

CHECKBACK:

1♣ / 1♦ - P - 1♥ / 1♠ - P

1NT - P - 2♣ asks do you have 3 cards in my Major? 2♦ = no; 2M=yes.

1♥ - P - 1♠ - P

1NT - P - 2♣ asks do you have 5th ♥ or 3rd ♠? If so its bid; 2NT= yes both; 2♦=no both.

Over 2NT rebid, 3♣ asks same questions, similar responses.

1♥ / 1♠ - 2 different suit (even clubs)

2NT - 3♣ asks do you have 5th ♥ or ♠ The 3♣ bid does not show clubs even if clubs have been bid before (3♦ = no both; 3♥=5hearts; 3♠=3 spades; 3NT = 5 hearts and 3 spades)

HOWEVER on this particular sequence:

1♠ - P - 2♥ - P

2NT - P - 3♣ asks how many ♥ and ♠

3♦ = 4S/1H (min / min);

3♥ = 4S/2H (min / max);

3♠ = 5S/1H (max / min);

3NT = 5S/2H (max / max)

since with a 15+ count and 3 card heart support the 2NT opener can show support by bidding 4♥ if 15-16 or 3♥ if stronger hand of 17+ as responder has guaranteed at least five hearts.

This sequence helps as responder may have a 6+ card heart suit or 3 card spade support.

(the min / max description are nothing to do with OGUST or points or honours!!!!

Simply same descriptions with Spades always first eg 3♥ = min (4) spades but max (2) hearts)

NOTE:

2NT rebid is always forcing to game somewhere!

Eg 1♠ - 2♦

2NT rebid would be forcing to game as responder must have 10 points or a **very** good 9 if bidding 2♦ over 1♠.

This means that:

1 apple - 1 pear

1NT shows 15-17

and 1 apple - 1 pear

2NT shows 18-19

But 1 pear - 2 apples

2NT can be anywhere between 15-19.

TRANSFERS OVER 1NT

Almost everybody uses the Stayman convention when partner opens with 1 NT, to enquire about a possible four card major in the No Trump hand. Another popular, and most useful, convention when partner opens 1 NT is the "Transfer bid" - transfers can, like Stayman, be made over opening bids of both 1NT and 2NT, and are used extensively in tournament bridge.

Using such a transfer convention, you bid the suit **below** the one you really hold and partner 'completes the transfer' by bidding the **real** suit for you. Why? Well, you should use the convention to ensure that the declarer is the player with the No Trump hand (particularly vital with weak take-out hands when it is best for the opening lead to come INTO the No Trump hand as opposed to THROUGH it), or to show a variety of invitational and game-forcing hands that will enable the partnership jointly to decide the best contract.

In its simplest format, the convention is limited to 'red suit transfers' ie. bidding Diamonds to show Hearts, and Hearts to say 'I have Spades'. In a more complex version, Spades and even No Trumps, can also be used as transfer bids.

Note that, as the bid you make as the transfer eg. 2♦ is not necessarily a suit that you hold (it is a CONVENTIONAL bid), partner must announce your transfer.

If you play Stayman and Transfers, you will be armed with a good range of bids to deal with any opening by partner of 1NT or 2NT. Stayman itself is a form of transfer, as partner will 'transfer' your 2♣ enquiry to 2♥ or 2♠ when holding an appropriate four card major suit. And if you do decide to use transfers, you need to check your use of Stayman with partner to ensure that the transfers complement your Stayman bids (as will be seen later in these notes).

Red Suit Transfers

Assume you are playing a weak opening One No Trump (12-14 points), and that **partner has opened 1NT**.

1) You hold:

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Q J 8 7 2
5 4 3
K 5 2
4 2
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What are your thoughts? You could pass the 1NT, but the hand will usually play better in Spades. So you wish to make a weak take-out in Spades. Playing transfers, you bid 2♥, which asks partner to bid 2♠. When partner does so, you simply pass. As partner plays the hand, the lead comes into the 1NT hand, and opponents do not see that hand (the stronger of the two), as you are dummy. Using a simple weak take-out bid of 2♠ as traditional, you would be declarer, and the 1NT hand would be exposed. Note also that the opponents are a little 'in the dark' after your 2♥ bid, as they do not know the strength of your hand, and so may not compete as they might if you made the traditional 2♠ take-out.

