



Modern Notrump Bidding Teacher Manual

Prepared for the ACBL by Pat Harrington
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Introduction for Teachers

Teaching the Modern Notrump Bidding Play Course

The lesson plans in this manual are to accompany ACBL's *Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course*. That course can be used in conjunction with Lessons 1 and 2 of *Commonly Used Conventions*. It also provides practice on bidding slams after notrump opening bids, including situations where Stayman or a Jacoby transfer has been used. (Slam bidding is covered in *More Commonly Used Conventions*.)

In addition to the material covered in the *Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course*, new introductory lessons on Stayman (Lesson 2A), transfers (Lesson 2B) and slam bidding (*a part of* Lesson 4A) have been added. It is suggested that you use that material with less experienced students. The lessons in the *Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course* are not intended as the first introduction to the bids covered. The added lessons can be used to introduce the material.

The material is flexible. The number of lessons in your course will depend on many things including: the level of the students you plan to teach, your own schedule, your location, the time of year (holidays, weather) and available space. With a fairly competent group, you might schedule four or five lessons, with each lesson covering one session of the *Modern Notrump "Play" Course*. The fifth lesson can be a review using hands selected from *Commonly Used Conventions* Lessons 1 and 2. In each lesson plan, related hands from *Commonly Used Conventions* (CUC) and *More Commonly Used Conventions* (MCUC) are noted. With less experienced students, you might want to expand the course to eight weeks, using all of the lessons in this manual plus a final review lesson as mentioned above.

It's certainly easiest to get payment up front but, where I teach, we have a lot of seasonal students who come and go, and we collect by the week. A compromise might be to collect money up front for a shorter lesson series of four weeks, which is easier for students to commit to.

The Lesson Format

A house is only as strong as the foundation on which it is built. This course provides a lot of practice in the use of each bid rather than a sample of how the bid is used. This practice is necessary to thoroughly prepare students to use the conventions.

The lesson plans allow the deals to tell the story of the day's bidding topic. You hold center stage only long enough to provide the information needed to move on to the next deal. The intent is to provide as much playing experience as possible. The length of your lesson will determine how many deals the class plays. Using this format, a three-hour lesson is not too long. We generally keep lessons shorter because the students cannot concentrate that long. But, when they are constantly involved in playing, they are able to maintain concentration for that time period. When I used these lessons in a 25-table group, we usually got eight deals in during the three-hour session.

Don't let the students dither over bidding. Give a reasonable amount of time to bid (preferably without any table talk) and then announce that everyone should be playing. At that point, go to any tables that are not playing and assign them a contract based on the auction they had so far. The class does not like being held up waiting for a slow table to finish playing. I hate stopping a table from completing the deal because everyone is waiting. The delay often comes in the bidding and can be averted as long as you monitor all tables carefully during the auction period.

Students sometimes learn more by reaching the wrong contract. You don't have to require that all tables play in the same contract unless you feel that an interesting play problem in that contract warrants it.

Students keep their cards duplicate style. After a deal is played, everyone places their hand face up dummy style, so you can go over key points in the bidding and the play to be sure that everyone understands the point of the deal.

Gear the focus of each deal to the ability of the group. Spend more time on bidding with less experienced groups and more time on the intricacies of play and the duplicate results with more experienced groups.

Encourage students to replay the lesson deals at home with other classmates or friends. You should include ACBL's *Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course* booklet and E-Z Deal cards in the lesson fee to expedite this. For lessons not included in the booklet, a hand record showing all the lesson deals has been provided. Make copies and distribute them to your students. Please note that the fact that you have permission to copy the handouts for lessons 2A, 2B and 4A is not the norm. In general, *it is neither legal nor ethical to reproduce the work of another author*. Teachers should not photocopy from books to make handouts for their classes without explicit permission from the author. Nor can you simply rewrite the identical material into your own computer. This applies to the actual text as well as exercise sets and answers. It is not sufficient to make a copy and give the author credit. You must have permission first. If you copy material from a book, the authors don't sell as many copies and have less incentive to write the books we teachers need. However, a bridge deal can't be copyrighted, so you may use any deal you see anywhere *with your own analysis* without violating copyright law.



Even experienced students relate better to seeing concrete examples using actual cards rather than looking at examples written on the board. New concepts are presented with examples using the cards. The manual uses the icon shown at the left of this paragraph to alert you to the fact that an exercise with cards is being done and to warn you to expect card changes at that point in the lesson. While your entire lesson could be taught with no board at all, you may wish to use the blackboard to make a particular point or as a backup for the examples students have laid out on the table. Putting the same deal on the board can help those who had difficulty getting the cards on the table. Expect some students to have trouble and do everything in your power to prevent it. Use a guidecard with the compass directions on it (all guidecards with North facing in the same direction). When you call the cards for an exercise, make sure the class starts with a suited deck and specify the suit first. Say, "Spade person are you ready?" and then give the spade cards. Repeat with each suit. Go slowly enough for the students to keep up and walk around the room to check for errors.

Instructions or information that is provided for teachers only is in a shaded box.

These lessons are set up so the entire class plays the same deal at the same time. Use the E-Z Deal cards when possible. When you use the lessons that are not included in ACBL's *Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course*, you will have to select a method of creating the lesson deals. In a small class, making boards is not that big a problem, but it is far too time consuming in a large class. I use printouts in my classes where all four hands are printed in large bold type with each hand facing the player. While mine are done by hand on my computer, the *Dealmaster* program is suggested for easy creation of these hand records (see www.dealmaster.com).

The Teacher's Role

Even using a prepared lesson series, your major work comes before you walk into the classroom. A good teacher spends more time preparing for a lesson than actually teaching the lesson! Read over the lesson several times to familiarize yourself with the material. Plan for material to omit if the lesson moves more slowly than expected. Bring the lesson plan to class to use as a guide but do not read from it. Use your own words.

Arrive at class early enough to have all materials out so that the class can start right on time. Make sure that you have all the materials and copies you will need for your lesson. I have found gallon size freezer bags perfect for storing what I need for a single lesson. I use one bag for the lesson plan and lesson handouts. With the baggie, some decks of cards and guidecards, I'm ready to go.

During class, your job is to keep things running smoothly and to provide only as much information as is needed for the students to learn through playing. I believe that students gain more by working things out on their own, and tables should have time to consider the problem or auction without your help. However, I also believe in being available to help or offer encouragement. My policy is to walk around the room and eavesdrop without appearing to do so. I feel it is okay for a teacher to step in when it is obvious that there is a problem or tension at a table. The students appreciate a friendly word of encouragement or assistance when it is truly needed, but they also appreciate being allowed to work a problem through on their own. Don't stand and watch the action at a table, or you will make the students nervous and fearful of making mistakes. Don't let the students ask you to do their thinking for them. When a question about bidding or play is asked, help the student think along the right line, don't give the answers. I find that this close contact with the students while they bid and play clues me in on the errors in their thinking, and it allows me to address those errors to the group as a whole without singling anyone out. Talk like each error is a mistake that is made all the time so nobody is made to feel uncomfortable about misconceptions.

I sometimes pose questions to the class, but I never call on any individual. Let the group feel free to contribute without fear of giving the "wrong" answer. Some teachers don't even let the students answer; they answer their own questions. Do you remember being in junior high school and trying to make yourself disappear so you wouldn't be called on? You don't want to make your student feel like that! It's a good idea to announce at the first lesson that they will never be called on, so the students should not be afraid to look at the teacher. Above all, protect your student's egos and make them feel comfortable.

Teachers differ in whether they take questions from the floor. I do. I find that it helps me to hear these questions. Sometimes it becomes obvious that I have not made myself clear, and I try to say things in a better way. Sometimes the students ask a question on the topic that will be covered next, and that reinforces for me that my lesson is going in the right order. I do not find questions disruptive, as long as the teacher controls them. If a question is off topic or the answer would be too confusing for the class, simply say that you do not want to go there now. You can discuss the question privately after class. Never feel forced to answer a question if you are unsure of the answer. Research it and get back to the class. I believe that the main problem with questions is that some teachers let the questions run the class. Remember, you are in charge and you have a plan for the lesson. Stick to it.

Handling Uneven Numbers

In an ideal world, bridge class attendance would always be in multiples of four. Even if your registration achieves this goal, emergencies arise and you are likely to have the wrong number of people some weeks. Some teachers will make tables of three. This may work for more experienced students. Some teachers will make a table of five with the declarer sitting out after playing a hand. We have to be sensitive to the students who feel they are putting people out by making someone sit out a deal. We have had success with giving the extras their own table. We then bump players from another table to go visit them for one hand. That way, most tables get inconvenienced once and only once, and the “extras” don’t feel uncomfortable about being the oddballs.

Humor

A well-placed laugh can make it easier for your students to learn. It relaxes them and makes them more receptive to new information. The ideal time for a joke is when your class has been working hard and you need to break the tension a bit. In fact, there were a couple of lessons in this series where I found the need to tell TWO jokes. My class was working so hard on learning the new material.

Yes, you can tell jokes – even if you’ve never been able to recall a punch line in the past, (trust me – I know this from personal experience). Write the joke down and review it before you tell it. Soon you will find yourself remembering jokes and being able to tell them in social circles. (I never would have believed it either.) Humor is very personal and a joke that one teacher is comfortable telling would embarrass another teacher, so it is wise to start a collection of jokes. Mark each one when you use it in a particular class. Don’t be discouraged if some students find the joke the most important item in your lesson plan. I once had a student request the joke from a missed lesson but not the lesson sheet. Remember, the students want to have fun while learning and it’s your job to provide it. Jokes help.

Feedback

I hope you enjoy teaching from these lesson plans. Any comments or suggestions you have are welcome. You can contact me (Pat Harrington) at abta@earthlink.net.

LESSON 1 — Using the Modern Notrump Ranges

The deals for this lesson come from Lesson 1 of the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*. Play and discuss them as outlined in this lesson plan.

In addition to providing practice on bidding balanced hands, there is a recurring theme in several deals about covering an honor with an honor.

Have your students make up each of the deals using the Modern Notrump Bidding (E-Z) Deal cards.

Remind students of dealer and vulnerability on each deal.

Related Deals from CUC and MCUC: None

Reference sections in CUC and MCUC Teacher Manuals:

CUC – Lesson 1, section entitled Opening Notrump Bids.

If you took basic bridge lessons or if you play with social players, you may be opening 1NT to show a balanced hand with 16-18 points. It's easier for new players to use this range, so you were not taught incorrectly, but the modern range for opening 1NT is 15-17 instead of 16-18. Most tournament players use the lower 15-17 point range. If you currently use 16-18, a change to 15-17 doesn't require any major adjustments. You still have a balanced hand but you have 15, 16 or 17 points instead of 16, 17 or 18 points. No big deal. Experienced players find the 15-17 point range preferable for several reasons. 1NT is the most descriptive one-level opening bid, so we like to use it whenever our hand meets the requirements. You get more 15-point hands than you do 18-point hands, so the lower range allows you to open 1NT more frequently. A 1NT opening also makes it more difficult for the opponents to interfere. If you open 1♣, the opponents can easily come in with an overcall on the one level. When you open 1NT, they have to risk a two-level overcall.

Today we are going to practice using the 15-17 1NT opening range. It may surprise you to hear that you can answer pretty much the same way as you answered a 16-18 point 1NT opening. Responder still bids game with 10 points. This means you will reach some 25-point games, but these games have a reasonable chance of making.

Let's practice.

SESSION 1: Deal #1

Dealer: North

Vul: None

	♠ A Q 6 4	
	♥ A 7 6	
	♦ J 9 6	
	♣ A 9 5	
♠ 10 7 5		♠ 9 8 3
♥ Q 10 4		♥ K J 8 2
♦ K 8 4		♦ 7 5 2
♣ K Q J 10		♣ 8 4 2
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="text-align: center;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> WE </div> <div style="text-align: center;">S</div> </div>	
	♠ K J 2	
	♥ 9 5 3	
	♦ A Q 10 3	
	♣ 7 6 3	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	3NT
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opposite a 15-17 point 1NT opening, responder still bids game with 10 points. South, as responder to a 1NT opening, is the captain and places the contract in 3NT.

Suggested Lead: East is likely to lead the fourth best heart, the ♥ 2.

