

Two Over One

Jacoby and Texas Transfers

Popular, Versatile, Effective

Most modern players have learned the basics of Jacoby Transfers and regularly employ them correctly. There are, however, a few finer points to Jacoby Transfers of which not all players are aware. Our article today will introduce these finer points. In addition, Oswald Jacoby also invented a companion convention known as Texas Transfers, which complements Jacoby Transfers. These, too, will be the subject matter of today's discussion.

Jacoby Transfers: the Basics

Jacoby Transfers are bids that arise when partner opens 1NT. Opener's hand, by its nature holds collections of honors in most if not all suits. The strength of these collections is usually enhanced when the opening lead comes into them, allowing declarer to select his own play only after all three of the other players have committed their choice of card. Generally speaking, a gain of one entire trick is frequently the benefit of allowing the lead to come into the 1NT opening hand. Jacoby Transfers, and Texas Transfers, are both designed to allow the 1NT opener this important advantage.

The responder to the one notrump opening bid uses Jacoby Transfers when holding a major suit that is at least 5 cards in length. Holding such a suit, responder bids the suit that is just below the actual suit he holds. So with a 5-card heart suit, responder bids 2 diamonds. With a 5-card spade suit, responder bids 2 hearts. Opener then acquires the responsibility to bid the suit that responder actually holds, thereby becoming the declarer if the partners should subsequently agree to play the contract using responder's suit as trump.

So far, then, responder will only have identified his important major suit. On his second bid, responder will reveal the overall strength of his hand and indicate whether or not his suit is even longer than indicated so far. Assuming that his suit is not longer, but is just the 5-card suit already indicated, responder describes his strength as follows:

0 to 7 points	pass
8 or 9 points	2NT
10 to 15 points	3NT
16 or 17 points	4NT
20 to 21 points	5NT

These point totals should be regarded as guidelines. For instance, 9 HCPs and a 5-card suit will often produce 3NT. So consider shading your bid upward to the next category if you have the least provocation. This would especially be true when using IMP scoring, when, indeed, you should not even need the extra provocation. At matchpoint scoring, you perhaps will not push to the next level if your suit is poor, or if your hand suffers from some other defect.

When the one notrump opener hears responders 2nd bid, he is then in position to decide which contract the partnership should play in. If responder has shown invitational values only (8 or 9 points) by rebidding 2NT, then opener will decide whether sufficient values exist for game or not. If opener decides to play for partscore only, he either passes 2NT when he holds only 2 cards in responder's suit, or he may bid 3 of the major with 3 or more cards. If opener decides to accept the game invitation, he will bid 3NT with only 2 cards in

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partner's suit, but he will typically choose 4 of the major with 3 or more cards. As for the case when responder has jumped to 3NT, showing 10 to 15 points, opener will pass with 2 cards in partner's suit, but may bid the suit game with 3-card support.

So much for the basics of responder's rebid when his suit is only 5 cards long. If his suit is 6 cards in length or even longer, then he has a guaranteed major suit fit with opener, who will hold at least a doubleton in responder's suit. In this circumstance, responder will rebid his own suit to show point levels.

0 to 7 points	pass
8 or 9 points	raise to 3
10 to 15 points	raise to 4

Partner may also leap to 6 of the trump suit if he is satisfied that adequate controls are present to prevent the loss of 2 quick tricks. If responder doesn't know if adequate controls are present, he can ask for key cards by leaping to 4 clubs, which is RKC Gerber.

Jacoby Transfers: Fine Points

Both responder and opener have a some opportunity to convey extra meanings when playing Jacoby Transfers. The most important of these consists of an option for responder. Two others will apply to opener.

The 5-4 Game Force

If responder holds a 4-card minor in addition to his 5-card major, and when responder holds **game forcing values**, then, instead of leaping to 3NT, responder's 2nd bid is his minor suit:

opener	responder
1NT	2♦
2♥	3♦

Responder holds 5 hearts and 4 diamonds. His hand evaluates as 10 to 15 points. Opener still has the same choices he would have had if responder had bid 3NT, namely that he may bid and play 3NT or bid and play 4 hearts.

But opener now has an additional consideration. He could hold a strong fit with responder in the minor suit and be interested in slam. Opener will express this slam interest by cuebidding a control at the 3 level. If responder does not reciprocate the slam interest, he signs off at 3NT. If, on the other hand, responder's hand also suggests slam exploration, he will respond next with a cuebid of his own. Not inconceivably, opener's cuebid could be a drive toward slam in responder's major. But responder should understand it as a slam try in the minor. If opener should eventually conclude the auction with a bid of 6 of the major, this would be a surprise ending.

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Opener's Super-Accept

On occasion, when responder initiates a Jacoby Transfer, the opener will have 4 cards in responder's major suit and maximum or near maximum values for the notrump opening. On such occasions, opener will feel that he wants to express this ideal circumstance. Of course, there would not be any need for opener to express it immediately if he were assured that responder was planning to rebid, and not pass, because then opener could always make sure that game resulted.

But what if responder were transferring opener with the plan to pass when the transfer were completed? Responder's range for this action is 0 to 7 points. If responder were in the upper portion of that range, and if opener were maximal also, with a 9-card trump fit, then there is probably a good play for game. But if responder is in the lower portion of the point range, then game is still out of reach.