2) You hold:

Q 9 6
K J 4 3 2
K 5 2
Q 2

Eleven high card points, but five Hearts. Several contracts are possible - 2NT, 3NT, 3♥ or 4♥, depending on first whether partner has a maximum opening, and second, how many Hearts partner holds. So we start by a transfer bid of 2♦, asking partner to bid Hearts, but also telling partner that we hold at least FIVE Hearts. Partner responds as asked with 2♥, so now we bid 2NT. This shows exactly this hand of five Hearts and an INVITATIONAL raise with our 11 (or 12) points. Partner is now well placed to bid the final contract. With a minimum 1NT and only two hearts, partner will pass, but with a minimum 1NT and three hearts, partner does best to correct to 3♥, which we pass. With a maximum, partner bids either 3NT or 4♥, depending upon the number of Hearts held - remember the magic EIGHT card fit for a trump game.

3) We now hold:

J 6 3 2
K J 8 7 5
Q J
6 3

Hands which are 5 – 4 in the Majors can be handled *either* by Stayman *or* by using transfers. We use different sequences to distinguish between **weak** hands and those that are either **invitational or forcing** hands. Consider first the above hand - it is WEAK. This hand wants to play in 2♠ if partner has four Spades, otherwise in 2♥ (in, at worst, a 5-2 fit).

Do NOT use transfers for this hand!!!

Bid 2♣ Stayman, passing partner's response of 2♥ or 2♠. Should partner deny a four card Major suit by bidding 2♦, you *must* bid 2♥. In effect you have made a weak take-out of 2♥, but have been able to check first whether partner holds four Spades. So with weak hands with 5-4 in the Majors, use Stayman!

4) Our hand this time is:

K J 8 7 5
A J 3 2
Q J 3
6

This hand wants to play in game. But which? Is it 3NT, or 4♥, or 4♠? We need to elicit information from partner. Now we **DO** use a transfer, not Stayman.

So start with a bid of 2♥ (showing, at this point, 5 Spades and nothing else). Over partner's forced response of 2♠, we now bid 3♥, showing a secondary Heart suit (typically 4 cards). This 3♥ bid is **UNCONDITIONALLY FORCING ie. partner cannot pass!** With four Hearts partner will bid the Heart game; with less than four Hearts but at least three Spades, partner will bid the Spade game; and with specifically 2 Spades and 3 Hearts (remember partner shouldn't open 1NT with two doubletons), partner will bid 3NT. Partnerships that don't use transfers cannot explore both suits in this way. Using traditional bidding, either the fourth heart or the fifth spade will be 'lost'.

Note that responder bid 2♥ and then 3♥. The first bid shows Spades; only the second forcing bid actually shows Hearts. **You cannot use this sequence to say "Sorry partner, I forgot we were using transfers and really have a weak hand with hearts"**; you have to remember the system you agreed to play with partner. If you have forgotten that you are playing transfers, then you must give no indication of this to partner and should, without added comment, explain the alerts to opponents as it was meant to be. **Partner, of course, should continue to bid as if you had remembered! This is a matter of the ethics and proprieties of the game.** Whilst NOT recommended, if you do decide to use 2♦ as a means of the bid showing EITHER hearts or weak take out in diamonds then you must **NOT** describe the bid as a transfer – partner should say "might show hearts or be a weak take out in diamonds". (similar for the 2♥ bid showing either spades or clubs)

5) Next hand:

KJ872
AQJ32
QJ
3

Another game-going hand opposite a 1NT bid, this time with two five card Majors. There are actually TWO ways of bidding this hand. You can use Stayman (by EXTENDED Stayman), or transfers.

Extended Stayman provides a method of discovering whether the opening 1NT hand has either a FOUR card major; or, failing that, a THREE card major - very useful in this situation. After 2♣ (Stayman) and a reply of 2♦ ('sorry, no four card Major, partner'), a bid of 3♦ asks for a THREE card Major.