Suggested Play: North sees seven top tricks – four spades, one heart, one diamond and one club. Two more tricks can be established in diamonds. If the diamond finesse works, declarer will make an overtrick. If the finesse fails, West will gain the lead. Whenever your play to develop tricks could lose the lead, you should stop to consider what harm your opponents might do.

Although we sometimes hold up on winning an ace, North should not be concerned about the heart suit. Using fourth-best leads, the lead of a 2 indicates a four-card suit. The heart suit cannot hurt declarer even if the diamond finesse fails. East-West can win only three heart tricks plus the ♦ K. Declarer should be aware of a greater danger than the heart suit. Declarer's club holding is identical to the heart holding. If West is allowed to hold the first trick, West can shift to a club to establish at least three club tricks for the defenders, and 3NT will go down when the diamond finesse fails. Since the heart suit appears to be safe, declarer should take no chances. Win the ♥ A immediately and finesse diamonds.

If declarer doesn't win the first trick, West can see how to defeat 3NT in hand and definitely should shift to the ♣ K. It pays to count your winners in notrump whether you are declarer or a defender.

A 15-17 opening notrump fits best with a system that uses weak two opening bids and a strong 2♣ opening. When you can open 2♣ with 22 or more points, you can lower your range for opening 2NT. The modern range for opening 2NT is 20-21 points and balanced distribution. To show a balanced hand that is in between a 1NT and a 2NT opening (18-19 points), start with a suit and jump rebid 2NT.

Teachers may want to illustrate the above two auctions on the board. You might also discuss the fact that in duplicate your opening notrump range must be announced by the 1NT opener's partner immediately after the 1NT opening bid (and before the next player calls).

SESSION 1: Deal #2

Dealer: East

Vul: N-S

♠ A K 7 5	♠ Q 10 8 3	♠ 9 4 2
♥ K 3	♥ 9 4 2	♥ A Q J 5
♦ A 9 5	♦ J 7 6 3	♦ 8 4
♣ K Q 6 3	♣ 8 2	♣ J 10 7 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 6
♥ 10 8 7 6
♦ K Q 10 2
♣ A 9 4

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	Pass
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
	2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

West has a balanced 19-point hand, which is too good to open 1NT but not good enough to open 2NT. The way to show this hand is to open in a suit and rebid 2NT (provided you cannot raise responder's major).

This auction is interesting because we seldom skip over a major suit to bid notrump. However, opener's balanced 18-19 point hand offers an exception. With 19 points, opener has enough to jump shift. But remember a jump shift tends to describe an unbalanced hand, not the balanced hand West holds. The only time you will miss a major-suit fit is when responder is too weak to go to game. If East had held four hearts and four spades, East could mention the spades on the way to 3NT. When we bid, we tell partner just enough about our hand to let us find the best final contract. If we tell more, we may help the opponents defend.

The fact that it is okay to skip over bidding the four-card spade suit is likely to be news to some students. Spend as much time discussing this as necessary. You might want to illustrate possible sequences on the board that would locate a fit if it existed.

Suggested Lead: North has two four-card suits. On the auction shown, North is likely to lead the ♠ 3. We like leading an unbid major and North's spades are stronger than North's diamonds. If opener bid spades, North will lead the ♦ 3. Your opening lead depends on the bidding. We prefer leading an unbid suit.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts seven top winners – two spades, four hearts and one diamond. Two more tricks are needed and they can be developed in clubs. In fact, declarer can make an overtrick on the spade lead. Declarer's second spade stopper prevents North-South from taking any immediate spade tricks when South gains the lead with the ♣ A. On a diamond lead, the defenders will take three diamond tricks along with the ♣ A to hold declarer to nine tricks. Declarer makes the contract on either lead, but an overtrick can make a big difference in matchpoint scoring at duplicate bridge. Declarers winning only nine tricks may not score well.

Continued on next page.



Let's change the deal a little.
Trade East's ♥Q for North's ♥2.
Trade East's ♣5 for North's ♠Q.

Dealer: East
Vul: N-S

	♠ 10 8 3	
	♥ Q 9 4	
	♦ J 7 6 3	
	♣ 8 5 2	
♠ A K 7 5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ Q 9 4 2
♥ K 3		♥ A J 5 2
♦ A 9 5		♦ 8 4
♣ K Q 6 3		♣ J 10 7
	♠ J 6	
	♥ 10 8 7 6	
	♦ K Q 10 2	
	♣ A 9 4	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	Pass
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
	2NT	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
	4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

How will the auction proceed now? West still opens 1 ♣. East still responds 1 ♥ (going up the line with two four-card majors) and West still rebids 2NT. If East-West are going to find their spade fit, it's up to East to show four spades rather than raise to 3NT. In 4 ♠, only two tricks will be lost – the ♣A and a diamond. On a diamond lead, there are only nine tricks in 3NT. Remember, the top priority games are the majors with 3NT as a second choice. When you have a major-suit fit, you usually will take more tricks playing with that suit as trumps than you will take playing in notrump.



Leave only East's hand face up and turn the remaining three hands face down. Consider this auction:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1NT			

What has West shown? A balanced hand that is too weak to open 1NT (about 12-14 points). West didn't raise hearts, so West cannot have four hearts. And West skipped over the spades to bid 1NT. Should East be wondering if there is a spade fit? No. Don't skip over a major to rebid 1NT. Skipping the major, as we did on the hand we just played, is an exception and the exception occurs when you can rebid 2NT. East adds up the partnership's points and determines that there is not enough strength for game. With no major-suit fit, 1NT is a reasonable contract and East can pass.

Are you ready for an interesting hand? Let's deal out the cards for our next hand.

SESSION 1: Deal #3

Dealer: South

Vul: E-W

♠ J 6 3	♠ A 9 8 4	♠ Q 10 5 2
♥ K 10 6	♥ 2	♥ Q 8 7 3
♦ K 7 3	♦ J 9 6 5 4	♦ A 8
♣ J 10 9 8	♣ K 7 4	♣ 6 5 2
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ K 7	
	♥ A J 9 5 4	
	♦ Q 10 2	
	♣ A Q 3	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

Modern style is to open the bidding with 1NT even when you hold a five-card major. North has 9 points and wants to look for a major-suit fit while inviting game. North uses Stayman first and rebids 2NT to invite after opener shows the wrong major. Opener has 17 total points and accepts the invitation. South might simply bid 3NT, but there is a way to look for the 5-3 heart fit here. South's 3♥ bid says, "I do want to accept the invitation and I have five hearts if you are interested." Holding only one heart, North makes 3NT the final contract.

Stayman will be covered thoroughly in Session 3. North players who do not use Stayman will invite game with 2NT. With a hand that wants to accept the invitation, South can bid 3♥ to show the five-card heart suit on the way to game.

Explain the following as slowly as necessary. South players who do open 1♥ instead of 1NT will find themselves in a difficult position on the rebid. After North responds 1♠, South doesn't have a good rebid. A 1NT rebid shows a balanced hand too weak to open 1NT and a 2NT rebid shows a balanced hand too strong to open 1NT. If South chooses to rebid 1NT, North will pass and the pair misses a good game. On this hand, a 2NT rebid gets the pair to the right contract because responder has 9 points. North could have had a very weak 6-point hand, making 2NT too high.

Suggested Lead: West leads the ♣J, top of a sequence in the longest suit.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts six winners – two spades, one heart and three clubs. The diamond suit offers an opportunity to develop the needed three tricks. South should win the opening lead in hand and get busy on diamonds immediately. Dummy's ♠A or ♣K will provide the entry to diamonds once the suit is established.



Trade North's ♦J for West's ♥6. How will the auction go now? If South opens 1NT, that will probably end the auction. South will probably make 1NT. South wouldn't want to be any higher, but, if South opens 1♥ and rebids 2NT, you would probably end up in 3NT!

SESSION 1: Deal #4

Dealer: West

Vul: Both

♠ A K 5	♠ —	♠ J 10 9 8 7 6 2
♥ K 6 4	♥ A 8 5 3	♥ 9 7 2
♦ K J 8 5	♦ Q 10 9 6	♦ A 7
♣ A 4 3	♣ J 9 8 6 2	♣ K
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ Q 4 3	
	♥ Q J 10	
	♦ 4 3 2	
	♣ Q 10 7 5	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
	2NT	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

Using the modern 15-17 point range, West's hand is too good to open 1NT but not good enough to open 2NT. Opening with one of a suit shows 13-21 points. After East responds 1 ♠, West denies four-card support and describes a balanced hand of 18-19 points with the 2NT rebid. The notrump rebid is as descriptive as notrump opening bids. Responder is the captain after opener rebids 1NT or 2NT. Responder knows there is a fit because of West's balanced distribution. East also knows the partnership has sufficient strength for game but not quite enough for a slam. East places the final contract in 4 ♠.

Suggested Lead: South leads the ♥Q. This hand is a perfect example of how effective the top of a sequence lead can be. West's ♥K is trapped. North will not play the ♥A unless dummy's king is played. The defenders take the first three heart tricks and declarer cannot lose any more tricks.

Suggested Play: Declarer probably feels secure. There don't appear to be any losers other than the three heart tricks. Never let yourself feel so secure that you don't pay attention! On the first spade lead, North shows out. The ♠Q is not going to drop. East's hand has to lead a high spade to finesse against South's ♠Q. Luckily East's hand has entries – the ♣K, the ♦A and club ruffs.

We can usually take more tricks playing in our major-suit game than we can in 3NT. If East-West reach 3NT on these cards, they might make their contract but will not take any overtricks. Declarer cannot make 3NT without using the spade suit. North's likely club lead will knock out one of East's entries and the only dummy entry left is the ♦A. Declarer cannot afford to use that entry to finesse spades. If declarer enters dummy with the ♦A to finesse spades and if South does not play the ♠Q, the spade suit will be blocked and declarer will get only three spade tricks. Therefore, declarer must play the ♠A, the ♠K and lose a spade while still retaining the ♦A entry. South can shift to the ♥Q to collect at least three more tricks for the defense.

How does South know to shift instead of returning partner's club lead? North should be able to count nine tricks for declarer if South does return a club – two clubs (South's play at trick one denied the ♣A), an assumed six spades and the ♦A. Hearts is the only hope for defeating 3NT, so North must discard clubs on spades to warn partner off from returning a club. Pairs in 3NT should score only 600 while pairs in spades score 620. That 20-point difference matters when playing matchpoints!

Continued on next page.

This lesson has several deals that discuss covering an honor with an honor. Depending on time and on what you notice happening on this deal, you might want to discuss the following. Some students might lead the ♠J from East the first time spades are played. South has enough information to know not to cover with the ♠Q – whichever hand is dummy, the bidding gives South a clue that partner is very short in spades. We cover an honor with an honor to do one of two things – to promote a trick in our own hand (South cannot promote the ♠4 3) or in the hope of promoting something in partner's hand (but North is known to have spade shortness). Some declarers would lead the ♠J on a fishing expedition, hoping to induce a cover or to get a sign that South holds the queen. With a total of ten spades, declarer should not actually take the finesse when South plays low smoothly. It's better to play for the ♠Q to drop on the first spade lead. When North shows out, the finesse is in order and must be taken in 4♠. Point out the importance of not feeling so secure that you forget to watch the cards your opponents play and suggest that North discard the ♣2 to trick a careless declarer. South may end up winning the ♠Q when declarer isn't paying close attention.

SESSION 1: Deal #5

Dealer: North

Vul: N-S

	♠ Q J 7 3										
	♥ K J 10										
	♦ A 6 2										
	♣ A 10 9										
♠ K 10 9 4	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 8 7 5		♥ 9 6 4 2									
♦ 8 3		♦ Q J 10 9 4									
♣ 8 6 5 2		♣ 4 3									
	♠ A 6 5										
	♥ A Q 3										
	♦ K 7 5										
	♣ K Q J 7										

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	6NT
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

South can add up to at least 34 points opposite North's 15-17 points. When both partners have balanced distribution, bidding slam is based on the partnership's total points. A total of 33 points is suggested for a small slam and a total of 37 points is suggested for a grand slam. South knows the partnership point total is between 34 and 36 points. North might have counted one distribution point but no more, so the pair cannot be off two aces. There is no reason to use any ace-asking bid. South, as captain, can place the contract in slam – 6NT.

