

Jacoby Transfers

(The Beginner's Pages – 11&12)

When partner opens 1NT then he has said it all – a balanced hand in the 15-17 point range, with at least two cards in every suit.

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4	Hand 5
♠ 982	♠ J92	♠ K92	♠ K92	♠ K92
♥ Q10852	♥ AQ1052	♥ AQ1052	♥ AQ1052	♥ AQ1052
♦ J87	♦ J87	♦ J87	♦ A107	♦ A107
♣ Q9	♣ 95	♣ 95	♣ Q5	♣ A5

Consider these five hands after partner has opened 1NT (15-17). They all have a decent 5 card ♥ suit and either ♥'s or NT could possibly be the final contract with all five. But Hand 1 is weak, Hand 2 is invitational, Hand 3 is worth game, Hand 4 is slam invitational and Hand 5 is definitely worth slam. But how do we inform partner that we have a ♥ suit and then also tell partner about our strength?

With traditional natural methods you bid naturally. So 2♥, weak with hand 1. With Hands 3,4 and 5 you bid 3♥, forcing. Quite what you are meant to do with hand 2 is undefined. Just toss a coin? Of course it's totally unworkable, you cannot define weak, invitational and strong hands with just two bids (2♥ & 3♥); the solution was found by Oswald Jacoby. With all of these hands your first bid is 2♦, a transfer that says that you have 5 ♥'s (any strength) and requests partner to bid 2♥, regardless of his strength or ♥ holding. The same applies with a ♠ suit, when 2♥ is the transfer bid.

Once opener complies with our transfer request, we then show the strength of our hand. In all of these examples we have a 5 card ♥ suit. Our initial transfer promises at least 5 cards in the suit and so we *do not* repeat it. All of these hands are relatively balanced and so NT is the natural rebid.

How does the bidding progress with our 5 example hands?

Hand 1: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - pass. This hand is not strong enough to bid again. You need 8-9 points to invite and so the only options were to pass the original 1NT or to transfer and then pass. Transferring usually works out best.

Hand 2: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT. An invitational sequence. With a minimal hand, opener may either pass or bid 3♥. With a maximum he will bid either 3NT or 4♥.

Hand 3: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3NT. This shows game values with 5 ♥'s. If opener has 4 ♥'s he will convert to 4♥; if opener has only 2 ♥'s he will pass 3NT; if opener has 3 ♥'s he usually elects to go for the 5-3 fit but may pass 3NT with good holdings in the other suits.

Hand 4: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4NT. This is a slam invitation showing a 5 card ♥ suit.

Hand 5: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♣. As we use 4NT as a natural slam invitation this is Gerber, asking for aces on the way to slam. I will cover ace asking conventions (Blackwood and Gerber) in subsequent news-sheets.

Fine, but what does responder do if he has an unbalanced hand and so does not want to bid NT at his 2nd turn? Perhaps a 6 card suit, or a 2nd suit?

So let's have a look at responding hands that are not relatively balanced: -

Hand 6	Hand 7	Hand 8	Hand 9	Hand 10	Hand 11
♠ 2	♠ J9	♠ 92	♠ 92	♠ J9	♠ 92
♥ Q10852	♥ AQ1052	♥ AQ1052	♥ AQ1052	♥ AQ10652	♥ AQ10652
♦ J8754	♦ J872	♦ KJ874	♦ AK107	♦ 872	♦ KJ87
♣ Q9	♣ 95	♣ 9	♣ A5	♣ 95	♣ 9

Consider the first 4 hands after partner has opened 1NT (15-17). They all have a decent 5 card ♥ suit but this week they also have a 2nd suit, so how should we bid them?

They all have a decent 5 card ♥ suit and either ♥'s, ♦'s or NT could possibly be the final contract with all four. But Hand 6 is weak, Hand 7 is invitational, Hand 8 is worth game and Hand 9 is worth slam. How do we inform partner that we have a ♥ suit plus a ♦ suit and then also tell partner about our strength?

We start off with a 2♦ transfer bid with all of the hands.

Once opener complies with our transfer request, we then show the strength of our hand. In the examples 6-9 we have a 5 card ♥ suit. Our initial transfer promises at least 5 cards in the suit and we can now bid our 2nd suit naturally (if we are strong enough). But be careful, a transfer followed by a 2nd suit is always game forcing.

How does the bidding progress with our first 4 example hands?

Hand 6: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - pass. This hand is not strong enough to bid again. You need 8-9 points to invite and it's best to play unbalanced hands in a suit contract. You are not strong enough to look for a ♦ fit as a 3♦ bid would be game forcing.

Hand 7: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 2NT. An invitational sequence, you cannot bid ♦'s as that would be game forcing; you really have no option but to treat the hand as balanced. With a minimal hand, opener may either pass or bid 3♥. With a maximum he will bid either 3NT or 4♥.

Hand 8: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♦. This shows game values with 5 ♥'s and 4+ ♦'s. Partner should know enough to select the best game contract - 3NT, 4♥ or (rarely) 5♦.

Hand 9: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♦. This sequence starts off the same, inform partner of your two suits and later investigate the best slam.

The last two hands (10&11) have a 6 card ♥ suit, how do we handle them? We start with a transfer and then bid the suit naturally - 3♥ is invitational to game and 4♥ is to play: -

Hand 10: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3♥. This shows an invitational hand with 6 ♥'s. Partner will either pass or bid 4♥.

Hand 11: 1NT - 2♦ - 2♥ - 4♥. This shows game values with 6 ♥'s. Partner will pass.

Remember, you need a 6 card suit to transfer and then bid the suit again. If you transfer and then bid a new suit, this is game forcing.