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Newer Players

Ask Jerry

Dear Jerry,
My new duplicate partner wants to add Texas transfers to our system agreements. We already play Jacoby, and I don't see the need for another convention. Is there something I'm missing?

Sarah

Hi Sarah,
Yes!

Since that's probably not quite enough of an answer, let me continue. One of the goals in a partnership should be to describe as accurately as possible their values and shape in an auction. Let's start with some basic Jacoby transfer sequences.

A	1NT	2♦
	2♥	2NT
B	1NT	2♥
	2♠	3NT
C	1NT	2♦
	2♥	4NT

In each of these, responder has shown exactly a five-card suit and typically a balanced hand. In the first, he has invited game in either hearts or notrump; in the second, offered opener a choice of games, and in the last, has made a quantitative invitation to slam in either the major suit or notrump.

Now a little bit about Texas transfers. There are exactly two types of hands where responder should prefer Texas to Jacoby.

1) A hand with zero interest in anything other than game in a major suit. Your partner opens 1NT, and you hold:

♠6 ♥K J 10 7 6 3 2 ♦7 3 ♣Q J 2.

Although there might be the perfect holding to produce a slam, a good rule of thumb is to never play partner to hold a perfect hand.

2) A hand where you are sure of the trump suit, and you have interest in slam based totally on how many aces/key cards that opener holds. Once again, your partner opens 1NT:

♠A K Q 8 6 4 3 ♥7 ♦A 7 3 2 ♣2.

With this hand, about the only thing between you and slam is the number of aces opener holds. The auction:

1NT	4♥
4♠	4NT

This 4NT bid is ace-asking/RKCB with spades as trump. As long as partner holds at least one ace, bid a slam. Yes, it's possible he holds:

♠J 10 7 ♥K Q J 5 ♦K J 5 ♣K Q 10.

In which case, slam is not a good proposition.

Remember, Jacoby, followed by 4NT, is a quantitative invitation and never ace-asking. Texas, followed by 4NT, is ace-asking.

One further contrast:

1NT	4♦/4♥
4♥/4♠	Pass

In this auction, responder has not given opener another opportunity to speak. The auction is over no matter how good opener's trumps are or how many high-card points he holds.

1NT	2♦/2♥
2♥/2♠	4♥/4♠
?	

Responder holds at least six cards in his major, and is strongly advising opener that a suit contract is best. For some reason, he has taken an action that provides opener with a chance to speak again. The reason? This auction, which provides opener a chance to bid again, shows responder has mild slam interest. Example:

Partner opens 1NT. You hold:

♠K 6 ♥K J 10 7 6 3 2 ♦7 3 ♣A 2.

If partner holds a high heart and aces, he should be very eager to cooperate with your mild slam try by asking for aces/key cards. If he holds a minimum notrump without aces, he should be content for game.

Jacoby and Texas should apply in all of the following:

- 1NT opening bids
- 1NT overcalls
- 2NT opening bids
- 2NT overcalls of weak two-bids
- 2NT rebids after opening 2♣ when responder makes a negative or waiting response.

Are these enough reasons? 😊