Suggested Lead: Against the slam, East is happy to have a safe top of a sequence lead – the ♦ Q.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts winners – three hearts, two diamonds, four clubs and one spade. Two more tricks must be developed. One possible source of tricks is high cards. Declarer has not counted the ♠ Q and ♠ J yet. One of them will definitely be a trick on power through promotion. It would be nice to make them both tricks. The answer is to take a finesse, but not the finesse many might try. Leading North's ♠ Q is not the best play. The ♠ Q does not have a right to win a trick no matter who holds the ♠ K.



Everyone, turn over all your cards but the spades. As the cards lie, what happens when the ♠ Q is led from North? West can win the ♠ K. Other than the ♠ A, how many spade tricks will declarer get? Just one because West has the ♠ 10 9 to beat North's low spades. You might think you are unlucky to have spades divide 4-2, but what split do the odds favor when six cards are missing? 4-2. Players who led the ♠ Q (or ♠ J) to finesse will go down in 6NT. What if the finesse had "worked"? Trade West's ♠ K for East's ♠ 8. What should happen now when the ♠ Q is led from dummy? East knows that the king will have to be played next time if it isn't used now. Isn't it better to use the king to kill the queen than to possibly see it kill the ♠ 3? East should "cover an honor with an honor," not because East expects to win a spade trick but because East hopes to promote a spade trick for West. When that happens – West actually gets two tricks.

Continued on next page.



Trade the ♠K and ♠8 back again. The best way to play for two extra spade tricks is to lead *toward* North's high spades. This play gives the defenders a chance to win the ♠K, but you can afford to give up one trick in a small slam. It's best to play spades right away.

In notrump, we do our work building needed tricks right away. This allows declarer to keep control of all other suits and provides sufficient entries to reach South's hand to finesse twice if West plays "second hand low" the first time. Played this way, 6NT makes whenever West holds the ♠K. Do you think your chance of making this slam is only 50%? It is actually more than that since there is still hope that East may hold the ♠K. Spades could split 3-3 instead of the more likely 4-2.



Trade West's ♠K for East's ♥2. Will you make 6NT by leading up to declarer's queen-jack now? Yes. Even though the finesse loses and the king captures one of your high cards, spades split 3-3 and your fourth spade is good. On this layout, declarer could lead the queen to finesse, but why depend on a 3-3 split when you can handle a 4-2 split as long as West has the ♠K? Combine the chance of the correct finesse working with the chance of a 3-3 split and you have about a 68% chance to make the contract. Those of you who finessed by leading a high spade had only a 36% chance.

SESSION 1: Deal #6

Dealer: East

Vul: E-W

	♠ 8 3	
	♥ J 10 9 7 3	
	♦ Q 10 8 4	
	♣ K 6	
♠ A 9 5 4		♠ 7 6 2
♥ A K Q		♥ 8 4
♦ A K 7 3		♦ 9 5 2
♣ 10 7		♣ A Q J 4 3
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> NE</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> WS</div> </div>	
	♠ K Q J 10	
	♥ 6 5 2	
	♦ J 6	
	♣ 9 8 5 2	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	Pass
	2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

West shows a balanced 20-21 points. East has enough strength to carry on to game. With a long minor, 3NT is usually the best game, so East places the contract in 3NT.

Suggested Lead: North leads the ♥J, top of a sequence.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts seven top tricks – one spade, three hearts, two diamonds and one club. Two more tricks are needed. A working club finesse will provide them. Even if the club finesse fails, two additional club tricks will be promoted. However, West may not be able to reach dummy to cash them if South holds the ♣K and didn't take it when West finessed the first time. Luckily for declarer, the finesse works. Now the only question is how many overtricks declarer will make.

West should play clubs immediately, leading the ♣10. North sees the strong club suit in dummy and knows the only chance to stop declarer from running the entire suit is to “cover an honor with an honor” and play the ♣K on the ♣10. If declarer plays the ♣A on this trick, declarer is held to three club tricks and makes 3NT with no overtricks – South's ♣9 becomes a stopper. But West doesn't have to win the first club trick! If declarer allows North's ♣K to win the trick, declarer will take four club tricks when regaining the lead to make an overtrick in 3NT. How can West know to do this? The most likely way for clubs to split is 4-2, so expecting the whole suit to run is quite optimistic. If West goes with the odds and lets North win the ♣K, West gets a better score. However, West cannot beat declarers who encounter a weak defense when North doesn't cover the ♣10. Those declarers will end up winning two overtricks for a top score.

If clubs had split 3-3, declarer's duck of the ♣K would cost a second overtrick. But the 3-3 split occurs only about 36% of the time, so it is better for declarer to go with the odds and duck the ♣K to play for one overtrick.



Is a 2NT opening bid forcing? No. It shows 20-21 points. Responder is allowed to pass 2NT when the partnership doesn't have the 26 points suggested for game. Exchange North's ♦Q and ♣6 for East's ♣A Q. East has: ♠7 6 2 ♥8 4 ♦Q 9 5 2 ♣J 6 4 3

West opens 2NT. What response should East make? East realizes that the partnership cannot have enough for game and passes 2NT.

SESSION 1: Deal #7

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

♠ 9 8 5	♠ A 10	♠ 7 6 4 3 2
♥ K Q J 10 5	♥ 9 8 7	♥ 2
♦ 10 2	♦ 8 7 6 5	♦ K Q J 9
♣ 6 5 2	♣ K J 10 3	♣ A 9 8
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ K Q J	
	♥ A 6 4 3	
	♦ A 4 3	
	♣ Q 7 4	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	2NT	Pass	1NT
	Pass			Pass

When you use a 15-17 point 1NT opening bid, not all 8-point responding hands are worth an invitation. Some 8-point hands should pass the 1NT opening bid. Holding an 8-point hand, you will have to use judgment. There are several factors that can help you decide. A completely balanced 4-3-3-3 distribution provides only one chance to win a small card through length, so we like hands with 4-4-3-2 or even 5-3-3-2 distribution better. While we give point count only to aces, kings, queens and jacks, everyone would agree that 10s and 9s can help you win extra tricks. We like a hand containing high spot cards better than hands containing low spot cards. Where your honors are located makes a difference, too. High cards that are together in the same suit are more likely to provide tricks than scattered high cards. Even better are high cards together in your long suits. North's 8 points aren't that bad with high spot cards and two four-card suits. North's hand is worth an invitational 2NT raise.

Now the decision goes to South, who has 16 points. With a hand in the middle of the opening 1NT range, opener gets to use judgment, too, looking at all the factors mentioned above. South has a bad 4-3-3-3 distribution, low spot cards and the ♠K Q J together but in a short suit; the ♠K Q J would offer the chance for more tricks in a four-card suit. There is definite merit in passing 2NT.

Suggested Lead: West leads the ♥K.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts five winners – three spades, one heart and one diamond. Three more tricks can be promoted in the club suit. Do your work early. Lead the ♣Q first – high card from the short hand.

Responder answers a 15-17 point 1NT opening much the same way as responder answers a 16-18 point 1NT opening. But we no longer invite game with all 8-point hands. Responder has to decide whether this is a good 8 points or a bad 8 points.

SESSION 1: Deal #8

Dealer: West

Vul: None

	♠ A K 4	
	♥ A 10 6	
	♦ K 7 5 3	
	♣ Q 10 9	
♠ 7 3		♠ Q J 10 9 5 2
♥ K 9 5 2		♥ Q 7
♦ A 8 6		♦ 4 2
♣ J 7 4 2		♣ A K 5
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ 8 6	
	♥ J 8 4 3	
	♦ Q J 10 9	
	♣ 8 6 3	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1NT	2♠	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

Did any North players end up in 1NT? If you did, I'd expect you to go down one. Who gets the score? East-West score only 50 points since North-South are not vulnerable.

I assume East overcalled at the tables where North did not play in 1NT. Even though the hand has opening strength, East cannot open after North opens, but East can overcall. The guidelines for overcalling after your opponents open 1NT are a little different from the guidelines for overcalling after your opponents open in a suit. An overcall after 1NT is a nuisance bid designed to hurt communications between opener and responder. You all play a 2♣ response as Stayman. After East bids 2♠, South might want to use Stayman (on a different hand), but the 2♣ bid isn't available here. Did you make 2♠? You get a better score for making 2♠ than you do for setting 1NT. West – did you feel comfortable passing the overcall? You do have some strength but no comfortable bid. When partner overcalls, it's usually okay to pass with a hand that has no comfortable bid. And now that you know partner was only making a nuisance bid, you feel even better about passing.



Let's see how far some people might go to be a nuisance. Leave only East's hand face up and suit the remaining three hands, making one pile of hearts from the three hands, etc.

Remove from East the ♥Q and ♣K. Put in the ♣9 6.

East: ♠Q J 10 9 5 2 ♥7 ♦4 2 ♣A 9 6 5

North opens 1NT. Are there any overcallers now? When your opponent's opening bid in a suit forces you to overcall on the two level, you should have opening strength. A 1NT opening is different. When thinking about an overcall, points are not as important as distribution and suit quality. East still has a fairly solid suit. East also has a distributional hand. Many players would still overcall 2♠.

Continued on next page.



Remove the ♠J 10 and ♣9 5. Put in the ♣J, ♠3, ♥K and ♦K.

East: ♠Q 9 5 3 2 ♥K 7 ♦K 4 2 ♣A J 6

How do you feel about overcalling now? Yes, you do have opening count, but this hand isn't going to produce a lot of playing tricks. To make the kings good, you'll have to lead toward them and it may be difficult to get to dummy. Opener has already shown around 16 points and you have 13 HCP. There's not much left to split between partner and responder. Your spade suit is shorter and of poor quality, which risks a penalty double. I'm inclined to pass this hand. I'll take my chances defending where declarer has to lead to my high cards. In general, we *avoid overcalling the opponents' 1NT opening with a balanced hand even if it has opening strength*. I'd rather overcall with a distributional hand with a good suit and fewer points.

As we go through this course, we'll see more opportunities to overcall. We'll see the problems that overcalls can cause our opponents when they try to use the conventions that apply after a 1NT opening.

LESSON 2A – Introduction to Stayman

The deals in this lesson do not appear in the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*. They provide a simple introduction to Stayman and should be used before Session 2 of the Play Course when your students have had little or no previous experience using Stayman. You can move directly to Lesson 2 of the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course* if your students have already had exposure to Stayman and transfers.

There are no E-Z Deal cards to accompany this lesson, so you will have to prepare the deals in boards or create printouts from which the students can make their own hands. Remind students of the dealer and vulnerability on each deal of the lesson.

Since these deals do not appear in the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*, handouts providing analyses are provided in the Appendix. Teachers may copy these handouts to distribute to their students.

Related Deals from CUC and MCUC: CUC – Lesson 1, Deals 1-2.

Reference sections in CUC and MCUC Teacher Manuals:

CUC – Lesson 1 section entitled The Stayman Convention, Using Stayman with a Game-Going Hand and Stayman with an Invitational Hand.

The first deal is meant to introduce Stayman. Let your students bid using their current bidding methods. If they reach 3NT and go down, they will be anxious to learn how they could have gotten to a better game.

The play is easy in these deals. The focus is on using Stayman.

SESSION 2A: Deal #1

Dealer: North

Vul: None

♠ K Q 5	♠ 10 8 7 6	♠ A 4 2
♥ Q 10 9 5	♥ A 7 2	♥ K J 8 6
♦ K J 5 2	♦ 9 8 7	♦ A Q 3
♣ 10 2	♣ A 9 3	♣ Q 8 5
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ J 9 3	
	♥ 4 3	
	♦ 10 6 4	
	♣ K J 7 6 4	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	1NT	Pass
	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

There are two possible contracts. Did any of you reach 3NT? It is reasonable for West to raise East's 1NT opening to 3NT. But look at the two hands. Do they have a major-suit fit? Yes, in hearts. When we have an eight-card fit in a major, we prefer the major-suit game to 3NT. Let's see how East-West can get to 4♥.

