

Texas Transfers (4♦ & 4♥)

Suppose partner opens 1NT and your hand dictates that you want to play in 4♥. You have various options. You can always transfer with 2♦ and then bid 4♥. You could also bid 4♥ directly, but it is normally better for the 1NT opener to be declarer and so we have Texas transfers which immediately transfer opener to 4♥/♠. Transferring immediately to the 4 level is normally a sign off, i.e. not interested in slam.

There are two different versions of these Texas transfers: -

Scheme A (South African Texas)

4♣ = transfer to ♥

4♦ = transfer to ♠

Scheme B

4♦ = transfer to ♥

4♥ = transfer to ♠

Which is to be preferred? Presumably scheme B as this is more efficient and leaves 4♣ available for another use such as Gerber. One drawback with scheme B is that opener may forget and pass a 4♥ bid! Assuming that readers will not forget, which scheme is best? I personally prefer South African Texas but I will explain Texas Transfers here as they are more widely used.

So why do we want these Texas transfers when we can always go via Jacoby? Consider these two sequences: -

Sequence 1 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♠

Sequence 2 1NT - 4♥ - 4♠

What is the difference? Both show 6+ ♠'s and a game going hand. Sequence 1 is mildly slam interested whereas sequence 2 is not, it may even be pre-emptive in nature. If opener is max and likes ♠'s then he may bid on in sequence 1.

Example 1

West	East	West	East
♠ A109	♠ KQJ762	1NT	4♥ (1) (1) Texas transfer for ♠'s.
♥ QJ84	♥ K103	4♠ (2)	pass
♦ KQJ8	♦ 92		
♣ A8	♣ J4		

West is max and likes his hand for ♠'s, but he is not allowed to do anything more than bid 4♠ at (2).

Example 2

East			
♠ 5	West	East	The hand is worth game and a Texas transfer is correct as you don't want partner to look for slam which he may do if you go via the Jacoby Transfer Route.
♥ KQJ654			
♦ Q105	1NT	4♦ (1)	
♣ 765	4♥	pass	

A Texas transfer may be used with a very weak distributional hand: -

Example 3

Dealer:	♠ J3	West	North	East	South
West	♥ AK93				
Love all	♦ 9432	1NT	pass	4♥ (1)	pass
	♣ AQ3	4♠	pass	pass	pass

♠ A109	N	♠ Q876542
♥ QJ84	W E	♥ 5
♦ KQJ8	S	♦ 765
♣ K8		♣ 97
	♠ K	
	♥ 10762	
	♦ A10	
	♣ J106542	

4♠ may make, but even one down is an excellent score against N-S's ♥ or ♣ partscore or game. If East hand simply transferred with 2♥ at (1) then North would have had an easy double of West's 2♠ response. Neither North nor South can really say anything at the 4 level.

As we have seen, a Texas transfer is a weak bid or else a reasonable hand without slam interest. It is possible to have continuations by responder after the completion of a Texas transfer, and some players do play that 4NT (or Kickback) is RKCB. This would then free the 4♣ bid in a Jacoby transfer sequence for another use (some sort of slam try or perhaps a splinter). Quite playable and up to you.

New suits at the 5 level by responder can also be bid. These are probably best played as Exclusion Blackwood, asking for key cards outside the exclusion suit which would be a void. But you could play this equally well after a Jacoby transfer.