

4♣ Gerber

Many are familiar with 4NT as ace asking (Blackwood, Roman Key Card Blackwood, 1430). The Gerber convention asks for aces at a lower level and is popular in NT auctions. 4C triggers the Gerber ask. Partnership agreement is necessary to define when 4C is Gerber, Minorwood, a Control bid or natural.

1N-4♣; 2N-4♣; 2♣-2♦ -2N-4♣ an immediate JUMP to 4♣ is usually agreed a Gerber

1♣-1♠-1N-4♣; 1♦ -1♥-2N-4♣ a delayed jump to 4♣ is also usually Gerber

1N-2♣-2♥-4♣* this might be Gerber or might be RKB for Hearts – ASK!

1♣-1♠-2♣-2N-4♣; 1♣-1♠-2♣-2♥-2N-4♣ these sequences require partnership agreement.

1♣-1♥-1♠-2♦-2N-4♣ this sequence requires partnership agreement.

1♣-1♥-1♠-2♦-3N-4♣ this sequence is not Gerber, but can be a control bid or natural by partnership agreement.

4♣ Asks:	Gerber	Roman Style	Then 5♣ Asks:	Gerber	Roman Style
4♦	0 or 4 Aces	0 or 3 Aces	5♦	0 or 4 Kings	0 or 3 Kings
4♥	1 Ace	1 or 4 Aces	5♥	1 King	1 or 4 Kings
4♠	2 Aces	2 Aces	5♠	2 Kings	2 Kings
4N	3 Aces		5N	3 Kings	

4♦, 4♥ Texas Transfers

Promise 6+ Trumps in the suit above the transfer bid. Responder might be weak game forcing, or slam invitational, but never game invitational. Responder’s 4N after Texas is RKB, not Quantitative. With a 6+ card Major, quantitative NT raises are less useful. (*Some play a Jump to 4♣ after a 2-level Jacoby Transfer is RKB for responder’s major*). A 5-level suit bid by responder following a Texas Transfer is a special Roman Key Card Ask called Exclusion Keycard Blackwood. This requests opener to not count the Ace in that suit when responding to key cards. (Yes, responder has a void). Finally, playing Jacoby and Texas Transfers lets responder make a weak slam try. A Jacoby transfer followed by a jump to 4 of responder’s major shows a strong hand with prime cards (A’s and Ks) and HCP close to slam values (15 or so). Opener may bid 4N RKB, control bid, or pass.

When using Texas transfers responder invites game with 6+ cards in a major by the 2-level Jacoby transfer and rebidding the major at the 3-level. This allows opener to “super accept” with 4 trumps and extra values (after which responder will bid game with any invitational hand). With a weak hand and 6+ trumps, responder transfers at the 2-level and passes.

Texas is also very useful after a 1N-2♣-2♦ sequence where the Stayman bidder holds a 6-4 major pattern. While tricky, 1N-2♣-2♦-4♦/♥ is Delayed Texas, promising a 6 card suit one step above the transfer. Responder can continue slam investigation as above.

When paired with Smolen, Texas Transfers can give exact count in the 2nd major. Recall Smolen happens in the 1N-2C-2D auction. Responder’s 2nd bid is a jump to a 4-card major (opener denied holding a 4-card major) showing 5 cards EXACTLY in the other major (with 6 or more, responder uses DELAYED TEXAS).

Valuing hands for a Texas Transfer takes into account any extra playing strength from major suits longer than 6 cards. Here are a few examples:

Hand	HCP	Losers	Bidding Plan
♠QJ10765 ♥72 ♦J64 ♣85	4	9	Jacoby Transfer to 2♠ and pass
♠QJ10765 ♥7 ♦J642 ♣85	4	8	Jacoby Transfer to 2♠ and raise to 3♠. Invite!
♠QJ10765 ♥7 ♦QJ64 ♣85	6	7	Texas Transfer to 4♠
♠QJ1098765 ♥72 ♦86 ♣5	3	7	Texas Transfer to 4♠!

Hand	HCP	Losers	Bidding Plan
♠QJ10765 ♥QJ64 ♦7 ♣85	6	7	With both majors Stayman first. If partner bids 2D, then DELAYED TEXAS to Spades. If partner bids 2H or 2S bid game.
♠KQ10765 ♥AQ6 ♦74 ♣K5	14	5	Jacoby transfer then 4♠ to tell partner 5 losers and nice primes.
♠KQ10765 ♥AQ6 ♦- ♣K754	14	4	Texas then 5♦ Exclusion Keycard Blackwood. If partner shows 2 Keycards, bid 5NT to ask specific Kings. Partner will NOT show the ♦K. You hope to hear about the ♥K. Grand slam anyone?