It involves the use of a special bidding convention called Stayman. A 2♣ response to a 1NT opening doesn't show clubs at all. It is Stayman and asks opener to show a four-card major if opener has one. West's 2♣ bid is Stayman and East shows four hearts. Now West can choose the best game – 4♥.

Suggested Lead: South has a marvelous lead against 3NT – the ♣6. North wins the ♣A and returns a club, and the defenders win the first five tricks and still have the ♥A coming. Against 4♥, this lead is nowhere near as effective. West can ruff the third club. In fact, South might choose to lead the ♠3 or the ♦4 instead. We don't always lead our longest suit against trump contracts.

Suggested Play: Declarer's losers are one heart and three clubs, but one club loser can be ruffed in dummy. Declarer can even afford to draw trumps first. There will still be a trump left in dummy after trumps are drawn.

What a difference being in the best contract can make. East went from taking only seven tricks in 3NT to taking ten tricks in 4♥!



Leave West's hand face up and suit the remaining cards.

West has: ♠K Q 5 ♥Q 10 9 5 ♦K J 5 2 ♣10 2

Let's review the auction using Stayman. East opens 1NT. What does West bid? 2♣, asking opener to show a four-card major if East has one. Remember that West cannot mention the hearts. Any suit bid by responder after a notrump opening bid shows a five-card or longer suit. On the deal we just played, East bid 2♥ in reply to Stayman. West has a game-going hand. Usually a game-going hand jumps on the first response. When you use Stayman, delay that jump until your second bid. West's rebid is 4♥.

Continued on next page.

What if opener had answered 2♠ instead of 2♥? Opener does not have four hearts. If opener has four each of both majors, we suggest that opener show the majors going up the line (hearts first). Where does West want to play now that there is not a major-suit fit? 3NT. And that is what West bids, jumping with a game-going hand. When you use Stayman to ask for a major and opener shows the wrong major, bid notrump.

Opener might not have any major at all. There is an answer to show that. East opens 1NT and West bids 2♣ as Stayman. Opener bids 2♦ to deny a four-card major. Both your 2♣ Stayman bid and opener's 2♦ answer are artificial bids. You don't need clubs to bid 2♣ and opener doesn't have to have diamonds to answer 2♦. What will you do after hearing 2♦ from partner? You want to be in 3NT, so bid it. Again, you jump because you have a game-going hand.

Are you ready to practice using Stayman?

SESSION 2A: Deal #2

Dealer: East

Vul: N-S

♠ J 4 3	♠ A 7 6	♠ Q 10 8 5 2
♥ A 6	♥ Q J 8 7	♥ 5 4 2
♦ 8 7 5	♦ K J 2	♦ 10 9 6
♣ K J 7 4 2	♣ 9 5 3	♣ Q 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 9
 ♥ K 10 9 3
 ♦ A Q 4 3
 ♣ A 10 6

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

South opens 1NT. North has 11 points and is sure of game. Responder to a notrump opening bid does not introduce a four-card suit, so North uses Stayman to locate a major-suit fit. When South shows four hearts, North jumps to game. The one who knows goes.

Suggested Lead: West might lead the ♣4 or the ♠3.

Suggested Play: Declarer will win the opening lead and draw trumps. Losers are two clubs and one trump.

3NT would not fare as well. West's long suit is clubs. While opener has the ♣A, the defenders can get in again with a heart and take that trick plus four clubs to set 3NT.

SESSION 2A: Deal #3

Dealer: South

Vul: E-W

♠ A Q 2	♠ 9 7 5	♠ K J 6 4
♥ Q J 5	♥ 9 2	♥ A K 6 4
♦ A 6 3	♦ K 8 7 4 2	♦ 9 5
♣ K 8 5 2	♣ A J 9	♣ 7 6 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 8 3
♥ 10 8 7 3
♦ Q J 10
♣ Q 10 4

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				Pass
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
	2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East has enough points for game but would prefer to play in a major suit if there is a fit. Stayman will tell. Opener's 2♦ answer denies possession of a major suit. Now East knows the best game is 3NT.

Suggested Lead: ♦4, fourth best in North's long suit.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts winners in notrump. There are four spades, four hearts and one diamond. Take them and run! Be careful to take the high cards in the short hand (West) first in spades and hearts.

SESSION 2A: Deal #4

Dealer: West

Vul: Both

♠ Q 10 7 5		♠ A 6 3 2		♠ K 9
♥ 6 3		♥ 7 5 4		♥ Q J 10 9
♦ A 9 5 2		♦ K Q J		♦ 10 8 6 3
♣ 10 6 2		♣ A Q 5		♣ 9 8 3
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>			
		♠ J 8 4		
		♥ A K 8 2		
		♦ 7 4		
		♣ K J 7 4		

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
	Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

South uses Stayman to check for a heart fit before bidding game. When North answers in the wrong major, South goes to 3NT.

Did any South players think about bidding the hearts instead of 3NT? There are two reasons why you should not do this. The most important reason is that responder to a notrump opening *never at any point in the auction* introduces a four-card suit. If your four-card suit is to be trump, you have to get opener to name it first.

The second reason is that we have agreed that opener will show hearts first with both majors. North bid 2♠ in reply to Stayman, so the implication is that North does not have four hearts. Some players who use Stayman make the exact opposite agreement and show spades first. Others agree to name their best major. Naming hearts first is suggested in this course.

Suggested Lead: ♥Q, top of a sequence in East's longest and strongest suit.

Suggested Play: Declarer needs nine tricks. Winners are one spade, two hearts and four clubs. Declarer can promote two more diamond tricks right away while there are still high cards everywhere.



Leave North's hand face up and suit the remaining cards.

North has: ♠A 6 3 2 ♥7 5 4 ♦K Q J ♣A Q 5.

Take away ♥7 and add ♥A Q. Take away the ♣A Q and add the ♣7.

North has: ♠A 6 3 2 ♥A Q 5 4 ♦K Q J ♣7 5

Will North still open 1NT? Yes. South bids 2♣, Stayman. What answer will North give? 2♥, going up the line. South rebids 3NT. Does that end the auction? No – South had a reason to use Stayman. What was it? South has a major. But that major isn't hearts. Hmm ... I wonder what it can be? North should bid 4♠. The moral is don't use Stayman unless you have a major because North-South would be in a fine pickle now if South didn't have spades.

SESSION 2A: Deal #5

Dealer: North

Vul: N-S

♠ A 7 3 2	♠ J 10 6 5	♠ 9
♥ J 2	♥ A K 8 5	♥ Q 10 9 4
♦ K 7 5 4	♦ A 8	♦ Q J 10 9 3
♣ 10 6 4	♣ K J 7	♣ 9 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q 8 4
 ♥ 7 6 3
 ♦ 6 2
 ♣ A Q 8 5

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	2♣
	Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT
	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

South knows there is a game, but in spades or notrump? South can use Stayman to ask. North shows four hearts. When opener bids the wrong major, responder goes back to notrump, so South bids 3NT. Partner knows why you used Stayman and can correct to 4♠ with both majors.

North realizes that the only reason for partner to bid Stayman is to find a spade fit and North can safely bid 4♠. Isn't it nice to trust partner?

Only use Stayman when you want to hear about a *four*-card major in the 1NT opener's hand. Please don't use Stayman just because you know it; you must have a reason. As long as partner trusts you to have that reason, partner is able to deduce that you have four spades on this example.

Suggested lead: ♦ Q.

Suggested Play: You can afford three losers. Losers are one spade, two hearts and one diamond. There is an extra club winner in dummy. That will be a perfect place to discard a loser, but declarer must draw trumps first so no one can ruff those good clubs.

Our next hand is tricky to bid. Let's see how you do.

SESSION 2A: Deal #6

Dealer: East

Vul: E-W

♠ K 8 7	♠ A 5	♠ Q J 10
♥ A 9 7 4	♥ 8 3	♥ K Q 10 5
♦ 9 3	♦ A 7 6 4 2	♦ 8 5
♣ J 5 4 2	♣ 9 8 7 6	♣ A K Q 10

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 6 4 3 2
♥ J 6 2
♦ K Q J 10
♣ 3

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT	Pass
	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
	3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

West has 8 points and wants to invite game. There might be a heart fit. Stayman will tell. East shows four hearts. West knows the contract should be in hearts but is not sure if there is enough strength for game. West can invite game by raising to 3♥. East has 17 points and will accept the invitation.

Suggested Lead: South has a strong sequence and will probably lead the ♦K. Some players might lead the ♣3, looking for a ruff.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts losers: one spade and two diamonds. As long as the hearts split, there are no other losers. Declarer should draw trumps before a winner turns into a loser.



Leave West's hand face up and turn the others face down.

West has: ♠K 8 7 ♥A 9 7 4 ♦9 3 ♣J 5 4 2

Put auctions on the board, one at a time.

1NT-2♣. What if opener answers 2♠? Wrong major; West invites game with 2NT.

1NT-2♣. What if opener answers 2♦? Again, West invites game by bidding 2NT.

Stayman is used with both invitational and game-going hands. Responder shows the difference on the rebid. A game-going hand jumps to game. An invitational hand raises the right major and bids 2NT otherwise.

SESSION 2A: Deal #7

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

♠ Q J 8		♠ A 7 6 4		♠ 10 9 3 2
♥ Q 10 5 2		♥ 7 6 3		♥ A J 8
♦ A 7 5		♦ J 6		♦ 9 8 4 2
♣ 8 7 4		♣ K J 5 2		♣ 6 3
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="text-align: center;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> WE </div> <div style="text-align: center;">S</div> </div>			
		♠ K 5		
		♥ K 9 4		
		♦ K Q 10 3		
		♣ A Q 10 9		

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

North uses Stayman to check for a 4-4 spade fit before inviting game. South denies a four-card major, so North bids 2NT to invite game. With a good 17-point hand, South should accept the invitation.

Suggested Lead: ♥2, fourth best in West's longest suit.

Suggested Play: Winners are two spades, four clubs and (with the opening lead) one heart. Declarer needs two more tricks. The only place to get them is in diamonds. Declarer promotes the suit, losing to the ace. Is declarer worried about giving up the lead because of the hearts? He shouldn't be. The ♥2 was led. If that is fourth best, West cannot have a fifth heart. The suit should be breaking 4-3 and the defenders will take only three hearts plus the ♦A.

SESSION 2A: Deal #8

Dealer: West

Vul: None

♠ K 6 3 2	♠ J 9 4	♠ A 5
♥ K Q 4	♥ 10 8 7 2	♥ A J 6 3
♦ A 6 4	♦ Q 10 8 3	♦ 7 5 2
♣ A 5 3	♣ Q 10	♣ 8 7 4 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 10 8 7
 ♥ 9 5
 ♦ K J 9
 ♣ K J 9 6

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
	2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East has 9 points and wants to invite game. Stayman will find a heart fit if it's there. After West shows the wrong major, East bids 2NT to invite 3NT. West has only 16 points and 4-3-3-3 distribution. With 4-3-3-3 distribution, low spot cards and scattered high cards, West will probably not accept the invitation.

Suggested Lead: ♦3, fourth best from North's longest and strongest suit. North might have considered leading a heart, but the bidding showed that East has four hearts.

Suggested Play: Winners are two spades, four hearts, one diamond and one club. There's no hope for another trick, so declarer should take them and run!

Stayman is a very useful convention. It helps us find our major-suit game after a notrump opening bid. Most bridge players use Stayman. You have to be disciplined in the use of any convention. Only use Stayman after 1NT with invitational or better hands. And make sure you really do want to play in a major.

In all of today's deals, we used Stayman after a 1NT opening, but it can also be used after a 2NT opening bid. After a 2NT opening, responder uses 3♣ as Stayman. Opener shows a major or bids 3♦ to deny one. In order to use Stayman after a 2NT opening bid, responder has to have enough to want to bid game. But that's only 5 or 6 points opposite opener's 20 to 21.

LESSON 2B – Introduction to Jacoby Transfers

The deals in this lesson do not appear in the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*. They provide a simple introduction to Jacoby transfers and should be used before Session 2 of the Play course when your students have had no previous experience using transfers. Since there is some discussion of the use of Stayman to find a 5-3 fit when transfers are not used, it is best if your students are familiar with basic Stayman covered in Lesson 2A. You can move directly to Lesson 2 of the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course* if your students have already had exposure to Stayman and transfers.

