

Modified Four Way Transfers

Last week as a tease I presented a hand which I will repeat here. Declarer has the following:

Axxx, Axx, Axx, Axx

What would you open with this hand? One No Trump seems clear. (though I might argue the hand is worth 18 points since aces are worth more than four points.)

Now let us look at a responder hand:

xxx, xx, xx, KQxxxx

Most of us would go yuk and perhaps transfer to clubs. What if we had a system that would confirm that your partner owned three clubs including the Ace? The defenders would probably accuse us of peeking but a normal club break and three no trump is cold.

I would not recommend that you try to bid three no trump with a five count but I hope you can see the value of knowing your partner's holding in clubs.

What are four way transfers anyway?

Most players will bid two diamonds as a transfer to hearts and two hearts as a transfer to spades. The old fashioned method is to use two spades as a relay to clubs with partner correcting to diamonds if that is his suit. There are several disadvantages to this approach. One disadvantage is the transfer bidder gains no more knowledge about the no trump bidder's holding. A second major disadvantage is the wrong side ends up playing the hand when diamonds are the responder's suit.

In this modified method there will be several changes related to minor suit transfers after a one no trump opener. The major suit sequences remain the same.

1. Two no trump becomes a transfer to diamonds and it shows diamonds and at least a six card diamond suit. After the two no trump bid the no trump opener will either bid three diamonds or pre-accept. The no trump bidder will bid three clubs (pre-accept) with any four cards or more plus at least three cards with either queen, king or ace. Why do we like to pre-accept? With a good six card suit by responder many hands will make three no trump with a smattering of values. Without a pre-accept hand the no

trump bidder will just bid three diamonds. After a pre-accept by the no trump bidder the responder will just bid three diamonds with a weak hand. Notice that the strong hand plays the hand except in the last circumstance.

a. What happens to our invitational no trump bid? Stay tuned!

2. After a no trump opener two clubs is still Stayman. This bid will always promise a four card major. (be patient)

3. After a one no trump opener two spades becomes a two way bid. The two spade bid is either an invitational no trump hand or a transfer to clubs. With a minimum hand the no trump opener will bid two no trump. With a maximum hand the no trump opener will bid three clubs. Let us examine this bid in detail.

a. We give up the ability to pre-accept in the club suit. This is a minor weakness.

b. When the responder is trying to invite in no trump and the opener is at the lower range the responder will pass two no trump. When the responder has a weak club hand they will bid three clubs.

c. When the opener is at the top of his bid they will bid three clubs. The responder will bid three no trump with an invitational no trump hand. The responder will pass with a weak club hand.

d. The two spade bid keeps the opponents out of the bidding in a lot of cases.

e. When the two club Stayman bid is used the defenders know the responder has a four card major.

Four way transfers is a very effective method to use in any system. I hope your partnerships will consider trying this modified version.