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This Week in Bridge

(216) Transfer Rebids by Opener After 1♥ - 1♠

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Level: 6

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General

When the auction starts with us opening 1♥ and partner making a 1♠ response, we often have a difficult rebid and auction to follow. Opener will often have much to describe to Responder (second suit, fragment, strength, etc.) and Responder may also have some difficult decisions (pass, make a 'courtesy' raise, a limit raise, take a preference). One way to improve communication in this auction is to play transfer rebids by Opener. Let's see how this works.

Transfer Rebids by Opener

When the auction begins with 1♥ - 1♠ then we can define Opener's rebids as transfers.

1♥ 1♠

___?

- 1NT* Balanced Hand, 12-14 pts (natural) OR 4+card ♣, 12-14 pts – NF.
- 2♣* 4+card ♠, 12-18 pts – 1F.
- 2♦* 6+card ♥, 12-15 pts, some 5+card ♥ with 15-18 pts – 1F.
- 2♥* 5+card ♥, 3-card ♠, 12-15 pts – NF (usually unbalanced).
- 2♠ 4-card ♠, 12-14 pts.
- 2NT Balanced Hand, 18-19 pts – NF
- 3♣ 4+card ♣, Good 18+ pts - GF
- 3♦ 4+card ♦, Good 18+ pts – GF
- 3♥ 6+card ♥, not 3-card ♠, 15-17 HCP – NF
- 3♠ 4-card ♠, 15-17 points, NF (often unbalanced).



2♥* Rebids by Opener – Showing a Partial ♠ Raise

One of the biggest advantages to this system is that Opener shows 4-card ♠ support versus 3-card ♠ support. This solves Opener's problem of what to do with 3-5-1-4 (or maybe 3-6) shape and a minimum hand after the auction begins 1♥ - 1♠. Opener gets to show 3-card ♠ support by bidding 2♥ and 4-card support by bidding 2♠ and minimum values.

After Opener rebids 2♥*, Responder is well placed to choose the best partscore when they have a minimum hand:

- Pass with 4-2 in the Majors and a minimum hand.
- Correct to 2♠ with 5-card ♠ suit.
- Correct to 2♠ with other holdings like 4-1 in the Majors.

2♦* Rebids by Opener – Showing Extra ♥ Length

Another advantage of this approach is that with a hand with the values for a 2.5♥ rebid Opener starts with a 2♦* rebid and when Responder rebids 2♥, to show tolerance for ♥, then Opener can bid 3♥ - showing about 14-15 points decent 6+card ♥ suit.

1♥ 1♠
2♦* 2♥
3♥

Similarly, with extra values, 15-17 points, and 3-card ♠ and 6+card ♥, Opener can show their hand by taking three bids. First, rebid 2♦* to usually show a 6-card ♥ suit, and then bid 2♠ to show 3-card ♠ support.

1♥ 1♠
2♦* 2♥
2♠

This auction shows extra values, since with 3-6 in the Majors and a minimum hand Opener would have rebid 2♥.



2♣* Rebid Auctions – Showing ♦

When Opener has ♥ and ♦, with not enough values to make a jump shift (12-18 points) then they begin with a 2♣* rebid – showing at least 4-card ♦.

Playing standard rebid methods, when Responder has 8-9 points they must find another bid, so that game can be reached if Opener has extra values -- 16-18 points. This leads to Responder raising on 8-9 points (called a *courtesy raise*) and muddling their invitational auctions (making the same bid with 10-11 points). Playing these transfer methods, Responder can rebid 2♦ with a ♦ fit and 6-9 points. With a “full invite”, 10 to a bad 12 points, Responder can jump to 3♦. This 2♣* rebid usually does not have 3-card ♠ (unless it has extra values).

1♥ 1♠
2♣* ___?

- 2♦ Usually 4+card ♦, 6-9 points.
- 2♥ 2+card ♥, 6-9 points.
- 3♦ 4+card ♦, 10 to bad 12 points. (Invitational)

After Responder rebids 2♦, Opener can continue to bid on, showing 16-18 points, and allowing the partnership to find game when Responder has 8-9 points.

1♥ 1♠
2♣* 2♦
___?

