



Lesson 8 - Teachers Notes

Balanced Hands & Transfers

AT THE END OF LESSON 8 STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Describe, the difference between a **balanced** and an **unbalanced** hand.
- State the requirements to open the bidding 1NT.
- Describe the difference between a **limited** and **unlimited** bid made by Opener and why it's important to recognise this difference.
- Identify **Responder's** bidding options following a 1NT opening bid.
- Describe and use **Transfer** Conventional Bids made **ONLY** after partner's NT opening bid
- Explain why and by whom **Conventional Bids** are **Alerted**.

Revise the 1NT balanced hand opening bid

12 - 14 HCP and a Balanced Hand i.e. 4333, 4432, 5332 shapes

No voids

No singleton

Only 1 doubleton

Only 1 FIVE card suit – all qualities of minor suit but only a '**poor**' quality major suit i.e. one opener would not wish to rebid

A '**poor**' quality major has fewer than 2 honour cards from (**A,K,Q,J**.)

A 1NT opening bid is called a **Limit Bid**: Limited to 12-14 HCP and balanced, opener's bid shows defined shape and strength.

Main Points to Emphasise:

Because the 1NT opening bid is limited (in HCP range) and the shape is known, (balanced) responder is usually in charge. **Responder is the Boss!**

Stress that opener's first priority is to open 1NT with a balanced hand holding 12-14 HCP

It's the cornerstone of the bridge system being taught and 1NT is the most common 1-level opening bid.

Explain that the 1NT opening hand though "weak" has POWERFUL pre-emptive value.

Briefly Revise the stayman convention

- To make a **Stayman** bid Responder must have **11+ HCP** and at least one **4** card major
- The **2♣** bid Used by Responder after partner opens with a NT bid is Stayman
- It **'asks'** opener if he has a 4 card major

Revise Alerting Conventional bids

- Who bids the **2♣** Stayman conventional bid?
- Who alerts the **2♣** bid?
- Why must it be alerted?

But what if Responder holds a **5+ card major**

- Transfers are **ONLY** used by Responder after **Opener bids NT** and **Responder holds a 5+ card major suit**.
- Transfer bids can be made by Responder with very weak as well as very strong hands
- When Responder has a 5 card major he **TELLS** Opener **by bidding the suit below the major in which he holds 5+ cards**.
- **The clue is in the name 'Transfer'** e.g.

When partner opens 1NT –

If responder bids; **2♦** - this is a **transfer** into the suit ranked above diamonds i.e. hearts. Opener is commanded to rebid **2♥**

Likewise, if responder bids **2♥** - this is a **transfer** into the suit ranked above hearts suit i.e. spades. Opener is commanded to rebid **2♠**

The Transfer Convention Logic

As with the Stayman Convention, when **Responder makes a major suit Transfer bid** he is exploring whether the partnership has an 8+ card major suit fit given that normally, a suit contract is preferable to playing in NT.

Responder can use Transfers with **any number of points**. This is the second key difference between Stayman and Transfers

♠KJT93
♥AJ3
♦J
♣KT82

With 11+ HCP, Responder is looking for a **game** contract – either in NT or with a suit fit in the partnership, in a major suit contract – especially if Responder has an unbalanced hand featuring a weak suit as here in diamonds! but with fewer points (0-10), Responder is looking to **‘escape’** from a NT contract.

♠JT983
♥J3
♦Q9
♣J982

With only 5 HCP, and an unbalanced hand holding a 5 card major, Responder thinks the partnership will play better in a major than in NT. After the transfer bidding sequence has been completed, Responder would Pass as in this example where 2♠ would be the final contract

Explain the concepts underpinning the Transfers Convention

The Transfer Convention:

- Ensures the stronger hand plays the contract and is therefore hidden from opponents!
- Gives two pieces of information about responder’s hand in one bid i.e. 5 card major and hand strength

Responder’s & Opener’s rebids

After making a Transfer bid if Responder has

- 0-10 HCP - a weak hand (no game possible) - Pass
- 11-12 HCP – an intermediate hand (game may be possible if opener maximum – Invite - Bid 2NT
- 13+ HCP – game hand so bid it – 3NT

Remember, Opener now knows responders shape and strength of hand, so Opener does the maths and decides to

- Pass, (fewer the 25 HCP in partnership),
- Bid game in NT (25 + HCP without a suit fit), or
- Bid game in the major (25+ HCP with a suit fit).