



Ask Jerry

Jerry Helms
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Dear Jerry,

We had a disaster on the following auction:

Partner		Me	
1NT	Pass	2♥ ⁽¹⁾	Dbl
2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	All Pass	

(1) Transfer.

My hand was:

♠A9764 ♥82 ♦KQ7 ♣J52.

I assumed partner held at least three spades or otherwise he would have passed over the double. His actual hand was:

♠85 ♥AQ4 ♦AJ863 ♣A94.

With the ♥K onside, we were cold for 3NT, but doomed in 4♠ because of a 5-1 break. Where did the wheels come off?

Waiting for AAA

Hi Wheels,

Be sure to remain in the vehicle! Once again, partnership agreement motors to the forefront. My best guess is that most players either directly or by implication share the same thoughts you had concerning partner's acceptance of the transfer. While this may be mainstream, in my opinion, it is clearly not the best treatment. My systemic feelings are aligned with your partner's action although I still assign him the majority of blame.

By agreement, I play that when a transfer bid is doubled, opener accepts any time he feels sure there is a home! What exactly is a home? A home is three or more cards in the transfer suit or a stopper in the suit doubled. This treatment has a variety of ways to win. Try using this agreement on each of the following:

Partner		You	
1NT	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	Dbl
2♥	Pass	?	

(1) Transfer.

Holding:

♠876 ♥A7643 ♦92 ♣1042,

you should pass. Regardless of the number of hearts in opener's hand, your intent was to play a partscore with hearts as trump. This is now accomplished, and the opening lead will come into the strong hand.

Holding:

♠J85 ♥KJ643 ♦J54 ♣QJ,

bid 2NT. Once again, partner knows there is a home. Your intent was to describe a hand with invitational values and exactly five hearts. The notrump bidder is now marked to hold either three or more hearts or a stopper in diamonds. After your descriptive 2NT rebid, depending on his shape and values, opener can pass, bid 3NT, 3♥ or 4♥.

Following this logic, on your actual hand, you have an easy completion of the transfer by jumping to 3NT. Partner will know whether he should pass or correct to 4♠.

Why do I blame your partner after announcing I agree with him? Easy. Never choose a bid that may be clear in your mind, when you are aware it

could be foggy in partner's. Without any prior agreement, I would choose the action most likely not to be misinterpreted. Hard to imagine that pass with these cards would not give the partnership a reasonable chance to survive.

I have a great deal of empathy for the disaster in which you were a participant. Perhaps your experience will guide you to discuss this particular auction with all future regular partners. If undiscussed, at least you are now aware there are alternative agreements out there.

Have a question for Jerry? Contact him at askjerry@jerryhelms.com