



Adventures in Bridge

Leaders in Bridge Entertainment and Education

www.advinbridge.com

This Week in Bridge

(264) They Overcall After Partner's Transfer Bid

© AiB

Level: 2

Robert S. Todd

robert@advinbridge.com

General

When we open the bidding with 1NT, partner transfers to a Major suit, and the next opponent bids, then we need to have some agreements about how we handle the situation. One thing that makes this situation complicated for Opener is that they know one thing about Responder's shape (they have a 5+card Major suit), but they do not know anything about Responder's strength, as a Jacoby Transfer at the 2-level can be made on any number of points. This makes judging the situation more difficult for the opening bidder. The primary factor that Opener uses to determine how to bid in these auctions is their fit for partner. With a large fit Opener can apply the *Law of Total Tricks* (LOTT) and compete in the bidding, but without a large fit it is dangerous for Opener to act, since Responder may be bankrupt. Let's see if we can construct some agreements that help us deal with this situation.

Competition After a Jacoby Transfer

Let's look at some examples to help us get a feeling for how we are going to deal with RHO's interference.

Example 1

1NT P 2♦* 2♠

___?

The modern style is that the 1NT Opener cannot make a unilateral penalty double at the 2-level since Responder may have nothing. Here is a reasonable approach to the meaning of Opener's bids:

- Pass Nothing else to say
- X Defensively oriented, but cooperative double (usually has 3-card ♥ or ♥Hx)
- 2NT (Rare) 5/4 in the minors
- 3-minor (Rare) Natural, 5-6 card minor
- 3♥ 4-card ♥ or good 3-card ♥, maximum values, offensively-oriented

If RHO overcalls at the 3-level, then we usually allow the 1NT opener to make a unilateral penalty double (they can possibly beat this contract opposite even 0 points from Responder).

Example 2

1NT P 2♦* 3♣
—?

- Pass Nothings else to say
- X Penalty (Responder is expected to Pass)
- 3♦ (Rare) Natural, 5-6 card minor
- 3♥ 4-card ♥ or good 3-card ♥, maximum values, offensively-oriented

The key different in these two auctions is the meaning of double: at the 2-level it is cooperative and at the 3-level it is penalty.

Responder’s Actions

If the 1NT opener bids over the opponent’s interference then the follow up bids for Responder are relatively straight forward, making use of this information that Opener shows them. But if the Opener passes or doubles, then it is good to have some agreements about what Responder’s bids show.

Example 3

1NT P 2♦* 2♠
P P —?

- Pass Less than invitational values, usually only 5-card ♥ suit
- X “Card Showing”, cooperative, about 8+ points, does not promise a good ♠ holding. With extreme shortness Responder should not double.
- 2NT (Rare) Natural, Invitational
- 3♣ Natural, 4+card ♣, most play this as non-forcing (since X and 3♠ available to force)
- 3♦ Natural, 4+card ♦, most play this as non-forcing (since X and 3♠ available to force)
- 3♥ Usually 6+card ♥, competitive, non-forcing
- 3♠ Western Cuebid, only 5-card ♥ suit, offensively-oriented hand.
- 3NT To Play, ♠ Stopper

Conclusion

When we open the bidding and partner makes a Major suit transfer, we often know what we are going to do. But if RHO interferes in the auction, Opener must rethink their best action. Interference at the 2-level is generally treated differently than 3-

level interference. It is important for both you and partner to be on the same page about the meaning of double and about whether new suits are forcing or non-forcing. Make sure that this simple overall does not cause you and partner to have a bidding mixup.