Opener can help the partnership find these games by using the super-accept. The standard method of super-accepting is to complete the transfer at the 3-level:

opener	responder
1NT	2♥
3♠	

Opener has 17 points and 4 spades. Responder is invited to raise to game with 6 or 7 points and to pass otherwise. If responder does pass, then at least the partnership is afforded protection under the Law of Total Tricks.

Readers should be aware that there is considerable variation from this standard method of showing a super-accept. Bergen, for instance, suggests that the jump-accept should

NOT be a super accept, but a denial of a super-accept, even though opener does promise 4 trump. Bergen describes a different manner to super-accept. Still other systems employ additional means of super-accepting with only 3 trump. Do not presume, when you hear others jump-accept that they are making a super-accept. The standard super-accept does not require an alert. The Bergen method and 3-card super-accepts all do require alerts.

As a matter of fact, our own system only allows jumping super-accepts when responder's suit is spades, as in the auction shown immediately above. When responder's suit is hearts, we will super-accept by bidding 2 spades:

opener	responder
1NT	2♦
2♠	

Opener has 4 hearts and maximal values. Responder should next bid 2 notrump and opener will, this time, accept the transfer properly and bid 3 hearts. At this point, responder can pass with very minimum values and raise to game with 6 or 7 points. We play this variation in order to avoid a conflict with Walsh Relays, which will be the subject of an approaching lesson.

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Refusing the Transfer

We have always presented Jacoby Transfers as bids that could not be refused. And, indeed, refusing a transfer is a most extraordinary action. It can only be undertaken when opener has opened one notrump with an extraordinary hand:

K7 K9 AK10864 Q108

Opener has more values than needed to open 1 diamond. He has a suit that is ready or nearly ready to be run as a source of tricks. He has holdings in all suits that can stand an incoming lead from the left-hand opponent. The future of this hand would/should be notrump, so it is an acceptable, but extraordinary, one notrump opening hand. An extraordinary hand could even include a 7-card suit.

If opener has elected to open one of these extraordinary notrump hands, he is not eager to accept a transfer and get dropped in 2 of a major. If responder's weakness precludes a notrump contract, then this hand will at least fare better at 3 diamonds than at 2 hearts or spades. This being the case, the extraordinary opener takes the extraordinary measure of refusing the transfer. His bid is 2NT:

opener	responder
1NT	2♥
2NT	

Responder is now aware that opener has opened an extraordinary one trump, and the call should be alerted. If responder has 8 or more points, he should simply place the contract at the level of notrump that he thinks will make. So typically he will either pass or raise to 3NT.

If, instead, responder is very weak, so that notrump may not, in his opinion, work out, then he can escape to opener's minor. He does this by bidding 3 clubs over 2NT:

opener	responder
1NT	2♥
2NT	3♣

This 3 club bid tells opener that responder's hand lacks sufficient values to support a notrump contract. If opener's suit is clubs, he will pass. If opener's suit is diamonds, he will correct the 3 club call to 3 diamonds. If, perchance, opener had 3-card support for responder's major, he would not refuse the transfer, but accept and play in the known 8-card major suit fit.

Refusing Stayman

When opener has opened an extraordinary one trump and responder bids 2 clubs Stayman, opener will rebid 2NT. The message is just the same as it is when opener refuses a transfer. Responder should aim at notrump. Or, if responder can't accept notrump, he can escape to opener's minor by bidding 3 clubs.

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Texas Transfers

Texas Transfers are transfer bids occurring at the 4-level:

opener	responder
1NT	4♦
4♥	

Of course responder can transfer to spades by bidding 4 hearts. In either case, responder has a 6-card major suit. Texas Transfers cannot be refused.

Responder makes a Texas transfer with either with a weaker hand that should be played in game, or else with a stronger hand that almost certainly should be played in slam.

K109642 — A843 632

KQJ862 8 AQ8 A1096

With the 1st hand, responder bids 4 hearts over 1NT and passes opener to play 4 spades. With the 2nd hand, responder transfers opener into spades and then bids 4NT RKC.

6-card suit with mild slam interest. Neither hand above has mere slam interest. One has no slam interest and the other will virtually insist upon slam. But we may pick up a hand like this one:

KQ10742 A6 93 K86

With this hand, responder cannot decide on his own whether to drive for slam or not. So Texas Transfers are not appropriate to describe it. With this hand, responder uses Jacoby Transfer to get into spades, and then leaps to game:

opener	responder
1NT	2♥
2♠	4♠

Responder's leap to 4 spades shows extra values, but strength not sufficient to drive unilaterally toward slam. Opener will typically pass and play in game. But if opener has extra values and a true trump fit, then he can further explore slam possibilities. Note that this bidding sequence can express slam interest only when the partners are playing Texas Transfers. Players who play only Jacoby Transfers cannot assign this specialized meaning to the leap to game.

Texas Transfers are ON in competition. If an opponent intervenes over partner's 1NT opening bid, then Texas Transfers are still available.

opener	opp	responder
1NT	2♠	4♦

Opener should bid 4 hearts.

opener	opp	responder
1NT	3♠	4♦

Opener should bid 4 hearts.

In the last example, how would responder have shown a heart suit that was only 4-cards long? The answer is this:

When the opponents interfere at the 3-level over an opening bid of 1NT, negative doubles are ON.

opener	opp	responder
1NT	3♠	dbl

Responder has 4 hearts and game values.