

Transfers and Super-Accepts

This is a hand from 2 weeks ago at the Amari. There were 4 tables and the hand had been played 3 times in 4♥ (+2) before it came to our table. I was later asked (by Garry)

West	East	the easiest way to reach the good ♥ slam playing a strong NT. Obviously (!) West passes initially. You cannot pre-empt with another good major suit. East opens 1NT (15-17) and West? Simplest is to set the ball rolling with a 2♦ transfer to ♥'s. If East simply accepts (bids 2♥) then West does not know about the great fit. He can bid 2♠ (perhaps 3♠) - forcing and showing a 2 nd suit, depending upon your methods; but it really is better for East to show he really likes ♥'s and is max by breaking the transfer. Without prior agreement, the simplest is just to bid 3♥ at East's 2 nd turn. At our table (Chuck - me) the bidding was :-
♠ K9432	♠ A5	
♥ KJ10872	♥ AQ65	
♦ 3	♦ 1075	
♣ 7	♣ AQJ5	

West	East	The exact requirements for a super-accept are up to partnership agreement. I prefer to play 4 trumps and a non-min. 5♦ showed 3 key cards – RKCB (1430). Now I said that the easiest way was to transfer to ♥'s and then bid ♠'s. However, this sequence (1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2♠) is used by many to show a non-forcing 5-5 hand in the majors. I will bring out a separate booklet on transfer etc. later and it will completely cover these major two-suiters after a 1NT opening.
Pass	1NT	
2♦	3♥	
4NT	5♦	
6♥	pass	

Worth an Opening?

Hand 22 from two weeks ago on Monday.

West	East
♠ 863	♠ A109
♥ AJ3	♥ 642
♦ A754	♦ QJ92
♣ K83	♣ A95

Is this West and worth an opening? Very marginal!
I would perhaps open a weak NT if non-vul (get the heap of garbage off your chest) but if playing a Strong NT then I would pass. I believe that I am repeating myself when I say that totally flat hands lack trick making potential and should deduct 1 point. Anyway, my partner (Chuck) opened 1♦ (as did most players). What do you bid with

the East hand? 2NT (11 pts) is (obvious)? I do not agree. Again, deduct 1 point for a totally flat hand and bid 1NT. If your partner is prone to open garbage like this then you simply cannot afford to bid 2NT with the East hand. What actually happened? Two pairs passed the hand out for a 2nd top. Everybody else was in 2NT (-1) except us (yes, I did indeed practice what I preach and I bid 1NT with the East hand – I guess Chuck (my partner) would say that I know the limitations of my declarer play? Perhaps I should say that I know the garbage he opens on?

I subsequently discussed this hand with two of our leading players (Hans/Joe) and they also bid 1♦ - 2NT, and one of them noted that 2NT is not too bad as it will make 50% of the time (♦K on side). So, if you bid 2NT you get a tie score 50% if the king is onside and a poor score if offside – an average of about 25%. If you bid just 1NT your average is 75% or better. 75+% scores win tournaments. 25% scores do not. The bottom line is that 4333 shape hands are bad. Devalue them. If neither of you do, then you will get bad scores.

Incidentally, this West hand does not conform to the rule of 20 for an opening bid. I will cover this rule in a later news sheet.

Now last Friday was very interesting. We had 4 tables plus myself, so I sat at the best possible kibitzing position (behind Chuck who was partnering Hans). Now these two are undoubtedly our best two players, but I have chosen my words carefully here. Fortunately (or unfortunately for them) they have completely different/inflexible bidding styles and there were some interesting discussions over the disasters. I just loved it! Again, we are on the topic of what constitutes an opening bid.

Both of these hands were held by Chuck in 1st or 2nd seat. Do you open either, any or both? The Dutch style (Hans) is to open anything that resembles 11 points as long as you have a rebid, so Hans would open both (he also opened the West hand 22 above).

Hand A	Hand B
♠ AQJ96	♠ 109
♥ Q3	♥ K964
♦ J104	♦ AJ4
♣ Q97	♣ KJ75

The American style generally asks for sounder opening bids. Chuck passed Hand A but opened Hand B with 1♣. Now if Chuck is correct, and he can find another player who considers Hand B worth an opening and not hand A, then let me know (plus the name of his psychiatrist).