There are no E-Z Deal cards to accompany this lesson, so you will have to prepare the deals in boards or create printouts from which the students can make their own hands. Remind students of the dealer and vulnerability on each deal of the lesson.

Since these deals do not appear in the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*, handouts providing the analyses are provided in the Appendix. Teachers may copy these handouts to distribute to their students.

Related Deals from CUC and MCUC: CUC – Lesson 2, Deals 1-3.

Reference sections in CUC and MCUC Teacher Manuals:

CUC – Lesson 2, sections entitled: Jacoby Transfers for the Majors, Stopping in Partscore in a Major Suit, Inviting Game in a Major Suit, Bidding Game in a Major Suit, Opener’s Rebid after the Transfer and the Subsequent Auction.

The first deal is meant to introduce transfers. Let your students bid using their current bidding methods. If 4♠ is declared by responder, it will go down because the opening lead traps opener’s ♦K. Going down will make the students anxious to find a way they could have bid to protect that king, so they can make 4♠.

From Deal 2 on, stress counting losers from dummy’s perspective in a major-suit contract. My students had a difficult time changing their viewpoint and many went out of their way to trump in the long-trump hand. Some went down because they were unable to make the best plan. The play of these deals is not intended to be difficult and students should be able to succeed once they learn to count losers from the long-trump hand.

SESSION 2B: Deal #1

Dealer: North

Vul: None

	♠ 10 8 2	
	♥ A 6 2	
	♦ K 6 5	
	♣ A K Q 3	
♠ Q 9 5		♠ 3
♥ 8 7 4 3		♥ K Q 10 9
♦ Q J 10		♦ A 9 3 2
♣ 7 4 2		♣ 10 8 6 5
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ A K J 7 6 4	
	♥ J 5	
	♦ 8 7 4	
	♣ J 9	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	2♥
	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

Did you all reach 4♠? Did you all make 4♠? Making 4♠ might depend on who is declarer.

Suppose South is the declarer in 4♠. How many losers does South count?

There is a possibility of one trump loser, one heart loser and three diamond losers. With a nine-card trump fit, declarer will play the top two spades, hoping the queen will drop. When it doesn't drop, there is a trump loser. If the ♦ A captured North's ♦ K, there are three diamond losers. Given enough time, declarer can discard two diamond losers on clubs, so it's not necessary to rely on the diamond finesse.

West is on opening lead when South is declarer. West has a good top of sequence lead – the ♦ Q. With this lead, the unfortunate (South) declarer will not be able to discard diamond losers later because the defenders will have taken three diamond tricks before declarer gets the lead.

What if North could be declarer instead of South? Is there any killing lead that East could make? Declarer has the ace in three suits and East cannot productively lead diamonds because leading away from the ace or cashing the ace will make North's ♦ K good.

While responder is the captain after a notrump opening bid, it is often better to have the stronger opening hand declare to protect opener's high cards from attack. You could do that if you bid 3NT as your game, but we know that it's usually better to play game in a major when we have a fit. Jacoby transfers let you have it all. The stronger notrump opening hand gets to declare and you can play in the right denomination.

Here's how transfers work. Responder doesn't bid a long major; Responder bids the suit directly below it. How can responder show spades on this deal? By bidding hearts instead of spades.

Without transfers, South jumps directly to 4♠. Responder jumps to show a game-going hand. When you use transfers or Stayman, you delay your jump until your rebid. South responds 2♥, which forces opener to bid 2♠ whether or not opener likes spades. South rebids 4♠, since there is no question about the correct contract. The transfer makes North declarer and 4♠ makes on any lead.



Let's look at some examples to practice using transfers.

Lay out for North (x is a low card smaller than the 10):

♠ x x x ♥ Q 10 x x x x ♦ x x ♣ 10 x

Partner opens 1NT. How will you respond? You should want to rescue partner from 1NT into a safer contract, 2♥. If you were not using transfers, you would simply bid 2♥, which is a drop-dead signoff bid. Yes, you can bid without any points after a 1NT opening bid. The 6-point requirement for responder to bid is after the opening bid of one of a suit. One problem with the drop-dead signoff bid is that many players don't recognize it. Here you bid 2♥, a reasonable place to play, only to hear opener raise hearts or go back to 2NT. You are in trouble.

Players who use transfers will bid 2♦, the suit below the one you really have. Using transfers, opener has no choice but to bid 2♥. A transfer is a command to partner to bid your suit. Partner doesn't have to stop and think or count how many cards are held in your suit; partner just follows your instructions and bids 2♥.

With most hands partner will have a fairly good chance of making 2♥, a better chance than you would have if you ended up as declarer. The opening lead will come up to all the high cards in partner's hand rather than through them.



Remove from North the ♥ Q and three small hearts. Add four small spades.

North: ♠ x x x x x ♥ 10 x ♦ x x ♣ 10 x

Partner opens 1NT. What do you bid if you are using transfers? Sign off. Bid 2♥, the suit below yours. When partner complies with 2♠, you pass.



Remove a low spade and put in a low heart.

North: ♠ x x x x x ♥ 10 x x ♦ x x ♣ 10 x

Nothing has changed; you still transfer and then pass to place the contract in your long suit. That long suit is the only good thing about your hand; you might as well make it trump. When you have a six-card suit across from a notrump opening bid, you know there is a fit.

What if partner had opened 2NT instead of 1NT? Partner is still showing a balanced hand but now has 20-21 points. Where do you want to play? 3♠ should be safer than passing 2NT. We use transfers after 2NT opening bids, too. Bid 3♥ and pass when partner bids 3♠. This is an advantage of playing transfers. Players who do not use transfers cannot bid 3♠ to sign off. With the exception of a transfer, any bid responder makes after a 2NT opening bid is forcing to game. Transfers let you sign off in your long suit when you have a very weak hand facing a 2NT opening bid.

So far, we have seen two advantages of transfers: The opening lead comes up to the strong hand and that often gives you an extra trick. You can sign off in three of your long major after a 2NT opening bid only when you use transfers.



But before you think everything is rosy, take away four low spades and put in four low diamonds.

North: ♠ x x ♥ 10 x x ♦ x x x x x ♣ 10 x

Partner opens 1NT. Where do you want to play? You have a weak hand with a long suit and 2♦ is probably the best contract. But you can't get there using transfers! Why not? Your 2♦ bid forces opener to bid 2♥. If you use transfers, you cannot sign off in 2♦. Players who don't use transfers can bid 2♦ as a drop-dead signoff bid. If you want to get fancy with transfers, there is a way to sign off in 3♦ and hope you can take that many tricks. We'll discuss that later.

Even good conventions can have some disadvantages. If you decide to use Jacoby transfers, you cannot sign off in 2♦. Another downside is that using conventions can lead to bidding misunderstandings. What if you forgot and bid 2♦ with this hand? There's no way to tell partner that you made a mistake. Every bid you make trying to fix things will just dig you deeper and deeper. If you are afraid you or your partners will forget your conventional agreements, transfers are not for you.



North: Remove four low diamonds and the low club.

Add the ♣A and the ♠Q J x x

North: ♠ Q J x x x ♥ 10 x x ♦ x x ♣ A 10

Do you still want to sign off? No. This is an invitational 8-9 point hand. It's easy to invite game using transfers. First, make partner bid spades – bid 2♥. Partner says 2♠. You can invite game with a raise to 3♠. Now it's up to partner to count points. With a maximum 1NT opening bid, South can bid game. With a minimum, South should pass. It doesn't matter how many spades South has. When you transfer and then bid that suit again, you guarantee a six-card suit. South opened 1NT and has to have at least two spades – enough for a fit. When you bid 3♠, you are simply asking, "How many points do you have, partner?"



Make this hand stronger – remove a low spade and put in the ♠K.

North: ♠ K Q J x x ♥ 10 x x ♦ x x ♣ A 10

When partner opens 1NT, do you know where you want to play? You have 10+ points, a game-going hand and you are guaranteed a spade fit. How do you get to 4♠? Transfer first – bid 2♥ to make partner say 2♠ and then bid 4♠.

Some players use a special form of transfers called Texas transfers where the first bid is 4♥ telling partner to bid 4♠, but we can get to 4♠ by using the 2♥ bid first. We're not going to worry about Texas transfers at this time.

Let's try some hands.

SESSION 2B: Deal #2

Dealer: East

Vul: N-S

♠ 7 4	♠ K 9 8 5	♠ J 6 3 2
♥ 9 8 7 5 3 2	♥ 10 6	♥ A Q
♦ A 6 5	♦ J 10 3 2	♦ K Q 8
♣ 5 2	♣ K J 9	♣ A 7 6 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q 10
♥ K J 4
♦ 9 7 4
♣ Q 10 8 4

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT	Pass
	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

West knows that there is no game but wants to improve the contract. There is definitely a heart fit, and West's hand will provide more tricks if hearts are trump. West wants to sign off in 2♥. Using transfers, 2♦ forces opener to bid 2♥. East must follow instructions even with only two hearts. If East-West do not use transfers, West simply bids 2♥, which East must recognize as a signoff bid.

Suggested Lead: South will probably lead the ♣4 against either 1NT or 2♥. If North is on lead against 2♥, the ♠5, a diamond or even a low club might be selected as the opening lead.

Suggested Play: Whoever is declarer, losers should be counted from West's perspective. In a transfer auction, declarer should count losers from dummy where the trumps are longer. Losers are two spades, one club and some trumps. On a 3-2 split, there could be two heart losers. Declarer can afford five losers and should draw trumps early. Going to the dummy and taking the trump finesse doesn't help.

If East is left in 1NT, there are only five top tricks. The heart suit cannot be used, since dummy's ♦A entry has to be spent to drive out the last high heart. This is why we prefer to make a weak responder's long suit the trump suit. When that suit is trump, ruffing provides needed entries to responder's hand.

SESSION 2B: Deal #3

Dealer: South

Vul: E-W

♠ A 9 7 3	♠ Q J 10	♠ 5
♥ K 6 4	♥ A 9 3	♥ Q J 8 7 5 2
♦ A 3	♦ Q 10 8 7 5	♦ 9 4 2
♣ K Q 6 2	♣ 9 4	♣ A 5 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 8 6 4 2
 ♥ 10
 ♦ K J 6
 ♣ J 10 8 7

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				Pass
	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
	2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

East knows there is a fit in hearts and wants to invite game with 9 total points. First, East transfers to hearts by bidding 2♦. East's raise to 3♥ shows a six-card suit and invites opener to go to 4♥. West has a heart fit plus a doubleton, which brings the hand up to 17 points. West accepts the game invitation.

The bidding is more difficult for players who don't use transfers. East has to start with 2♣ as Stayman. When West answers 2♠, East can bid 3♥ to invite game in hearts.

Suggested Lead: North might lead the ♠Q. South would be likely to lead the ♣J.

Suggested Play: Count the losers from East's hand – one heart and two diamonds. Declarers who hope to make an overtrick will play diamonds before drawing trumps in order to ruff a diamond loser in West's hand. All declarers should make game, but top duplicate scores go to declarers who make the overtrick.

A hard-to-find trump opening lead might hold declarer to ten tricks. North-South must play so that North wins the second diamond to clear dummy of hearts.

SESSION 2B: Deal #4

Dealer: West

Vul: Both

♠ Q 10 9	♠ A K 5	♠ 8
♥ Q 8 7 2	♥ A 6 4	♥ K J 9 5 3
♦ 7 6 2	♦ K Q J 3	♦ 10 9 8 4
♣ Q J 10	♣ K 6 5	♣ A 9 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 7 6 4 3 2
♥ 10
♦ A 5
♣ 8 7 3 2

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

Jacoby transfers are used after all balanced notrump opening bids. South has enough points for game and is sure of a spade fit opposite partner's balanced hand. South uses a transfer to make the stronger hand declarer in 4♠.

Players who do not use transfers will immediately respond 4♠ and South will declare.

Suggested Lead: East will lead the ♦10. If West is on lead, West will find the attacking ♣Q.

