

TRANSFERS - Revisited

By Neil H. Timm

Playing 2/1, a strong club, precision, or the acol bridge system, among others, all pairs use transfers in duplicate bridge. The primary purpose of transfers over 1NT and 2NT allow the strong hand to play the contract.

Over the bid of 1NT commonly used transfers include Jacoby Transfers, Texas Transfers, Four-way Transfers, among others. However, a less used transfer over 1NT is South African Transfers.

Over 2NT Jacoby and Texas Transfers are also used, while the artificial bid of 3♣ the bid of 3♠* are often used with special meaning per partnership agreement. Over 3♣, agreements include Puppet Stayman, Muppet /Modified Puppet Stayman, Five-card Stayman, Romex Stayman, Multi Transfers, Mitchell Transfers, Baron Transfers, Roth Transfers, Cotter Transfers, Flint Transfers, and “Efos (Wohlin) Transfers, and many more.

A commonly used transfer over 3♠* is as a relay to 3NT or as Minor Suit Stayman (MSS) (e.g., bid 4 of short major over a 3NT to show 5+ in each minor or bid 4m to show 4 of m and 5+ of om; 4m response sets trumps with slam interest; 5m-no slam interest).

Transfers are also used by the opponents to put the strong hand on lead rather than the weak hand or to interfere/disrupt the bidding system/agreements of the opponents since they require the opponents to use different methods to convey their hand strength and suit holdings.

Entire bidding systems have been developed to capitalize on the advantage of transfers which include for example Transfer Precision and the Modified Toucan Club 2/1 System to name a few.

In this bridge tip I would like to review a simple, less used, transfer called the South African Transfer/South African Texas Transfer which may be employed over 1NT or 2NT. Why use them instead of Texas transfer?

- (1) They are less likely to be forgotten
- (2) They free up both 4♥ and 4♠ as natural bids

After a 1NT/2NT bid the South African Texas like transfers are:

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 4♣* | Transfer to 6+heart suit |
| 4♦* | Transfer to 6+spade suit |
| 4♥/4♠ | Natural bids with 5+cards and to play |

A primary disadvantage of the bid is that 4♣ may not be used as Gerber or Expert Gerber over the opening 1NT and 2NT bids.

However, most bridge experts agree that Gerber is not worth playing over the bids of 1NT and 2NT given the points Larry Cohen has raised in his Gerber Revisited post where he concludes that Gerber is no more than a brand of Baby Food. <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/gerber-revisited>

Over the bid of 3NT experts may use Expert Gerber or 143Gerber to ask only about aces.

It goes as follows the bid of 4♣.

4♦ 1/4 Aces

4♥ 0/3 Aces

4♠ 2 Aces Minimum hand ≤ 17 HCP

4NT 2 Aces Maximum hand ≥ 18 HCP