These American shrinks are certainly worth every \$ they earn if they can persuade people that hands B and 22W are openers but Hand A is not!

My personal opinion is that A is a sound opener, B is OK and 22W only if I can rely on my partner not to bid 2NT on a rubbish 11. Seems to be the reverse of Chuck. Both A and B conform to the rule of 20. Hans opens them all; and you?

Who should make the try?

Hans/Chuck missed an easy game on this board: -

Hans (W)	Chuck (E)	West	East
♠ 87	♠ AQ1064	1 ♣	1 ♠
♥ K6	♥ A8	2 ♣	2 ♦
♦ Q2	♦ J1065	3 ♣ (1)	pass (2)
♣ AKJ9632	♣ 108		

Now obviously when you kibitz these two, you get the cream of the cream. 3NT is lay down. So whose fault? Unfortunately these two guys have bidding styles that are so far apart that they could not even begin to discuss the problem. They may well be the club's two best players, but they are certainly not the best partnership! No sweat, I was at hand and told them what I thought. What do you think? Clearly either West's 3rd bid should be 2♥ or East's 3rd bid should be 3♥ (both are 4th suit – partner would bid 3NT with a stop). So who should have had a go? What do you think? I won't keep you in suspense, so my conclusion follows.

4th Suit forcing

So, let's look into this Chuck/Hans dual. Chuck thinks that Hans should have bid 2♥ at (1). Hans thinks that Chuck should have bid 3♥ at (2). Now I was sitting behind Chuck and as he tabled his hand, I muttered to him that I thought that his hand was worth a 3♥ (looking for 3NT) bid :- the 10-8 of ♣'s are golden and 3NT may well be on; 11 high cards with 3 tens must be worth a go? I stick by that, but I am afraid to say that I believe that Chuck is also correct. Hans should have made a try with 2♥. This is 4th suit forcing (in this case, looking for a ♥ stop), but having already limited his hand (with 2♣) it should not be game forcing. With a super max for his bidding so far, this is a good bid. So, actually, both made (in my humble opinion) bad bids (and, of course, both were correct with their criticism of their partner!!), but it greaves me to say that I believe that Hans made the worst bid. I would apportion the blame at about 80-20, with Hans more at fault. I know that Hans is man enough to accept this, but will Chuck?? It goes without saying that I would have reached 3NT with either hand/partner !! – excuse me while I choke.

Perhaps one or both (Hans and Chuck) will give some printable comments for next week's issue? I will happily print anything sensible from anyone. The opening bids from page 1 of this news-sheet anybody?

Negative doubles – the penalty pass

Now last issue I said that you do not lose your penalty double when you play negative doubles – you simply need a disciplined partner. And sometimes the opposition don't know what's happening until it's too late! In principle, opener should always re-open with a double (there are a few exceptions, but generally speaking, opener will double 95% of the time, just in case partner has a penalty pass). Occasionally this tactic can lead to a bonanza. This is a hand from 3 weeks ago. It is a typical penalty double of 2♣, so I passed awaiting partner's re-opening double. West did not like ♣'s so (unwisely) bid 2♠. Unaware of the mis-fit and impending disaster, East re-bid his ♣ suit. Who says you cannot give a penalty double when you have to pass initially? – I managed four having passed initially!! 1100 thank you.

South (me)	North	East	South	West
♠ AJ3	1♦	2♣	pass (1)	2♠ (2)
♥ 93	pass (3)	3♣ (4)	dbl (5)	3♠
♦ K75	pass	pass	dbl	4♥
♣ K8753	pass	pass	dbl	pass
	pass	4♠	dbl	pass
	pass	pass		

- (1) either a penalty double hand or a hand too weak for a forcing bid.
- (2) unwise with a mis-fit
- (3) no need to re-open now
- (4) unaware that south had a ♣ stack.
- (5) I wanted to play 2♣ doubled, so this is fine.

This bidding was a bit freakish, but you really do get the opponents one level higher quite often, and the penalty doubles are not often (never!) missed if opener re-opens with a double when he should (nearly always).