Alternatively, you can use a transfer here - first you bid 2♥ (showing Spades). Then over partner's response, you now bid 3♥ (showing Hearts and forcing). Partner may choose game in a major (in which case pass), or game in No Trumps. In that case bid on to 4♥! Why? Partner has denied 3 spades, so must have 3 hearts (no two doubletons for the 1NT opener).

Some partnerships prefer Extended Stayman here, just in case the opening 1NT does include two doubletons in the Majors (well, anyone can make a mistake). Extended Stayman also allows the partnership to play in three of a Major, given the appropriate hands - replace the Ace of Hearts in the above hand with the 4 of

Hearts. So using transfers would never show a 5-5 Major suit hand, but always 5-4 in the Majors. You choose. (You see how you must discuss the use of Stayman if you also use transfers.)

6) And another:

KJ872
QJ
AQJ32
A

Again a game-going hand, even a slam is a possibility. When your second suit is a Minor, the rule is to introduce it ONLY when you have slam interest, as here. Bid 2♥ (showing your Spades), and then 3♦ (new suit – **forcing**). Partner with Diamond support and a suitable hand will by-pass 3NT by bidding 4♦. Then using (Roman Keycard) Blackwood 4NT, you can ask partner how many aces are held. If the reply is 5♥, then 6♦ will be an excellent contract. Note you can use transfers to show 5 cards in a Major and 5 cards in a Minor (no other way to indicate this).

Transfers Using Spades and No Trumps

You can extend the scope of transfers over and above that of just the red suit transfers by using 2♠ and 2NT as transfer bids.

1. A very basic method is to play 2♠ as exactly 11 points, and 2NT as exactly 12 points. Very simple, but not too clever as it throws away all the richness available in the transfer mechanisms. In this system, a weak take out into a Minor is shown via the Stayman 2♣ bid, as in standard ACOL (which itself is a poor method, as it permits opponents an easy bid at the 2 level over your 2♣ bid)..

2. Another popular scheme is that 2NT is a transfer to 3♣ (forced). Transferor then passes to play in 3♣, or bids 3♦ to play in 3♦ (opener must not bid on). These are Minor suit weak take-outs; but note, as you are asking partner to play at the *three* level, you should have at least a six card Minor suit and less than 10 points. The 2NT bid must be described as transfer to either clubs or diamonds.

So, playing this system and given the hand below, over partner's 1NT opener you would reply 2NT, showing a weak hand with a long Minor suit. Partner MUST bid 3♣, and now you correct to 3♦ (known as 'pass or correct'). Partner, of course, passes.

876
Q3
QJ8732
J

And what does the 2♠ transfer bid mean?

2♠ is a transfer to an invitational 2NT, showing 11 or 12 points plus a willingness to play in game if partner is maximum (14 points, or a good 13 points) - just like the standard ACOL raise to 2NT. With a minimum hand, opener bids 2NT, else bids 3NT. Using this system, every bid (including 2NT) forces partner to bid the next suit up (although the 2♠ transfer may elicit a 3NT reply instead of 2NT).

Using this system, given the following hand, you would bid 2♠ over partner's 1NT, showing 11-12 points without a 5-card suit, and partner would pass or bid 3NT, depending on the strength of the 1NT hand.

Q 9 6
K J 4
K 8 5 2
Q 10 2

A slight alteration to this mechanism swaps the 2♠ and 2NT bids. Now 2♠ is the transfer to 3♣ (the weak take out), while 2NT shows the 11/12 point invitation. Why do it this way? Because the 2NT invitation is then the same as 'old' ACOL.

Opponents Double 1NT

System is always 'off' over 1NT doubled. Neither Stayman nor transfers apply. All two level bids by opener's partner, including 2♣, are natural rescue bids, and should be passed. (You may agree to play something more complicated)

USE OF BIDDING BOXES

Bidding boxes were introduced to reduce the risk of players giving away unauthorised information during the bidding. It is important that players use the bidding boxes in a manner that cannot be misinterpreted as an attempt to convey information other than the actual bid.

