



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(520) Opponents' Doubles of Our Stayman & Transfers**

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Level: 6, 8 of 10

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#### **General**

When we open notrump and partner bids Stayman 2♣ or 3♣, or most any artificial bid for that matter, the opponents will sometimes make a lead-directing double. This gives us an idea of what the opponents are going to lead. Our discussion here is about how to use these lead-directing doubles to our advantage – to help us better communicate with our partner about fit and/or stoppers in the opponents' suit.

#### **Dealing with a Lead Directing Double of Stayman**

Our general approach to this auction is that Opener answer Stayman by making the bid they were planning to if they have a ♣ stopper and passes if they do not have a ♣ stopper. Here are the rebid details:

##### *Example 1*

1NT P 2♣ X

\_\_\_?

- Pass No ♣ stopper
- XX 5+♣, an offer to play 2♣ redoubled
- 2♦ no 4-card Major and a ♣ stopper
- 2♥ 4+♥ and a ♣ stopper
- 2♠ 4+♠ and a ♣ stopper

If Opener shows a stopper, then Responder can bid on normally – looking for a Major suit fit or knowing they can play 3NT if they have no Major suit fit (since Opener has promised a ♣ stopper).

*Note: We can use a similar bidding agreement if we open 2NT and the opponents make a lead-directing double of Responder's 3♣ Stayman bid.*



## Responder's Follow-up Bids After Stayman – Double – Pass

When Opener passes the opponent's lead-directing double of Stayman around to Responder (denying a stopper in ♣) then Responder's normal action is to make a redouble to ask Opener to answer Stayman anyway. Responder can continue to look for a 4-4 Major suit fit (or some 8-card Major suit fit), and if they do not find one and they do not have a ♣ stopper, then they can settle for a 4-3 Major suit fit or even a minor suit fit if they have enough values for game.

### Example 2

1NT P 2♣ X  
P P \_\_\_?

- XX Asks Opener to answer Stayman
- 2♥ 4+card ♥, wanting to declare
- 2♠ 4+card ♠, wanting to declare

If Responder has a positional stopper in ♣ (like ♣AQ or ♣Kx), Responder wants to be the declarer. In this situation, Responder bids their 4-card Major (2♥ or 2♠) and then Opener can raise with a fit. This 2M rebid by Responder is forcing for at least one round (showing at least 8+ points). This bidding sequence allows Responder to become declarer and protect their honor holding.

*Note: Some partnerships play this 2-Major rebid by Responder as game forcing to simplify the follow-up bidding.*

## Dealing with a Lead-Directing Double of a Jacoby Transfer

When the auction begins with a Jacoby Transfer that is doubled before the Opener gets a chance to accept the transfer:

1NT P 2♦\* X  
or  
1NT P 2♥\* X

Then we want to consider how we should use this lead directing double to help us.



Let's consider the first example in more detail. Opener now has these bidding options:

*Example 3*

1NT P 2♦\* X  
\_\_\_?

- Pass 2-card ♥ support
- XX 2-card ♥ support and a good, long ♦ suit, willing to play 2♦XX if Responder has some values and a couple of ♦. Often this agreement does not make much sense, as Responder has not promised any values for making a Jacoby Transfer after we open 1NT.
- 2♥ 3+c ♥ support
- Other bids are the same as if there were no X.

If Opener passes, showing only 2-card ♥ support, Responder can redouble to retransfer and then bid on normally as planned, or Responder can just bid on as they wish, including bidding their own suit and choosing to play the hand.

*Example 4*

1NT P 2♦\* X  
P P \_\_\_?

- XX Retransfer to ♥
- 2♥ To play
- 3♥ Invitational, 6-card ♥
- 4♥ To play, 6-card ♥

Opener's 2♥ bid directly over the X is valuable because now Opener has shown support and if LHO competes in the bidding, Responder can make a better-informed decision about competing. Opener does not want to make that decision unilaterally because Responder might have 0 points.

**Vs. a Lead-Directing Double of a Texas Transfer**

When we make a Texas Transfer, we know we have a fit and we have already committed to game, so we don't expect the opponents to compete in the bidding too often, but just to make their lead-directing bid sometimes. We want to structure our agreements not to try to compete in the auction, but to play the hand from the better side.

*Example 5*

1NT P 4♦\* X  
\_\_\_?

- Pass Open to either side declaring – no Honor in their suit
- XX "You play it, partner." – Ace in their suit
- 4♥ "I want to play it." – positional stopper



### *About the Auction*

- 4♥ usually shows a positional control in the doubled suit, like Kx or AQ (or longer).
- XX shows the Ace and no other honors (a non-positional control) and forces partner to declare in that game.
- Both XX and completing the transfer show a control in the doubled suit in case Responder is interested in slam.
- Pass denies a control in the doubled suit – a holding like xx+ or Qx+.
  - Responder can then decide who declares by completing the transfer themselves or XX to retransfer and get Opener to complete the transfer.

The auction is similar when Responder makes a 4♥ Texas Transfer for ♠.

*Note: If we open 2NT, partner makes a transfer (Jacoby or Texas), and RHO doubles, we use a similar set of agreements as we do after a 1NT opening.*

### **Modern Jacoby Transfer – X -- XX Improved Agreement**

Since it is rare that we will want to XX “for business”, suggesting that Opener has a great holding in the doubled suit and wants to play there if Responder is willing to, some partnerships use Opener’s XX of the opponent’s X of a Jacoby transfer over 1NT as another way to compete in the bidding.

#### Example 6

1NT P 2♦\* X  
XX

This alternative is to play that XX shows 3-card support with a maximum hand OR at least a desire to compete to the 3-level if the opponents continue to bid. Therefore, completing the transfer over the double shows 3-card support and a minimum OR no desire to compete at the 3-level.

### **Conclusion**

When an opponent doubles our Stayman or transfer bid, we need agreements for how to handle it and how to use the new possible bids created by the interference: XX and pass. By using the agreements above you can help to locate a fit and show some additional values (as in the Jacoby Transfer auctions) or determine if we have a stopper in the opponent’s suit (as in the Stayman Auctions). These agreements give us a good set of tools for dealing with the opponents’ lead directing doubles of our artificial bids.