Suggested Play: Count losers from South's perspective – one spade on the most likely 3-1 split and four clubs. Two discards will be available on diamonds once trumps are drawn, so declarer will lead off the top two trumps, hoping to see the ♠Q drop. Then declarer will discard club losers on diamonds. Trumps don't split, but luckily, West has to follow suit to three diamonds, and declarer is able to discard two club losers. West can ruff the fourth diamond, but the defenders will take only that trump plus two club tricks.



Trade South's ♦A for North's ♦J.

North has: ♠A K 5 ♥A 6 4 ♦A K Q 3 ♣K 6 5

South has ♠J 7 6 4 3 2 ♥10 ♦J 5 ♣8 7 3 2

What opening bid will North choose now? With 23 points, North opens 2♣, planning to rebid 2NT. Transfers can be used on an auction that starts with 2♣ followed by a 2♦ response, provided opener's next bid is in notrump. South can bid 3♥ to make opener bid 3♠. South will go on to 4♠ because there is a fit, and South hopes to make game across from 22-24 points.

Transfers are easy when responder has a six-card major. You know you will play with that major as trump because a fit is guaranteed. Is a fit guaranteed when responder has only a five-card suit? No. A notrump opening hand with a doubleton and five cards opposite two is not the ideal fit. You can still transfer with a five-card suit. But, if you bid again, you should bid notrump rather than your suit. Let's look at some examples.



Suit all the cards and lay out for North:

North: ♠ Q J x x x ♥ 10 x ♦ x x ♣ x x x x

Partner opens 1NT. Do you have a game? Are you sure there is a spade fit? No to both questions. However, I would want to sign off in 2♠ anyway. The only way your hand will be of any use to partner is to make your long suit trump. The worst that will happen is that you end up playing 2♠ in a 5-2 “fit.” How do you get to 2♠ using transfers? Bid 2♥ to make partner bid 2♠ and then you pass, since you are where you want to be.



Take away three small clubs from North. Put in the ♣ A J and the ♥ x.

North: ♠ Q J x x x ♥ 10 x x ♦ x x ♣ A J x

This is an invitational 8-9 point hand. Again partner opens 1NT. You want to invite game and show five spades. Transfer by bidding 2♥. Partner bids 2♠. What next? The correct rebid is 2NT.

A lot of players misuse transfers with a five-card major. Instead of bidding notrump, they bid their five-card suit. We’ve been taught that you should not rebid a five-card suit. When you transfer and then bid the suit you forced partner to bid, in a way you are rebidding your own suit, and you need a six-card suit to do that. Since North has already “bid” spades with the transfer, the five-card suit should not be bid again. North invites game by bidding 2NT. With only two spades, opener can pass with a minimum hand and can bid 3NT with a maximum. With more than two spades, opener can bid 3♠ to sign off with a minimum or 4♠ with a maximum. When responder has a five-card major, you leave the final denomination up to the notrump bidder.

Transfers make bidding invitational hands with a long major easier. Without transfers, the only way to show an invitational hand with a major is to bid Stayman. You would bid 2♣ first. If partner bids spades, you can raise, but it’s far more likely that partner will bid either 2♦ or 2♥. Over either answer, bid 2♠ to show an invitational hand with five spades.



Take away from North the ♠ Q J. Add the ♥ K x.

North: ♠ x x x ♥ K 10 x x x ♦ x x ♣ A J x

What kind of hand is this? Invitational again. Over an opening 1NT bid, you want to show five hearts and then invite game. How do you start? 2♦ to make opener bid 2♥. How do you continue? Bid 2NT because you have only five hearts. This leaves the final decision up to opener; you are finished bidding. If you didn’t play transfers, you would have to bid 2♣ as Stayman. Things can get awkward if partner answers 2♠. You want to show your hearts. 3♥ is not forcing but, if partner does not want to be in game, you risk playing 3♥ in a 5-2 “fit.”

This awkwardness, created when you do not use transfers, is one reason why it is suggested that opener always show hearts first in reply to Stayman with 4-4 in the majors. Examples continued on the next page.



Remove North's ♠ x and ♣ J. Put in the ♣ K x.

North: ♠ x x ♥ K 10 x x x ♦ x x ♣ A K x x

What kind of hand do you have now? Game-going with 11 points. How will you show the game-going hand with five hearts? Bid 2♦ to transfer first. Opener bids 2♥ because you forced that rebid. What next? Bid game – 3NT because you have only five hearts. Opener should pass with only two hearts but should bid 4♥ with three or more hearts. It's important to remember that a game-going hand must jump after making a transfer bid. If you did not use transfers, your first bid here would be a game-forcing jump to 3♥. Using either transfers or Stayman, a game-going responder delays the jump until the next rebid.

If you listen to an auction having a transfer bid, you would be very surprised to see responder's hand. You hear a heart bid and the hand shows up with spades, or you hear diamonds bid and the hand shows up with hearts. When you use a convention that makes your bidding sound like you have something very different from what you actually do have, it's polite to let your opponents know something strange is happening. The way you do that playing transfers is to have the notrump opener say "transfer" as soon as the bid is made.

Ask a table to demonstrate an auction where the opening bid is 1NT and responder shows spades. Discuss who says transfer and when it is said. Instruct the students to practice announcing transfers on the rest of the lesson hands.

Let's play some more hands.

SESSION 2B: Deal #5

Dealer: North

Vul: N-S

♠ A J 7 4 3	♠ Q 10 8 6	♠ K 2
♥ A 5	♥ 6 3 2	♥ J 9 8 4
♦ K 8 6 4	♦ 9 2	♦ A Q 10
♣ 10 3	♣ A 7 5 2	♣ K Q J 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 5
♥ K Q 10 7
♦ J 7 5 3
♣ 9 8 6

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	1NT	Pass
	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

West wants to be in game once East opens 1NT. The question is which game will be best – 4♠ or 3NT? West can let East choose. First West transfers to spades to show a five-card suit. Next, West bids 3NT to show values for game. This sequence tells East to bid 4♠ with three or more cards in support and to pass with only two spades. East has only two spades and chooses 3NT.

If you weren't using transfers, West would immediately jump to 3♠ and East would choose 3NT as the best game.

Suggested Lead: South will lead the ♥K, top of two touching honors with three cards that are nearly in sequence. Declarer must win the first trick with the ♥A. This guarantees a second heart stopper no matter who leads hearts next.

Suggested Play: Count winners in notrump – one heart, three diamonds and two spades. Three club winners can be promoted (use the ten wisely). On a diamond lead, declarer can make an overtrick by winning cheaply with the ♦10.

SESSION 2B: Deal #6

Dealer: East

Vul: E-W

♠ K 7 2	♠ 8 5	♠ J 10 9 3
♥ A 9 4	♥ Q J 8 7 2	♥ K 10
♦ 8 4	♦ K 10 2	♦ 9 7 6 3
♣ J 10 9 5 3	♣ A 7 4	♣ Q 6 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q 6 4
♥ 6 5 3
♦ A Q J 5
♣ K 8

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

North shows five hearts with the 2♦ transfer bid. North rebids 3NT to show enough strength for game and exactly five hearts. South must decide whether the best game is 3NT or 4♥. We usually choose a major when there is an eight-card or longer fit. The doubleton club makes the major-suit contract attractive despite the weak trumps.

Without transfers, North's first response is 3♥, which South will raise to four.

Suggested Lead: West might lead the ♣J, top of a sequence. If East is on lead, East will choose the ♠J.

Suggested Play: Count the losers in North's hand – one possible spade, one club and two or three hearts. The diamond suit might provide a spade discard. South's doubleton club avoids a loser in that suit if you ruff a club before playing hearts. When North does draw trumps, North should lead toward the Q-J twice. If East does not lead spades early, declarer will make an overtrick when discarding the spade loser on diamonds.

Note that West would lead clubs in 3NT, and since declarer must set up hearts to take nine tricks, the defenders get the lead often enough to set up the club suit and defeat 3NT.

SESSION 2B: Deal #7

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

♠ A 6	♠ Q 3	♠ J 8 7 5 4
♥ Q J 3	♥ A 9 8 4 2	♥ 7 6 5
♦ Q J 6 2	♦ 10 8 4	♦ A 5 3
♣ A Q 9 4	♣ J 8 6	♣ K 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 10 9 2
♥ K 10
♦ K 9 7
♣ 10 7 5 3

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
	2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East wants to invite game while showing five spades. East transfers first and then bids an invitational 2NT. West has an awful 16-point hand. Opener has to use judgment with 16 points and should accept the invitation to game only with a good 16 count. This hand has too many queens and jacks to be good, and it has only two spades. Pass 2NT.

This deal is easier to bid with transfers than without. With an invitational hand, responder cannot show spades immediately and has to start with Stayman. Opener answers 2♦ to deny a major and responder invites with 2♠. Opener has to decide whether to pass 2♠ or to sign off in 2NT. It's hard for opener to know what to do without knowing how many spades East has. All opener knows is that partner holds at least five spades.

Suggested Lead: North will lead the ♥4 – fourth best from the long suit.

Suggested Play: Count winners in notrump – three clubs, one spade, one diamond and one heart as the suit lies. Two more tricks are needed. There are two possible ways to get these tricks. Declarer could work on spades, hoping for a 3-3 split. But the most likely split is 4-2. Or declarer could try for the two extra tricks in diamonds. The best way to play diamonds is to lead up to the queen-jack twice. Declarer gets the two needed tricks when South has the ♦K, no matter how the suit splits. Declarer also hopes to get the two needed diamond tricks when North has the ♦K and diamonds split 3-3. The 50% finesse coupled with the chance of a 3-3 split when the finesse fails gives declarer a 68% chance of making 2NT.

If East ends up playing in 2♠ without transfers, the contract may go down. Losers are two hearts, three spades and one diamond.

SESSION 2B: Deal #8

Dealer: West

Vul: None

	♠ A K J	
	♥ K J 3	
	♦ A K Q 3	
	♣ K 6 4	
♠ 9 5 4 3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10 8 6 2
♥ 7 6 4		♥ A 5
♦ J 9 2		♦ 10 8
♣ J 10 9		♣ A Q 8 5 2
	♠ Q 7	
	♥ Q 10 9 8 2	
	♦ 7 6 5 4	
	♣ 7 3	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦
	Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

North's 2NT rebid shows a balanced 22-24 point hand. South wants to be in game. If there is a heart fit, South prefers 4♥ to 3NT. South uses a transfer to make the strong hand declarer in either contract. Then South rebids 3NT to give North the final choice. Since North knows there is a heart fit (the transfer guarantees a five-card suit), North should choose 4♥.

Suggested Lead: East will probably choose a spade or a diamond. A club lead right into the strong hand would be foolish. If West is on lead, the ♣J will be led.

Suggested Play: 4♥ will make no matter which hand declares. With East on lead, declarer can avoid a second club loser. One of South's clubs can be discarded on North's extra spade to make an overtrick.

If North-South reach 3NT, East's opening lead is another story. The club lead isn't so risky now. Look at the reward for letting declarer have the ♣K – when East gains the lead with the ♥A, there are four club tricks to take.

We use transfers to prevent a dangerous opening lead through the strong hand. When that hand is very strong, as with a 2NT opening or with a strong 2♣ opening followed by 2NT, transfers are even more valuable than they are over 1NT opening bids.

SESSION 2B: Deal #9

Dealer: North

Vul: E-W

♠ A Q 9 4 2		♠ 10 8		♠ K 6 5
♥ 10 6 2		♥ 9 8 7 4		♥ K Q 3
♦ Q 10 3		♦ 9 7 4		♦ A J 5 2
♣ 6 2		♣ K 8 5 3		♣ A 9 4
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>			
		♠ J 7 3		
		♥ A J 5		
		♦ K 8 6		
		♣ Q J 10 7		

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	1NT	Pass
	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
	2NT	Pass	4♠	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

West has an invitational-to-game hand with a five-card spade suit. Using transfers, West first transfers to make East bid spades. With only five spades, West chooses an invitational bid of 2NT. East has 17 good points and should go on to game. With a fit in spades, East chooses 4♠.

Without transfers, West will bid 2♣ as Stayman. Opener answers 2♦ and West rebids 2♠ to show a game invitation with five spades. Opener accepts and chooses 4♠ as the best game.

Suggested Lead: South will lead the ♣Q. North might lead the ♣3, but a heart lead is also possible.