The Orange Book contains the following guidance.

Starting with the dealer, players place their calls on the table in front of them, from the left and neatly overlapping, so that all calls are visible and faced towards partner. Players should refrain from touching any cards in the box until they have determined their call. A call is considered to have been made when the call is removed from the bidding box with apparent intent.

We would add the following guidance.

All calls should be placed made in the same manner, i.e. with equal speed and force.

Once placed, players should not touch a call again.

There is nothing worse than a player's hand hovering over the bidding box whilst he thinks about whether to bid or not. This is giving unauthorised information to his partner! Worse still is that once the hovering has finished and the player decides to pass his partner then bids!! The director should be called if there is even the

slightest doubt that his partner MAY have been influenced by the hesitancy in the pass – the director does not have to decide if his partner was influenced, only that he may have been.

4 4 4 1 HANDS

1. ♠ KJxx ♥ x ♦ AQxx ♣ KJxx - open 1♦ – you will always find your fit
2. ♠ x ♥ QJxx ♦ AQJx ♣ AQxx - open 1♦ – allows you to rebid 2♣/2N after 1♠ and lie only on the minor (♦)
3. ♠ Kxxx ♥ AQxx ♦ J ♣ Axxx - open 1♣ – always find your fit
4. ♠ KJxx ♥ KQxx ♦ QJxx ♣ Q - open 1♥ – the only awkward one; if partner responds 2♣ you have to bid 2♦
5. ♠ Kxxx ♥ Qxxx ♦ Q ♣ Axxx - PASS. 4-4-4-1 hands are hard to bid anyway, NEVER open them light.

On 4 you and partner should be aware of this sequence and the possibility of 4-4-4-1 but it occurs VERY rarely.

The other option on 4 is to rebid 2N after 2♣ by partner PROVIDED you hold good 14hcp's. (if it goes wrong and you end in 3N-1 you say to partner "sorry, I miscounted.")

EXCLUSION RKCB

This is an interesting gadget:-

Your Hand

♠ AKJ
♥ A97652
♦ KQ42
void

This is not worth a strong 2 opening but nonetheless it's a pretty strong hand. Partner bids 1♥ (!!!) and your RHO comes in with 2♣. Now what do you do? You now have a (not too uncommon) problem – if partner has ♥K and the ♦A then 7♥ must be an excellent contract, but if he has the ♣A instead of one of them, you must stay in 6♥. How can you find out? RKCB will tell you the key cards but it won't tell you which Ace. You could start a cue bidding sequence but that is likely to be awkward and possibly won't get you the answer. In any event you may find that you are met with a barrage bid of 5♣ scuppering your chances of finding the grand slam.

The answer is for YOU to Bid 5♣. It says "this is Exclusion Blackwood - I have no Clubs, so ignore the Club Ace in your reply, please." Partner duly bids 5NT (2 key cards plus the ♥Q; RKBC Style) and 7♥ can be safely bid and made.

Another example:-

♠ A Q x x x x
 ♥ A K Q x
 ♦ void
 ♣ K J x

You open 1♠ and to your delight partner bids 2NT (Jacoby agreeing spades and showing good raise to 3♠+). Rather than start a cue bid sequence or follow your normal Jacoby raise system you can immediately bid 5♦ seeking key cards EXCLUDING diamond Ace.

KICKBACK

'Everybody' these days plays Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKCB), and quite right too – it is far superior to the standard version. However, whenever you use Blackwood (whatever variety you choose) there is always a problem with the lower ranking suits as trumps because the reply may get you too high. In fact, you may even have a problem with RKCB when ♥'s are trumps: -

West	East	West	East			
♠ KQ762	♠ J	1♠	2♥			
♥ KQ8	♥ AJ109765	3♥	4NT (1)	(1)	RKCB	
♦ AJ54	♦ KQ	5♠ (2)	? (3)	(2)	two key cards	
+ ♥Q						
♣ 10	♣ KQJ					

The point is that 4NT does not work as RKCB when ♥'s are trumps. East justifiably had visions of slam but now 5NT at (3) would be asking for kings and really 5NT bids should be reserved for grand slam tries when you know you all hold all the key cards and we are too high! The problems are even worse with a minor suit and you may also get problems when asking for the trump queen. The only real way to solve this is to ensure that you have 4 steps between your Blackwood asking bid and the trump suit.

