

Ruben Advances

By Neil H. Timm

How many times have the opponents opened a club and your partner overcalls a major and you have the other major or a good minor suit and no support for your partner's major. What should you do? If you bid a new suit, is it Forcing or NF constructive? There is no accepted standard; however, most partnerships play it as invitational.

However you play it, you in general need a good suit to prefer it to partners overcall. What is needed is a method of showing a good suit, even if you have a bad hand. Jeff Rubens, editor of "Bridge World" recommends the use of transfers.

Here is how it works, with a few modifications, after the bid of 1♣ - 1♠ - pass

1NT natural
2♣* transfer to diamonds
2♦* transfer to hearts
2♥ cue bid (takes the place of the bid of 2♣, a strong bid)
2♠ natural support bid

*Alert – in what follows an asterisk indicates an alert

With interference 1♣ - 1♠ - 2♣

Dbl transfer to diamonds
2♦* transfer to hearts
2♥ cue bid (a support bid too strong for a natural raise)
2♠ natural support bid

Similarly, after the sequence 1♣ - 1♥ - pass

1♠ natural
1NT natural
2♣* transfer to diamonds
2♦ cue bid (a support bid too strong for a natural raise)
2♥ natural support bid

With interference 1♣ - 1♥ - 2♣

2♦* transfer to spades
2♥ natural support bid
2♠ cue bid (a support bid too strong for a natural raise)

If the overcall is a touching suit 1♥ - 1♠

- 2♣ natural, forcing one round
- 2♦ natural, forcing one round
- 2♥ a support bid too strong for a natural raise
- 2♠ natural support bid

Let's investigate a few examples to see how the transfer works, your partner bids 1♠ natural and you hold the following hand.

♠5 ♥987 ♦ KQJ865 ♣J43 what do you bid?

You have a very weak hand, hence you must bid 2♣* transferring partner to diamonds and pass. Alternatively, suppose you have the hand

♠5 ♥K87 ♦ AQJ865 ♣QJ6

You again bid 2♣*, however, after hearing 2♦ by partner you bid 2NT. If partner has no interest in notrump because of weak clubs, he may return to 3♦.

In the above example, we had only a single spade. With at least two spades and one honor, you can transfer and then support spades. This sequence shows good diamonds and some support for the major.

Continuing, suppose you have a hand that has shortness in spades with great hearts. For example, you hold the hand:

♠5 ♥AQJ843 ♦J107 ♣543 what do you bid?

Now you bid 2♦* to transfer to hearts. Because you have a weak hand, you then pass. With a stronger hand you may raise hearts. For example, if your hand was:

♠5 ♥AQJ843 ♦AJ7 ♣543 or even better with ♠Q5 ♥AQJ843 ♦QJ10 ♣A43

You would again bid 2♦* as a transfer to hearts, but instead cue bid 3♣ to invite notrump.

What if the opponents bid at the two level? Can we still employ a transfer system? Yes!

For example, suppose we have the sequence:

If the overcall is a touching suit 1♠ - 2♥ - pass

- Dbl* transfer to diamonds
- 2♠* transfer to clubs
- 2NT natural
- 3♣* transfer to diamonds
- 3♦ cue bid (a support bid too strong for a natural raise)