Suggested Play: Count losers from West's hand, where the trumps are longer. Losers are two hearts, one diamond and one club. One loser must be avoided. Draw trumps and then set up diamonds to discard a loser (club or heart depending on the lead).

If West ends up as declarer in 4♠ and if a heart is led, declarer must play high from dummy. Declarer's plan is to discard either a club or a heart on the fourth diamond. If South wins the ♥A at trick one, the hearts can't successfully be returned, as the cards lie. South might hold up, but that's okay since North will not be allowed the lead until after diamonds have been set up. No lead from either defender can defeat 4♠.

LESSON 2 – Using Jacoby Transfers

The intent of this lesson is to review the use of basic transfers and to bring up some interesting situations that can arise when using transfers. If this is your students' first exposure to Stayman and transfers, it is suggested that you precede this lesson with Lessons 2A and 2B, which are not part of *the Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course*.

The deals for this lesson come from Session 2 of the *Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course*. Play and discuss them as outlined in this lesson plan.

Have your students make up the deals using the *Modern Notrump Bidding "Play" Course* E-Z Deal cards.

Remind students of dealer and vulnerability on each deal.

Related Deals from CUC and MCUC: CUC – Lesson 2, Deals 1-4

Reference sections in CUC and MCUC Teacher Manuals: CUC – Lesson 2

This lesson is designed to provide practice in using transfers and to show some interesting situations where transfers apply. It is assumed that the students already have some knowledge of how transfers work. It is best to use Lesson 2A first if your students have had no previous exposure to transfers.

Before we play, let's review Jacoby transfers. Transfers are used after a 1NT opening bid. Transfers can also be used in any auction where opener's first bid describes a strong balanced hand – after 2NT or a strong 3NT opening, for example. Transfers are designed to allow the notrump bidder – usually the partner with the stronger hand – to declare. When the opening lead comes up to strength instead of through it, you might gain a trick in the play.

Responder to the notrump opening bid needs a long major – at least five-card length – in order to use a transfer. Responder doesn't bid the long suit but the suit directly below it. In the auction:

W	N	E	S
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass

East is showing five or more spades. West is now expected to accept the transfer and say 2♠ no matter how many spades are held. What might East do next? It depends on the strength of East's hand. When responding to 1NT, the strength categories are:

Partscore with 0-7 (or a bad 8) points

Invite game with a good 8 or 9 points

Game with 10 or more points (but consider slam with a lot more)

With a partscore hand, East will pass the transfer bid. With an invitational hand, East will invite game. Be careful how you invite. Since the transfer bid promised a five-card suit, East will invite with 2NT unless the hand has more than five spades. With a game-going hand, East bids game. East should not bid 4♠ without a six-card suit. Use 3NT with only five spades.

Let's practice. Some of our hands will point up some problems you might encounter when using transfers. You and partner should discuss the solutions to these problems.

SESSION 2: Deal #1

Dealer: North

Vul: None

♠ 8 7 4	♠ Q J 10	♠ K 6 5
♥ A K 10 9 6 4	♥ Q J 5	♥ 8 7 2
♦ K 9	♦ 7 4 2	♦ A Q J 10
♣ 5 2	♣ 8 7 4 3	♣ A J 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 9 3 2
♥ 3
♦ 8 6 5 3
♣ K Q 10 9

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	1NT	Pass
	2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
	4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

West is the captain after partner's 1NT opening bid. West knows there is a fit in hearts and, with a total of 12 points, wants to be in game. If East-West do not use transfers, West places the contract in 4♥ at the first opportunity. Using a Jacoby transfer, West bids the suit below the real suit – 2♦ to command opener to bid hearts. Then West rebids 4♥.

If you have not used lesson 2A, discuss the need for East to announce the transfer. Even if you have discussed this before, it's a good idea to remind the class of this.

Suggested Lead: South will lead the ♣K (but North would lead the deadly ♠Q).

Suggested Play: In a trump contract, declarer plans the play by counting losers. Normally declarer's hand is the master hand, and we count the losers in declarer's hand. Normally, declarer's hand is not shorter in trumps than dummy. We count the losers from the long-trump hand. When dummy has a longer trump suit than declarer, dummy's hand should be considered the master hand. In a transfer auction, dummy should be considered the master hand. The plan should be made from West's perspective even when East becomes the declarer. West's losers are one club, possibly one heart and three spades, unless the ♠K wins a trick. Even though there could be five losers, given time, declarer sees a solution to the problem. Two discards will be available on diamonds. But declarer must take those discards before North is allowed to gain the lead. North is a dangerous opponent who can lead through the ♠K. Declarer isn't sure what the spade situation is, but should play for the worst scenario where South has the ♠A and North can lead a high spade to trap the king. So declarer wants to play "keep away" from North until at least one spade loser has been discarded. How could North gain the lead? Possibly with a trump. Declarer should play the top two trumps and then try to discard on the diamonds, hoping that North doesn't get the lead too soon. North can ruff the fourth diamond, but two losers have already been discarded from West's hand and the defenders can win only three tricks. Some declarers might make an overtrick. South cannot afford to lead a second club at trick two. That would make declarer's ♣J good and would provide a third spade discard, costing the defenders their spade trick. This hand shows one advantage of using Jacoby transfers. Without transfers, West will declare and the opening lead will be the ♠Q through East's ♠K. Using transfers, no suit can be attacked on opening lead. This allows declarer the time to discard losers.

SESSION 2: Deal #2

Dealer: East

Vul: N-S

	♠ 8 3	
	♥ J 10 9 6 5 2	
	♦ A 5	
	♣ Q 6 2	
♠ J 10 9		♠ Q 7 5 2
♥ A 4		♥ K 8
♦ Q 10 6		♦ 9 7 4 3 2
♣ K 10 8 5 3		♣ J 9
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ A K 6 4	
	♥ Q 7 3	
	♦ K J 8	
	♣ A 7 4	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

North has 9 points and wants to invite game. If there is a game, it is in hearts. North knows from the opening bid that South has at least two hearts. North must first transfer to hearts by bidding 2♦. After South obeys the transfer, North bids 3♥. This invites game and shows a six-card heart suit. South has 17 points, the top of a 1NT bid, and South bids 4♥.

Suggested Lead: Top of a sequence leads seldom give away tricks. The ♠J is a reasonable choice on this auction. If West leads a club, declarer might put up the queen from dummy to win the first trick.

Suggested Play: Consider the losers from North's point of view where the trumps are longest. Losers are two hearts and two clubs. One loser must be avoided.

There are two finesses that declarer might try. In clubs, declarer can lead *toward* the ♣Q. Leading the queen should never work. If East held the ♣K, East would cover an honor with an honor to force declarer to play the ♣A. On the actual deal, West has the ♣K and will capture the queen. Declarer's best play is to lead toward the ♣Q before playing diamonds or the ♣A. Even though declarer didn't count a diamond loser, declarer might consider finessing the ♦J. A winning finesse would provide a place to discard a club loser. It is possible for declarer to keep both options open. The club losers are slow losers as long as declarer still has the ♣A. Declarer must lead toward the ♣Q before playing the ♣A or trying the diamond finesse. If the club finesse wins, declarer has the contract and doesn't have to worry about finessing in diamonds. However, if West did not jump up with the ♣K, the diamond finesse does offer an opportunity for an overtrick. Unfortunately, it doesn't work.

Do not mix the cards. Discussion continues on the next page.



Let's see what happens if East and West trade hands. Now the club finesse fails and the diamond finesse wins. As long as declarer leads toward the ♣Q before playing the ♣A, there is time to take the diamond finesse to discard a club loser. If declarer takes the ♣A before leading to the ♣Q, the defenders have a chance to cash both club tricks immediately. Of course, there will be times when both finesses fail and declarer will be set. But 4♥ is still the best contract. Switch the East-West hands back to where they started.

If North-South reach 3NT instead of 4♥, West will lead the ♣5. Declarer has two club stoppers (provided the ♣Q is played on the first trick or the ♣A is used to capture East's ♣J). Perseverance by the defense pays off as long as West lets East win the first heart trick. East returns partner's club lead and the clubs run when West wins the ♥A. The defenders set 3NT with three clubs and two hearts.



Trade South's ♥Q for East's ♦3. Now South has only 15 points and does not want to accept the game invitation. South should pass 3♥. Don't fall into the trap of bidding 3NT because you have only two hearts. Partner's bidding showed a six-card suit, so you have a fit. The question partner asked was if you had a game and the answer is no.

SESSION 2: Deal #3

Dealer: South

Vul: E-W

♠ A 10 8	♠ K Q 7	♠ 9
♥ K 10 8 2	♥ A Q 5	♥ J 9 3
♦ J 9 5	♦ K Q 6 3	♦ A 10 8 4
♣ 9 6 3	♣ A 4 2	♣ K Q J 10 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 6 5 4 3 2
♥ 7 6 4
♦ 7 2
♣ 8 5

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				Pass
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
	Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass!
	Pass			

North's 2NT opening bid shows a balanced 20-21 point hand. After a notrump opening, responder is in charge. South knows that there has to be a fit in spades. South also knows the partnership cannot have enough strength for game. The only way South's hand will provide any tricks is to make spades trump. South can accomplish this by transferring – a 3♥ bid forces North to bid 3♠. And South plans on passing 3♠.

Players who do not use Jacoby transfers cannot stop in 3♠. Without transfers, a 3♠ bid from South is a forcing bid. This hand illustrates a second benefit of using Jacoby transfers – responder can sign off in a major-suit partscore after a 2NT opening bid.

Suggested Lead: ♣K.

Suggested Play: Look at losers from South's perspective (the long-trump hand). Losers are one club, one diamond, two hearts and probably only one spade. Finesses are available in both diamonds and hearts. With enough time, both finesses can be taken. Declarer can ruff a club to lead toward the diamonds. Later on, diamonds can be ruffed to take the heart finesse. Only the heart finesse works and 3♠ makes exactly three.

If South passes 2NT, East sets up clubs to win four club tricks plus the ♠A and ♦A to defeat 2NT. If West holds up on the ♠A, dummy's long suit will be useless and declarer is likely to go down two. Isn't it nice that you are using transfers?

Transfers are easy when responder has a six-card suit; you know you will play with that suit as trump because a fit is guaranteed. Is a fit guaranteed when responder has only a five-card suit? No; a notrump opening hand can have a doubleton, and five cards opposite two is not the ideal fit. You can still transfer with a five-card suit. But, if you bid again, you should bid notrump rather than your suit. You should remember that on our next deal – it has an interesting twist to the use of transfers. Let's see if anyone finds it.

SESSION 2: Deal #4

Dealer: West

Vul: Both

♠ K 2	♠ 9 5	♠ Q J 7 6 3
♥ 8 6 5	♥ 10 7	♥ A 3 2
♦ A K J 2	♦ Q 10 7 6 3	♦ 9 4
♣ A Q 9 5	♣ 10 8 4 3	♣ K J 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 10 8 4
♥ K Q J 9 4
♦ 8 5
♣ 7 2

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♥	Dbl
	Pass	Pass	3NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

Don't insist that the bidding go as shown above. Wait to discuss the auction after the class plays the deal and see if anyone found the lead-directional double.

East has a game-going hand with five spades. The way to show this hand is to transfer and then jump to 3NT. Remember, you don't bid your suit again after a transfer with only five of them. Since opener has only two spades, the final contract will be 3NT.

Did any South players take any action other than pass? Were those South players who passed wishing and hoping for a heart lead? A transfer bid can occasionally backfire. South calls right after East transfers and can do better than wish and hope. When you double an opponent's artificial bid, your double is generally lead-directing, asking partner to lead the suit just mentioned. In this case a double of East's 2♥ transfer bid asks for a heart lead. It's silly for a double of 2♥ to be penalty, since East-West don't intend to play in hearts. While the double could be a takeout double showing everything but spades (the real suit shown), it's not necessary to enter the auction at this point. South will have a chance to make a takeout double next time if the bidding does happen to die at 2♠.

Suggested Lead: Without the lead-directional double, North will probably lead the ♦ 6 against 3NT. With the lead-directional double, North should be happy to cooperate and will lead the ♥ 10.