There are a few solutions; 4-of-the-minor as Blackwood for minor suits is one of them. But probably the best is Kickback; this uses the suit above trumps as the key card ask. So in this actual example 4♠ at (1) would be RKCB and then east would pass the 5♥ response.

THE THREE LEVEL PRE-EMPT

An Opening Bid at the three-level shows (normally) a seven-card suit, and a **maximum** of 7 points. The bid is meant to disrupt the communications of the opponents, and if possible prevent them finding "Game". So when a Three-Level Pre-empt is bid, the opponents must enter the bidding at a high level before they can establish either their "fit", or their strength, which may make life difficult for them. A pre-empt will, usually, be about a 7 Loser on the "Losing Trick Count". (The Triple 7 i.e- Points - Cards - Losers.)

We impose the maximum count (7pts.) as the more points that we hold, the less there are for our opponents, and we will also have more defensive capability, reducing the likelihood of the our Opposition making "Game".

MAJORS/ MINORS

We treat the Pre-empt in these suits slightly differently.

MINORS: Because we are less likely to "Buy" the contract in the Minors we have other considerations besides causing disruption to the Opposition.

- 1) Partner when on lead, may be disappointed to find, that you have a weak suit without any worthwhile honours, and a different lead could have been more profitable.
- 2) Partner may have a good hand, and may be considering bidding 3 NT, in such case the decision will be much easier, if the quality of the Pre-empt hand can be relied upon.

I would therefore suggest that in a Pre-empt of a Minor suit, then that suit should be of a decent quality, (I promise my Partners that I will hold at least KQxxxx).

MAJORS. Because a Pre-empt in the Majors is much more disruptive of the Opponents bidding space, we should be more aggressive in our choice of hand with which to bid. In fact I warn my Partners "Any old 7 card rubbish"

- 3) **The Lead:** Partner should be aware that our suit cannot be relied upon for lead purposes.
- 4) If Partner is considering "Game" it is unlikely to be in 3NT. (Surely the "Game" would be in your Major where length is more important than strength.)

RESPONDER

Obviously the strength of responder's hand will decide what further action (if any) is to be taken.

- 5) Responder is WEAK (say up to 7 / 8 pts). As it seems almost certain that the Oppo have enough points for "Game", and maybe even "Slam" the most likely winning action is to extend the Barrage, as far as seems sensible.
- 6) Responder is INTERMEDIATE (say 9 to 13 pts.) This time it seems that neither side has "Game", and if the Oppo compete, settling for defence is likely to be the best option.
- 7) Responder is STRONG (say 13+ pts) and perhaps we have "Game".
 - 7a) When Opener has Pre-empted with a Major it is relatively simple to raise that suit to Game.
 - 7b) When however Partner has bid three of a Minor we need to be a little wary about bidding 3NT, we need to be sure that the Pre-empt suit will "run" (it is very possible that there will be no "outside entry" so I would suggest that if we do not hold the Ace, then we should hold at least three cards in the suit. Ironically the fewer the number of cards that we hold in the trump suit, then the safer it will be to play the contract in the Minor.

A MYTH

There is a quite widespread mistaken belief that once a player has made a Pre-emptive bid, then that Player must not bid again. This presupposes that once there has been a Pre-empt, then Partner is prevented from exploring for a Game (or even a Slam) in another suit. This is plainly nonsense as quite frequently Partner is likely to hold a good hand, and may wish to explore the bidding further.

An Example:

Your Hand ♠AKJxx ♥AKJxx ♦xx ♣x and your Partner opens by pre-empting either of the Minors.

All you need to know from Partner is, which of the Majors is his longest, and does he have the Ace of his suit??

So after a Pre-empt, any bid by Partner (except when extending the "Barrage"), is unconditionally forcing.

P D B C