



Ask Jerry

Well-known teacher and player **Jerry Helms** answers your bridge questions.
Send your questions to askjerry@jerryhelms.com.

Dear Jerry: What is the difference between Jacoby transfers and Texas transfers? Do I need to use both, or is either one okay?

—T. R., Atlantic City, NJ

Dear T. R.: Assuming you are going to play transfer bids, you should start with Jacoby transfer bids. They are the essential convention and they don't require that you know anything about Texas transfers.

The idea behind transfer bids is to get the opener to be declarer if the contract is played in responder's suit. Opener will usually have the stronger hand, and it can be advantageous to keep it hidden from the defenders and to have the opening lead come up into opener's strength.

Here are the mechanics:

JACOBY TRANSFER BIDS

After partner opens 1NT:

- A response of 2♦ asks opener to bid 2♥.
- A response of 2♥ asks opener to bid 2♠.

Transfer bids are easy to use when responder wants to sign off in partscore. With this hand, for example, ♠ 6 3, ♥ J 8 6 5 3 2, ♦ Q 10 4, ♣ 6 4, when partner opens 1NT responder would simply bid 2♦, and after opener bids 2♥, responder would pass.

It's also easy for responder to invite game with a five-card or longer major suit. With this hand, responder would transfer to spades and then bid 2NT. Opener can then pass or return to 3♠ to play partscore, or raise to 3NT or 4♠ to accept the invitation.

With a six-card or longer spade

suit, responder would rebid 3♠ rather than 2NT to invite opener to game.

With a five-card or longer major and enough for game, responder's task is also very easy. With

♠ K J 5
♥ A Q 8 6 5 2
♦ 6 5
♣ 9 2

this hand, responder transfers to hearts and then jumps to 4♥. With only a five-card suit, responder would transfer and jump to 3NT, giving opener a choice of game contracts.

Jacoby transfers also make it easy to show two-suited hands. With this hand, responder starts by bidding 2♥ to transfer to spades and then bids 3♣, forcing, to show the second

♠ A K 7 6 3
♥ 4
♦ 7 2
♣ A Q J 9 5

suit. The partnership can then decide on the best game, or possibly a slam.

Now let's consider the mechanics of Texas transfer bids:

TEXAS TRANSFER BIDS

After partner opens 1NT:

- A response of 4♦ asks opener to bid 4♥.
- A response of 4♥ asks opener to bid 4♠.

So Texas transfers are only used when responder has a six-card or longer major suit and wants to be in at least a game contract.

With this hand, for example, responder can jump to 4♥, asking opener to bid 4♠, and then pass.

♠ Q J 9 8 6 4 2
♥ 8 3
♦ 7 6
♣ A 2

With a hand like this, responder can make a Texas transfer bid of 4♦, and after opener bids 4♥, can then bid Blackwood to check for aces and decide whether to bid a small or grand slam.

♠ 3
♥ K Q J 9 8 5
♦ K Q 7 4
♣ K 4

Other than getting the job done faster, there doesn't seem to be much advantage to using Texas transfers in addition to Jacoby transfers. It looks as though Jacoby transfers would handle the task just fine.

There's a subtle reason for using both, however. It allows responder to invite slam without getting beyond game when opener isn't interested.

Look at this hand. With 14 high-card points and 2 length points for the six-card heart suit, there may be enough combined strength for slam if opener has a fit for hearts and useful high cards in the other suits.

♠ J 4
♥ K 10 8 7 5 2
♦ A 4
♣ K Q J

Playing just Jacoby transfer bids, there's no easy way to invite slam. After bidding 2♦ to transfer to 2♥, a raise to 3♥ would only be invitational, and a jump to 4♥ would be a signoff in game. You could jump to 5♥, but that might be too high.

If you use both Jacoby and Texas transfers, however, you can agree:

JACOBY AND TEXAS TRANSFERS

- If responder only wants to play in game, use a Texas transfer and then pass.
- If responder wants to invite slam, use a Jacoby transfer and then jump to game.

So, with the above hand, you can start with 2♦ and then jump to 4♥, inviting slam. With a poor fit and no slam interest, opener can pass, and you will rest safely at the four level.

This is all pretty subtle. So I would suggest just sticking with Jacoby transfers, even if it means missing the occasional borderline slam.—JH♦

For upcoming cruises with Jerry visit www.jerryhelms.com