

Phillip Alder Bridge

Responding to One Notrump



1. Without Transfers

If you do not wish to use transfers, I suggest you employ this system of responses:

2♣: Stayman 2♦: weak signoff 2♥: weak signoff 2♠: weak signoff 2NT: game-invitation

3♣: weak signoff 3♦/♥/♠: natural, game-forcing

If you wish to force in clubs, respond two clubs, Stayman, then rebid three clubs.

2. Transfers into the Majors Only

This is a good first step into the world of transfer bids. Then, you have this responses:

2♣: Stayman

2♦: transfer to hearts; at least five hearts, *any* point-count; 2♥: transfer to spades

2♠: your guess is as good as mine! (In the original Jacoby Transfers, this bid showed a minor two-suiter, either weak or game-forcing.)

2NT: game-invitation ; 3♣: weak signoff ; 3♦: weak signoff

To bid Stayman then three of a minor, it is natural and game-forcing.

3♥: game-invitational with 5-5 in the majors; 3♠: game-forcing with 5-5 in the majors

But, of course, you may have your own interpretations for these last two responses.

3. Four-Suit Transfers

I think these are excellent. Then we get the following initial responses:

2♣: Stayman

2♦: transfer to hearts; at least five hearts, *any* point-count

2♥: transfer to spades

2♠: transfer to clubs; at least a six-card suit; any point-count

2NT: transfer to diamonds; at least a six-card suit; any point-count

3♣: game-invitational with at least 5-5 in the minors

3♦: game-forcing with at least 5-5 in the minors

3♥: game-invitational with at least 5-5 in the majors

3♠: game-forcing with at least 5-5 in the majors

Now let's look at some auction continuations. After a transfer into a major, the opener usually does as requested, bidding two of his partner's suit. However, with a maximum, *four*-card support, and a doubleton somewhere, he may make a superaccept by jumping to three of the shown major.

After that, the responder passes, or bids two notrump to invite game, or jumps to three notrump to offer a choice of games, or bids a new suit at the three-level, which is natural and game-forcing. (To rebid two spades shows exactly 4=5 in the majors and is game-invitational but nonforcing. I will add a whole section on showing major two-suiters later in the week.)

After a transfer into a minor, the opener bids the shown minor if he has at least high-honor-third in the suit; in other words, a hand that would be happy to play in three notrump if partner holds six to two top honors and one high card outside. With no love of the responder's minor, the opener bids the intermediate step: two notrump over two spades, or three clubs over two notrump.

Why do it this way? Suppose the responder has a very weak 5-5 in the minors. He responds *two notrump*, a transfer to diamonds. If the opener rebids three diamonds, saying that he likes that suit, the responder passes. Alternatively, if the opener rebids three clubs, saying that he doesn't like diamonds, the responder passes!

How does the responder proceed? With a weak hand, he either passes if the opener bid his suit, or he corrects to his suit at the three-level; for example, 1NT-2NT-3♣-3♦. The opener must pass.

Now we get to the trickier bit. If the responder continues with three of a major, that shows *a singleton (or void)* in the bid suit and at least game-going values.

Now we get to the even trickier bit! If the opener denies interest in the responder's minor and the responder continues with three notrump, that is a mild slam-try. If the opener showed interest in the responder's minor and the responder continues with three notrump, that is to play. With slam interest but no singleton, the responder either fudges with a "natural" three diamonds over three clubs (if legal), or must bid four of the agreed suit, or bid a quantitative four notrump; to ask for key cards or aces, the responder must agree the minor first, then bid four notrump over partner's four-level control-bid (cue-bid).

After 1NT-3♣, the opener passes, corrects to three diamonds, takes a shot at three notrump, shows a feature (high-card values) in a major, or jumps to game in either minor. (To bid four of a minor gets you the Marquis de Sade award for torturing partner!)

After 1NT-3♦, opener shows a feature in a major, or bids three notrump, or bids four of a minor to agree the suit and suggest a slam, or jumps to five of a minor with no slam interest and some reason to avoid three notrump.

After 1NT-3♥, the opener places the final contract.

After 1NT-3♠, there is a good case for the opener's four-club rebid showing slam interest in hearts (and four hearts being slam negative), and four diamonds expressing slam interest in spades.

Major Two-Suiters

How should you bid different major two-suiters? This scheme will assume that you are using transfers into the majors.

a. 4-4 With a weak 4-4 in the majors, normally you will pass. You might gamble with two clubs, Stayman, hoping that partner can show a major. But what will you do if he replies two diamonds? If you have length in diamonds (4=4=5=0 or 4=4=4=1 shape), you could pass, making the Stayman maneuver worthwhile (but not without risk, especially when you have 4=4=4=1 because you could end in a six-card fit, the opener having 3=3=2=5 shape). But if you are short in diamonds, you would have to continue with two hearts, which shows a weak major two-suiter and expresses a desire to stop at the two-level. Partner will pass with three hearts, or convert to two spades with three spades and two hearts. You will be in a seven-card fit, but it might go better than one notrump — but probably not.

With a game-invitational 4-4, respond two clubs, Stayman. If partner shows a major, raise to the three-level; if he denies a major, continue with two notrump, again inviting game.

With game-forcing values, respond two clubs. If partner shows a major, jump to game in that suit. If he denies one, rebid three notrump.

That should be well-known.

b. 4=5 (four spades and five hearts)

With a bad hand, you could transfer into hearts and pass partner's two-heart rebid. But you probably do better to respond two clubs. If partner replies two hearts (what a partner!) or two spades, you pass. If he rebids two diamonds, you continue with two hearts, which, as mentioned a moment ago, shows a weak major two-suiter. Partner passes with 3=3 or 2=3 in the majors, but converts to two spades with 3=2 in the majors.

With game-invitational values, respond two diamonds, transfer, and rebid two spades. That describes this exact hand. Partner passes or names the final contract, which may be two notrump, three hearts, three notrump, four hearts or four spades.

With game-forcing values, you employ the *Smolen* convention. You respond two clubs. If partner shows a major, you jump to game in that suit. But if he replies two diamonds, you jump to three spades, your *four-card* major. (This is designed to make the opener the declarer if he has three-card heart support.)

c. 5=4

With a weak hand, probably you do best to transfer into spades. But you might gamble with Stayman, hoping partner shows a major. But if he replies two diamonds, you will have to rebid two hearts. Then, partner, with 3-3 in the majors, will pass, leaving you in a seven-card fit when there was an eight-card fit available.

With game-invitational values, respond two clubs. If partner replies two hearts, raise to three hearts. If he rebids two spades, raise to three spades or jump to four spades, if your hand reevaluates sufficiently well. And if partner answers two diamonds, rebid two spades, which shows this exact hand; partner names the final contract.

With game-forcing values, use *Smolen*. Respond two clubs, planning to rebid three hearts over a two-diamond reply.

d. 5-5

With a weak hand, respond two clubs, planning to rebid two hearts over two diamonds.

With game-invitational values, I respond three hearts. The opener names the final contract.

And with game-forcing values, I respond three spades. There is a case for the opener's four-club rebid to show slam interest in hearts and four diamonds to announce slam interest in spades.