\heartsuit$	Pass	?	

You have an easy 2 NT bid now. Having bid 2 NT you have shown five hearts, a spade stopper, and the values to invite game — perfect! Partner can pass 2 NT, correct to 3 ♣ or 3 ♥, bid game in hearts or notrump, or make some other forward going move. Whatever he decides, the chances are high that you will reach the best spot.

You are also well placed if your LHO raises spades.

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
1 ♣	1 ♠	2 ♦*	2 ♠
Pass	Pass	?	

The meanings you choose to assign to 2 NT and to double are a matter for partnership agreement. You can agree that double shows this kind of balanced hand with values and some trumps and use 2 NT as some kind of competitive move with a second suit, or you can use double for take-out on a hand with short spades and play 2 NT as natural. Either way, partner will know enough about your hand to do the right thing most of the time.

So, what about Hands D and E?

Hand D	Hand E
♠ K 8 6	♠ 8 6 4
♥ J 3 2	♥ J 3
♦ K Q 6 5 4	♦ K Q 8 6 5 4
♣ Q 4	♣ Q 4

Pard	RHO	You	LHO
1 ♣	1 ♠	2 ♥*	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	?	

Partner is no better or worse off here than he would be after a natural and forcing 2 ♦ bid. He can choose to cue-bid 2 ♠ with a hand that lacks direction and wants to know more about your hand. On this particular collection, you have an easy 2 NT bid that describes both your values and your spade holding. If partner had bid 3 ♣, then you can assume that is what he would have bid over a forcing 2 ♦ and continue accordingly.

With the weaker Hand E, you have the same options as you did when playing traditional methods. You could pass or bid 1 NT on the first round, or you can bid the 2 ♥ transfer and then bid a non-forcing 3 ♦ if given the chance next time around.

Note that these methods are not designed to improve your bidding when responder has the minor-suit hands, but to leave you in the same position on

those while greatly increasing your accuracy when responder has an unbid major. For that reason, it would obviously make no sense to use these same transfer methods when the bidding starts, for example, 1 ♣ from partner and a 1 ♥ overcall. Bidding 2 ♦ to show spades and 1 ♠ with diamonds would increase your success rate when responder has diamonds, but would make life much harder when he holds spades — not a good idea.

Transfer after a Black suit overcall

So, when do these methods produce the greatest gain? Here is the simple rule that my regular partnership uses: when RHO overcalls a black suit at the one, two or three level (and responder has not already passed), the meanings of bids in the two unbid suits are switched.

In the final chapter of this series, we stay in responder's seat to see the benefits of transfer jump shifts in unopposed auctions.

13. 1 Suit – (Pass) – Jump Shift [Weak/Strong]

Introduction

In Part 12, we began with a look at how you can use transfers by responder (without competition) to broaden the repertoire of hands you can show. This month we continue by considering the benefits of transfer jump shifts in unopposed auctions. As usual, we start with some bidding problems. In each case, partner opens 1 ♠ and RHO passes:

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D	Hand E
♠ 7	♠ —	♠ A Q 8 6	♠ A Q 6 4	♠ 7
♥ 3 2	♥ K Q 7 6 5 3 2	♥ K Q J 7 3	♥ 5	♥ A Q J 10 9 7 3 2
♦ A J 10 8 6 5 3	♦ 7 3 2	♦ A 6	♦ A K J 9 8 6	♦ A
♣ 8 3 2	♣ J 8 5 3	♣ 5 4	♣ 9 4	♣ K Q 4

Playing standard methods, you have only two realistic choices with Hand A — pass or 1 NT — either of which is not unlikely to produce a poor result. If you pass, there is a chance the opponents will allow partner to play in 1 ♠. Equally unsatisfactory, when the enemy are cold for 4 ♥, they are unlikely to have a problem getting there. Bidding 1 NT is more likely to work, since if partner rebids his spades or tries 2 ♥, you can escape to 3 ♦. However, many things can go wrong — 1 NT may end the auction, which is not likely to be good news, or partner may jump to 3 ♠. Also, if this is the opponents' hand, they will be able to get into the auction cheaply. What you would really like to do is bid diamonds immediately, preferably at the 3-level, which is why weak jump shifts are quite popular in the US.

The problems on Hand B are similar, except that this time you also want to be able to get to 4 ♥ when it is right. Playing traditional methods, you are more or less forced to respond 1 NT. It is not unlikely that this will end the auction, since the opponents are less likely to back in when they do not have hearts. Playing in 1 NT is unlikely to be much fun. Bidding 2 ♥ over 1 ♠ might work, but is likely to get you too high whenever partner has a decent hand. Once again, playing weak jump shifts would solve the problem here, as you could then jump to 3 ♥ to show this hand, and partner would raise when it was right.

