



NT Bidding - Transfers

The Transfer Principle

Over opening bids of 1NT or 2NT our responses are *Stayman* and *Transfers*.

2♣ is **Stayman** which **shows** at least one 4-card major and **asks** partner if he has one also.

When partner responds in a major he **shows** 4 cards in that major

2♦ and 2♥ hearts are **Major suit Transfers** which **show** 5-cards in hearts and spades respectively.

Partner must respond by bidding your major.

He has no choice, so his bid tells you nothing.

Do not assume that partner has support for your major just because he has bid it!

Transfers are a way to tell partner about your hand: Stayman is used to ask partner about his.

Major Suit Transfers

1) You can use these as a **weak takeout into a major**. Eg 1NT-2♦-2♥-Pass

NB: when you adopt transfers they are the **only** way to make a weak takeout.

A bid cannot have two meanings: if you bid 2♥ you show **spades**

2) You can use them on balanced 5-3-3-2 hands worth **a raise to 2NT or more**:

Eg 1NT-2♦-2♥-2NT

1NT-2♥-2♠-3NT

2NT-3♥-3♠-3NT

This offers partner a choice of places to play. With a doubleton in your suit he chooses NT, with more he can **convert** to your major at the appropriate level

3) You can use them with a 6+card major to **transfer the declaration** into partner's hand

Eg 1NT-2♦-2♥-4♥

1NT-2♦-2♥-3♥ invites game in a 6+card suit, NOT NT

(Or you can simply bid 4♥/4♠ to play – these bids make it harder for opponents to enter the auction)

4) Or you can use transfers with **an unbalanced hand with game values**.

Describe your distribution by transferring to your 5-card major, then bidding your second suit.

Eg 1NT-2♦-2♥-3♦ shows 5+hearts and 4+diamonds and enough values for game.

It may even have slam interest, you can continue with cue-bids to show extra values.

Minor Suit Transfers

Using major suit transfers leaves 2♠ as a bid with no meaning.

And we have no way to make a weak takeout into a minor.

So we use 2♠ as a **weak takeout into either minor**.

Partner must bid 3♣, and you can Pass, or convert to 3♦.

So far we have no alternative meaning for 2♠: it is always weak, with a 6+card minor in an unbalanced hand.

NB When you transfer into a minor you are contracting to take 9 tricks instead of the 7 you need for 1NT.

With a semi-balanced hand prefer to play in NT.

Transfer into the minor with an unbalanced hand which will not provide tricks in no-trump

Responding to 1NT at the 3-level

Playing transfers all 2-level responses in a suit are **conventional**. They say nothing about the suit actually bid

By contrast, all responses at the 3-level are **natural** strong slam tries with a 6+card suit.

They suggest slam in your suit or NT – you have no second place to play.

Partner is invited to cue-bid – if he does not like his hand he can **sign off** in 3NT.

If you are still interested you can cue-bid (you have no second suit) as a way to set your suit as trump.

A cue-bid agrees your suit: after someone has cuebid either partner can use RKCBBlackwood.

Responding to 2NT

You can still use Stayman and Major suit transfers, but at the 3-level instead of the 2-level.

But we do not need a weak takeout for a strong bid, so 3♠ shows interest in playing in the minors and is a slam try. Opener bids a 4-card minor if he has one, otherwise signs off in 3NT.

You can jump to 4♦ as a single-suited slam try, but 4♥ and 4♠ are to play.

(Most play 4♣ as Gerber, but that is a matter for partnership discussion)