Quantitative 4♠ & 4NT Raise

Once we adopt Gerber to ask Aces after partner's 1 NT or 2NT opening bid, 4NT is no longer needed as ace asking. When both players hold balanced hands, 33 HCP are usually sufficient for 6NT. 37 HCP is often sufficient for 7 NT. (*33 means we are NOT missing 2 Aces and 37 HCP means we are not missing 1 Ace*).

Let's look at bidding after partner opens 1NT (15-17 HCP). You hold this very nice hand:

♠ AK6 1NT – pass – 4♠: Shows 32 or 23=4=4 *Bid 6 with a maximum partner*. While you might explore a minor suit fit, usually NT will play well (and score better). Bid 4N with 23/32=53/35 or 33/43/34 shapes. Partner passes with 15 HCP, bids 6NT with 17 and decides whether to bid 6 with 16 HCP (Holding As and Ks and a 5-card suit, partner will bid 6NT with 16 HCP).

♥ Q4

♦ KJ32

♣ K732

Change the hand to:

♠ AK62 Now you want to determine if partner has 4 ♠s. Try Stayman 1st. If partner has 4 ♠s invite slam in ♠s. If not bid 4NT as a quantitative raise. If partner has 4 ♠s, then you can jump to 4♣ to ask for aces, intending to set the contract based on how many Aces and Kings your side is missing.

♥ Q4

♦ KJ3

♣ K732

The same principle applies after a Jacoby Transfer. Change responder's hand slightly and we have:

♠ AK632 Now you transfer to spades and jump to 4NT (*NOT Blackwood or RKB*) as a quantitative question to partner. You are asking partner 2 questions: Strain (♠ or NT) and Level (4NT, 5♠ or 6 of either). Generally partner will prefer ♠s with 3 or more cards and an outside doubleton.

♥ Q4

♦ KJ3

♣ K72

4NT as a quantitative raise is useful when responding with a balanced hand. Other bidding approaches should be used with unbalanced or semi-balanced (5422) hands to explore likely trump fits. *If you play 11-14 HCP 1NT opening bids, then responder will have 19 HCP to make the Quantitative Raise.*

Generally, any sequence where 4♣ is Gerber, then 4NT is the Quantitative Raise. A few common sequences:

1♣ – Pass – 1♠ – Pass 2N – Pass – 4N QR	1♣ – Pass – 1♠ – Pass 1N – Pass – 4N QR	1♠ - Pass – 2♣ – Pass 2N – Pass – 4N QR	1N – Pass – 2♣ – Pass 2♦/♥/♠ – Pass – 4N QR	1N – Pass – 2♦ – Pass 2♥ – Pass – 4N QR
Opener has 18-19 HCP Responder has 14 HCP	Opener has 12-14 HCP Responder has 19 HCP	Responder has 19 HCP or 16 if 2N is 15-17	2♣ Stayman Responder has 16 HCP	Jacoby Transfer Responder has 16 HCP

Here are a few sequences where 4NT is NOT quantitative:

1♣ – Pass – 1♠ – Pass 2N – Pass – 3♦ – Pass 4♦ – Pass – 4N	1♠ – Pass – 2♦ – Pass 3♣ – Pass – 3♥ – Pass 4♣ – Pass – 4N	1N – Pass – 4♦ – Pass 4♥ – Pass – 4N <i>Texas Transfer</i>	1♠ - Pass – 2♥ – Pass 3♥ – Pass – 3♠ - Pass 4N	1♠ - Pass – 2♥ – Pass 3♦ – Pass – 4♣ - Pass 4N
<i>Blackwood for ♦s</i>	<i>Natural to play. No fit.</i>	<i>Blackwood after a Texas Transfer</i>	<i>Blackwood</i>	<i>Natural to play, No fit.</i>

A 4NT bid is a quantitative raise whenever partner makes a NT opening bid limiting their hand. 4♠ is quantitative only directly over 1 or 2N opening bid. 4NT is ace asking if a fit is shown or implied (jumping to 4N implies a fit for the last suit partner bid). 4NT is to play if our side has no fit and this is the best chance to play NT.