- 2♥ 6+card ♥, 4+card ♦, 16-18 points.
- 2♠ Something like 3-5-4-1, 16-18 points.
- 2NT 2-5-4-2 or 1-5-4-3, 16-18 points.
- 3♣ 0-5-4-4, 16-18 points.
- 3♦ Usually 5-card ♥ and 5-card ♦, 15-18 points.



1NT Rebids Auctions – Opener has a Minimum Hand with ♥ and ♣ OR Balanced

With exactly 5-card ♥, at least 4-card ♣, and 12-14 points, Opener rebids 1NT. This 1NT bid is non-forcing. The 1NT rebid can be made with this hand or with a balanced hand with 12-14 points.

In this bidding sequence, if Responder has a minimum hand that is relatively balanced (or is short in ♥) then that is where the partnership will play. This may have some disadvantages if Opener is extremely distributional and weak, but that is not always the case. 1NT is often a great contract even in these situations!

Responder's Rebids after 1NT by Opener*

The partnership can still play Two-Way NMF after this 1NT rebid – with a small modification. Since Opener has two hand types for rebidding 1NT, they need to show which they have on the next round of the bidding.

If Responder uses a 2♣* relay (to start most invitational sequences)

1♥ 1♠
1NT* 2♣*
___?

- 2♦* Balanced hand, 12-14 points.
- 2♥* ♥ and ♣, 12-14 points.

If Opener accepts the relay in the traditional fashion, that shows that Opener had the balanced hand. If Opener breaks the relay and bids 2♥*, that shows the shapelier hand with ♥ and ♣.

Note: With exactly 2-5-2-4 Opener has a choice of which hand to show.

If Responder bids 2♦* as an Artificial Game Force, the Opener further describes their hand and Responder can work out which hand type Opener had for rebidding 1NT.

1♥ 1♠
1NT* 2♦*
___?

- 2♥ 2-5-2-4 OR 1-5-3-4
- 2♠ 3-5 in Majors, Balanced (with 3-5-1-4 OR 3-5-0-5 Opener rebids 2♥* previously).
- 2NT 2-5-3-3
- 3♣ 5+card ♣ suit



2♦* Rebids by Opener - Other Hands with ♥ and ♣

When Opener has 12-14 points with 6+card ♥ and 4+card ♣, Opener is too distributional to risk playing in 1NT. Instead, Opener rebids 2♦* (showing a 6+card ♥ suit). This suppresses the ♣ suit, but even a 6-1 ♥ fit may be a better place to play.

When Opener has 15-17 (or a bad 18) points with 5+card ♥ suit and 4+card ♣ suit, they cannot show their ♣ by rebidding 1NT (this is different than if they had ♦ as a second suit, where they are certain to get another bid). Let's look at some follow-up auctions.

Examples

1♥ 1♠

2♦* 2♥

___?

- Pass 12-15 points
- 2♠ 3-6 Majors OR 3-5-1-4, 15-17 points
- 2NT 2-5-2-4, 1-5-3-4, 15-17 points
- 3♣ At least 5+card ♥ and 5+card ♣, 15-17 points
- 3♦ 6+card ♥, Game Try (usually 3-card ♦)
- 3♥ 6+card ♥, 14-15 points, 2.5♥ rebid

1♥ 1♠

2♦* 2♠

___?

- Pass 12-15 points
- 2NT 2-5-2-4, 1-5-3-4, 15-17 points
- 3♣ At least 5+card ♥ and 5+card ♣, 15-17 points
- 3♦ 6+card ♥, Game Try, Choice of Games, usually 2-card ♠
- 3♥ 6+card ♥, 14-15 points, 2.5♥ Rebid, usually 0-1 ♠
- 3♠ 3-6 Majors OR 3-5-1-4, 15-17 points

Conclusion

In modern bidding systems, transfers have become a larger and larger part of bidding. These bids are a valuable tool for describing many hand types in a limited amount of bidding space. This is particularly true in auctions that start 1♥ - 1♠. Transfers are valuable in helping us have better constructive auctions, allowing us to communicate more information at low levels. If you have a partnership that likes gadgets, give these transfers a try.