So, are you are ready to switch to playing weak jump shifts...?

Transfer Jump Shifts

Of course, playing strong jump shifts does have advantages when you have either a good one-suited hand or a two-suiter with primary support for partner's suit. Hands such as C, D and E are classic example of strong jump shifts opposite

a 1 ♠ opening bid. However, your problems are not necessarily over once you have made as strong jump shift. Part of the problem is that you need room to tell partner why you have jumped, and partner obviously has to use up some of that room with his second bid.

On Hand C, you can jump to 3 ♠. If partner now bids 3 ♠ or 3 NT, you can cue-bid your ace of diamonds, conveniently showing a strong hand with 4-card spade support, good hearts, a diamond control, and no club control. That's fine, provided partner bids 3 ♠ or 3 NT. Much of the time though, he will raise to 4 ♠. Now what? Perhaps the 5-level is safe. Maybe you settle for 4 ♠. Either way, you are left with an awkward decision, and have not managed to describe your whole hand at a safe level.

With Hand D, you are again likely to run into space conservation problems. You want to show a good hand with spades and diamonds, and you would also like to show your heart control. Let's say you respond 3 ♠. If partner bids 3 ♠ now, you can bid 4 ♠, but partner will not know how to evaluate the king of hearts and might easily carry you too high.

With Hand E, you want to set hearts as trumps and then use RKCB. So, you jump to 3 ♠, intending to bid 4 NT next. If partner rebids 3 ♠, are you 100% sure that when you now bid 4 NT, it is hearts that are the key suit?

You may be wondering how it is possible to solve all of the problems discussed here at the same time, and the answer of course is to use a transfer method. Here is the basic outline:

After a 1 ♠ opening:

- 2 ♠ Strong heart raise
- 2 NT Transfer to clubs
- 3 ♣ Transfer to diamonds
- 3 ♠ Transfer to spades

After a 1 ♠ opening:

- 2 NT Strong spade raise
- 3 ♣ Transfer to diamonds
- 3 ♠ Transfer to hearts
- 3 ♠ Transfer to clubs

Many pairs use a 2 NT response to a major-suit opening as some kind of strong raise, although you can use Baron 2 NT (16+ balanced) in the scenario above too. Note though, that over a 1 ♠ opening, 2 ♠ is used for this purpose, thus providing a little extra room in those sequences. The other three jump

responses below three of opener's major are transfer bids, and these are either weak or strong. With a hand that would pass a weak jump shift, partner simply completes the transfer. Let's see how these methods work on the example hands we examined earlier.

With Hands A and B, you can now respond 3 ♣ and 3 ♦ respectively. This ensures that you play the hand in your long suit, but also that partner does not carry you too high. He can, of course, do something other than complete the transfer when he has a good hand with a fit. Getting the bidding to the 3-level immediately also makes life tougher for the opponents when the hand belongs to them.

With Hand C, the auction begins 1 ♠ – 3 ♦. Expecting a weak hand, opener will usually just bid 3 ♣, and you can now bid 4 ♦ to agree spades and show your diamond control. The effect of the transfer is to provide partner with a cheap response.

This benefit is even more important when you have Hand D. After 1 ♠ – 3 ♣, opener can bid 3 ♦, allowing you to agree spades at the 3-level by bidding 3 ♠. Partner also has the inference that you have not bid 3 ♣ or 4 ♣, which would also agree spades, so he knows you do not have first-round control of either suit. If partner has no slam interest opposite a good hand with spades and diamonds, he will simply raise to 4 ♠ and you can pass comfortably. However, if he is still interested, he will cue-bid a club control, or perhaps show a partial diamond fit, and you can now cue-bid 4 ♣, knowing that partner will know this is a second-round control. Again, you will reach slam when it is good and avoid getting overboard when it is not.

Finally, with Hand E, you again respond with a 3 ♦ transfer. Assuming partner simply completes the transfer, you can bid 4 NT and it should be clear that you intend hearts to be trumps (as you could have agreed spades by bidding 3 ♠ or by cue-bidding either minor).

You will note that in the scheme above there are two auctions in which you are transferring to a spot above three of partner's major. Basically, to respond 3 ♣ (showing clubs) to a 1 ♠ opening, you will need an extra trump, just as you did in the old days when 4 ♣ was a natural pre-empt. I will leave you to work out with your regular partner how the various auctions continue after the initial response, and also exactly what your personal requirements may be for the weak options.

You will notice that I have only outlined a scheme for use over a major-suit opening bid. This is primarily because most of the problems occur when responder's suit is lower-ranking than opener's. You could use the same

concept after a 1 ♣ opening, but it is not efficient after 1 ♦, since you could not then show hearts at the two-level.

This concludes our series of articles on transfers.