

Refining the Conventions

What do you do if Partner opens with 1NT and you are holding 5♥'s and 4♠'s or 4♥'s and 5♠'s.

Do you bid Transfer to the 5-Card suit or bid Stayman? You Bid Stayman!!

If Opener has a 4-Card Major he will bid it at the 2-level and you will know that there is an 8 or 9-Card fit and you respond with an appropriate level of the suit

8-9 PP → bid 3 of the suit PP==> is Playing Points Since there is a fit you can count both HCP and distributional points.
10+ PP → bid 4 of the suit

If Opener responds 2♦ saying No; you bid your 5-Card suit as follows:

< 9 HCP → bid 2 of the suit This time there is no Magic-8 guaranteed so use HCP not PP. This is a drop-dead bid NT opener must Pass (you might have had < 8 HCP)

10+ HCP → bid 3 of the suit In this case Opener knows partnership has Game going points and can pick the appropriate contract; 3NT or 4 of suit with 8-Card fit.

Note: The normal rebid after 2♦ is a NT response showing points; the fact that you bid a suit is signal to Partner that you hold 5 in the suit. The NT Opener can then choose the contract to be in the suit of NT.

Smolen Transfers

This is a refinement of the above bid when you hold 10+ HCP bid. It requires a Partnership agreement because the Smolen transfer requires that you hold both Majors 5-4 or even 6-4 (or 4-5, 4-6) in the Majors. After the 2♦ rebid by 1NT Opener you bid the shorter suit at the 3-level which is then a pseudo-transfer to the other Major or NoTrump. If Opener holds 3-Cards in Transferred suit he bids Game in that suit otherwise bids 3NT.

We Do Transfer to Majors, Is It Possible to Transfer to a Minor Suit

The short answer is yes; the details are a bit longer. There are three treatments: One is called a Relay. This is the way it is generally taught. However, I prefer transferring to a Minor in a fashion similar to Major suit transfers. But doing it in a straight-forward way creates a problem. An easily surmountable problem.

Relays:

In the absence of a 4-Card Major and only with 8+ HCP and a 6-Card Minor respond 2♣ to the 1NT open. When the 2♣ bid is made the Opener must announce "RELAY" and then, in turn bid 3♣.

If ♣'s is your 6-Card Minor:

< 12 HCP → Pass There is no Game in site – get out
> 12 HCP bid 4♣ If Opener has more than 2♣ and has 16/17 HCP he can bid 5♣

If ♦'s is your 6-Card Minor:

< 12 HCP → bid 3♦ There is no Game in site – get out but you'll have to play the hand
> 12 HCP bid 4♦ If Opener has more than 2♦ and has 16/17 HCP he can bid 5♦

The drawback of the relay – in addition to ending at the 3-level – is the ♦ suit. If ♦'s are the suit the strong hand becomes the Dummy. A distinct disadvantage that transfers seek to avoid.

4-Suit Transfers (inferior):

The straight forward method. In the absence of a 4-Card Major and only with 8+ HCP and a 6-Card

Minor Responder bids

2♠ → Transfer to ♣'s Opener announces "TRANSFER" and bids 3♣

2NT → Transfer to ♦'s Opener announces "TRANSFER" and bids 3♦,

Responder has a final rebid

8-12 HCP → Pass There is no Game in sight – get out but you'll have to play the hand

> 12 HCP bid 3NT If Opener has more than 2♦'s and has 16/17 HCP he can bid 5 of suit

If you employ 4-suit transfers in this manner you lose the natural, and far more important, 2NT bid.

This loss of the 2NT point showing bid is what makes the following the preferable method.

4-Suit Transfers (better):

In the absence of a 4-Card Major and only with 8+ HCP and a 6-Card Minor Responder bids

2♠ → Transfer to ♣'s Opener announces "TRANSFER" and bids 3♣

3♣ → Transfer to ♦'s Opener announces "TRANSFER" and bids 3♦

Responder has a final rebid

8-12 HCP → Pass There is no Game in site – get out; you don't have to play the hand.

> 12 HCP bid 3NT If Opener has more than 2 of the suit and has 16/17 HCP he can bid 5 of suit.

This method also has a draw back. But for beginners it is not a serious problem. Once one advances to the use of [Puppet Stayman](#) over both 1NT Openings, the 4-Suit Transfer needs to be modified.

4-Suit Transfers (preferred):

In the absence of a 4-Card Major and only with 8+ HCP and a 6-Card Minor Responder bids

2♠ → Transfer to ♣'s Opener announces "TRANSFER" and bids 3♣

2NT → Transfer to ♦'s Opener announces "TRANSFER" and bids 3♦

Responder has a final rebid

8-12 HCP → Pass There is no Game in site – get out; you don't have to play the hand.

> 12 HCP bid 3NT If Opener has more than 2 of the suit and has 16/17 HCP he can bid 5 of suit.

I know you're wondering what happens if I have 8-9 HCP no distributional assets? I used to be able to bid 2NT to show my flat 8-9 HCP hand, but now 2NT means transfer to ♦'s. How can I show that type of hand? Recall you need at least 8 HCP to bid Stayman, so just bid 2♣-Stayman.

Regardless. What partner rebids you, on your rebid, now bid 2NT. In this particular case you may not have had an 4-card Major (a known requirement to bid Stayman) so Partner must make the Statement: "Partner may or may not have a 4-card Major". The opener also needs to be aware that the 2♣-Stayman may be this work-around and either Pass or bid 3NT with 17 HCP. We noted in the previous section that once Puppet Stayman is added to your bidding repertoire the 4-Suit transfer needs modification. This is the needed modification, so whether or not you intend to adopt Puppet Stayman we recommend use of the preferred approach so you don't have to make another change sometime in the future. It also makes you aware of what your more advanced opponents are doing.