Suggested Play: On a heart lead, 3NT cannot make. In fact, no game makes. On any other lead, declarer has time to set up two spade tricks to go with his seven top tricks. Players who do not use transfers have a better chance of making game on this hand. Without transfers, East jumps to 3♠ to show a five-card suit and West bids 3NT. Unless North finds a heart lead, 3NT makes.

Use the opponents' bidding against them. When they use a convention like Jacoby transfers or Stayman, you can double to suggest that partner lead what the opponent bid artificially. When you make a lead-directional double, you must have both length and strength in the suit your opponents bid artificially.

We've learned that a transfer forces opener to bid responder's suit. With the lead-directional double, does West have to accept the transfer and bid 2♠? No. Most players agree to accept the transfer here with at least three-card support for responder's spades and to pass with only two.

SESSION 2: Deal #5

Dealer: North

Vul: N-S

♠ K 7 3	♠ A 8 4 2	♠ 6 5
♥ J 8 7 6 4	♥ 2	♥ A Q 10 5
♦ Q 4	♦ J 10 7 2	♦ A K 6 3
♣ 5 4 2	♣ 10 9 8 7	♣ A K J

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q J 10 9
♥ K 9 3
♦ 9 8 5
♣ Q 6 3

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	2NT	Pass
	3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
	3NT	Pass	4♥	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

Even with a small doubleton spade, 2NT is the best description of East's hand. The 2NT opening bid makes West the captain. West knows there is game and also wants to explore for a heart fit. West bids 3♦ as a transfer to show five or more hearts. Then West bids 3NT to give opener a choice of games. East chooses 4♥.

Suggested Lead: ♠Q.

Suggested Play: Declarer can afford to lose three tricks. Count losers from West's hand – the long-trump hand. Declarer's losers are three spades, one club and one heart, but one spade loser can be ruffed in declarer's hand and another loser can be discarded on East's third diamond winner. With an entry to West's hand in the ♦Q, declarer should finesse hearts. Lead the ♥J so the finesse can be repeated if it works. Unfortunately, the finesse doesn't work and declarer should be held to ten tricks.

We've stated that the notrump bidder must accept partner's transfer bid without thinking. On the previous deal, we saw one exception to that guideline. If the opponents intervene after partner's transfer bid, opener may pass with only a doubleton in support.

This deal offers another exception. East's hand is a maximum 2NT opener with four-card heart support. In fact, East's hand goes up to 22 points in support of hearts. After West makes the 3♦ transfer, it would not be unreasonable for East to jump to 4♥. A jump accepting partner's transfer is known as *super accepting*. 99% of the time you do exactly as you were told. You obey the transfer and bid responder's suit at the cheapest level. To super accept, opener must have four-card support and a useful doubleton that makes the hand revalue to even more than the range already described.



Leave the East-West hands face up and suit the North-South hands, making one pile for each suit from North-South's cards.

Continued on next page.



Trade West's ♠K for East's ♥10.

West has ♠7 3 ♥J 10 8 7 6 4 ♦Q 4 ♣5 4 2 opposite

East's ♠K 6 5 ♥A Q 5 ♦A K 6 3 ♣A K J

What opening bid will East choose now? With 24 points, East opens with a strong forcing 2♣ bid and rebids 2NT. Transfers may be used on an auction that starts with 2♣ followed by a 2♦ response, provided opener's next bid is in notrump. Over East's 2NT bid, West can bid 3♦ to make opener bid 3♥. (And that is all opener should bid. East's hand does not upgrade beyond a notrump bid in support of hearts.) West has six hearts now and enough to go on to 4♥. You don't need much to bid game across from a strong 2♣ opening bid.



Replace West's ♥J with the ♥K from the suited pile.

Take away East's ♣A K J and ♦K. Put in ♠A, ♥9 and ♣9 8.

West has ♠7 3 ♥K 10 8 7 6 4 ♦Q 4 ♣5 4 2 opposite

East's ♠A K 6 5 ♥A Q 9 5 ♦A 6 3 ♣9 8

East has 17 points and opens 1NT. What is West's plan for this hand? With only 7 total points, West doesn't think there is any chance for game. There is definitely a heart fit and West plans on signing off in 2♥. West bids 2♦ to transfer and East's hand upgrades to 18 points with good four-card support and a useful doubleton. East can super accept the transfer by jumping to 3♥. West was very close to inviting game and carries on to 4♥, which should make easily by ruffing one club loser in East.

Bridge players often are confused about when a convention applies. So far, most of our transfers have been after a notrump opening bid. We just discussed one exception – when opener starts with a strong 2♣ bid and then rebids in notrump. Even though using transfers and Stayman in a 2♣ auction is fairly standard, some players are unaware of that, so it is wise to discuss it with your partner before trying it.

Another thing to discuss with your partner is whether you use transfers after your side overcalls 1NT. As long as the next player passes, your side has all the normal bids available and there is no reason not to use transfers. You might want to have that discussion right now.

If time is running short and you have to omit a deal, leave out Deal 6. Take time for a brief discussion of using your normal conventions over a 1NT overcall and then point out that transfers are off if there is an overcall after your 1NT opening. Then go on to Deal 7.

SESSION 2: Deal #6

Dealer: East

Vul: E-W

♠ 8 3 2	♠ K J 9 6 4	♠ 7 5
♥ J 9 8 7	♥ 10 6 3	♥ K Q 4 2
♦ J 10 8 3	♦ 9 2	♦ K Q 6
♣ 5 3	♣ A 7 2	♣ Q J 10 9

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q 10
♥ A 5
♦ A 7 5 4
♣ K 8 6 4

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1 ♣	1NT
	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠
	Pass	2NT	Pass	4 ♠
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

South's 1NT overcall shows a good 15 to 18 points, balanced distribution and guarantees a club stopper. Even though we no longer include 18 points in our opening range for 1NT, it is suggested that you include 18 in the range for a 1NT overcall. Also, some 15-point hands might not be good enough to overcall 1NT. When you overcall 1NT, the opponents have already communicated and you are more susceptible to being doubled for penalty by opener's partner.

Any time your partnership agrees to use a convention, you must decide whether the convention applies in a competitive auction. So far, we have used transfers only when our side opened in notrump and the next player passed. Here, the opponents bid and South overcalled 1NT. As long as the next player passes, it is suggested that your partnership respond to a 1NT overcall in exactly the same way as you respond to a 1NT opening bid. If you use transfers over a 1NT opening, use transfers over a 1NT overcall.

North has an invitational hand with a five-card spade suit. North transfers to spades and invites game by rebidding 2NT. South has a maximum with 17 HCP and a doubleton and accepts the invitation, choosing 4♠ with support.

Suggested Lead: West might choose to lead partner's suit – the ♣5, but other leads are reasonable. Every hand doesn't have a crystal-clear lead.

Suggested Play: This is an easy deal to play, but some declarers may get sidetracked because dummy is the master hand. Dummy's losers are two hearts, one diamond and one club. If North were the declarer, North would notice the doubleton heart in dummy as an indication to ruff a loser. It's harder for South to realize that a heart must be ruffed in hand to make the contract because we are so accustomed to ruffing in dummy to get extra tricks. We don't usually go out of our way to ruff in declarer's hand. The fact is that extra tricks are generated by ruffing in the *shorter* trump hand. Here that is the South hand, declarer or not. 4♠ makes as long as declarer ruffs a heart before drawing trumps. Declarer must give up a heart early to prepare for the ruff. Notice that declarer has nine tricks off the top in 3NT. Would it be better to play there? Not for a duplicate player who wants the highest score possible. 4♠ scores an extra 20 points.

We can use our normal system to respond to partner's 1NT overcall. Transfers are on and so is Stayman. But this is not an automatic assumption. Make sure you and partner have agreed in advance about what to do in this situation.

You should also discuss your methods when the opponent doubles partner's 1NT opening bid or overcall. The double hasn't taken away any of your two-level bids, so some players agree that their conventions still apply. However, if the double is a *penalty* double, there is some merit to treating all two-level bids as runouts. In standard bidding, a double of a 1NT opening or overcall is for penalty. Many players use conventions where this double is not for penalty. A double is used instead to show a hand having an unspecified suit. These conventional doubles will be Alerted, so you will know when they happen.

It is recommended that you use your usual responses after a conventional double of partner's 1NT opening bid (that is after a double not intended for penalty). You might use your normal system after a penalty double, or you might let all bids be natural which allows you to run to 2♣ and 2♦ as well as to 2♥ and 2♠.

The situation is different when an opponent overcalls partner's 1NT opening bid. An overcall takes away at least one bid we would usually use as a transfer, and transfers should be off after an overcall. Revert back to standard bidding as you knew it before you learned transfers.

West, I'm rooting for you to overcall on our next hand.

SESSION 2: Deal #7

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

♠ 10 9 4	♠ A 6 2	♠ J 8 7 5
♥ A 5	♥ K J 9 4 2	♥ 10 8 7
♦ Q J 10 9 8 3	♦ 6	♦ 4 2
♣ A 8	♣ K J 4 3	♣ 9 7 6 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q 3
♥ Q 6 3
♦ A K 7 5
♣ Q 10 5

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	2♦	3♥	Pass	1NT
	Pass	Pass	Pass	4♥

Although West is missing the top two diamonds, this six-card suit is strong enough to overcall South's 1NT opening. West hopes to win the contract and confuse the opponents' auction. Will North-South agree that transfers do not apply when an opponent overcalls a 1NT opening?

North has a game-going hand with five hearts. North is not sure if the best game is 4♥ or 3NT. Transfers are off when the opponents overcall, so North resorts back to standard bidding where a jump response in a major is game-forcing and shows a five-card suit. South has a heart fit and chooses the major-suit game over 3NT.

Suggested Lead: East will lead the ♦4, top of a doubleton in partner's suit.

Suggested Play: Declarer should draw trumps and promote clubs, losing only two aces. Declarer must avoid the temptation of cashing the second diamond before trumps are drawn. West can win the ♥A and lead a third diamond to promote a trump trick for East.

If North-South reach 3NT instead, declarer will only have time to promote the hearts to take nine tricks. West's diamonds will be ready to run at that point so declarer cannot lose the lead to set up any club tricks. As usual, playing in your major-suit fit yields a better result than playing in notrump. The extra 20 points might not matter to a social bridge player, but they make a big difference to a duplicate player.



Suit all hands but North's.

North has: ♠ A 6 2 ♥ K J 9 4 2 ♦ 6 ♣ K J 4 3

West's overcall didn't cause much of a problem for North-South as long as they understood their conventional agreements. What if North doesn't have a game-forcing hand?

Continued on next page.



Trade North's ♠A for the ♦4.

Now North has: ♠6 2 ♥K J 9 4 2 ♦6 4 ♣K J 4 3

South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♦. North has an invitational 9-point hand. How will North invite game? Your partnership could agree that a 2♥ bid here would be invitational with a five-card suit, but most pairs would make that bid with a weaker hand to sign off. The overcall has taken away responder's ability to show the three different hand types – partscore, invitational and game-going. Something has to give. And that is why players love to interfere over notrump opening bids when they hold a distributional hand.

As much as we like to foul up our opponents, it is not wise to interfere with a balanced hand. You might succeed in disrupting the opponents, but you are more likely to get yourself in trouble. North is so close to a game-going hand here that North might still make the forcing 3♥ bid but will not be comfortable doing so.



Let's make North a little weaker.

Take away the ♣K J and put in the ♣Q 10.

North has: ♠6 2 ♥K J 9 4 2 ♦6 4 ♣Q 10 4 3

Now there is no question about having a game. The question is do you want to compete after partner opens 1NT and the next player bids 2♦? If you and your partner agree that 2♥ here is merely competitive, you can bid. If partner would take you for an invitational hand, you cannot bid. What is the advantage of being able to bid 2♥ with this hand? You could easily make it. Your side has about half the deck. Why roll over and play dead and let West have the bid for 2♦? If you don't take action, partner will probably sell out since partner has already described their hand.

When the opponents overcall after your side opens 1NT, a simple agreement to have is that your bids reflect the old-fashioned standard meaning where two-level bids are signoff and three-level bids are game-forcing. Responder will have to decide the best bid with an invitational hand. It might be responder's suit at the two or three level or it might be 2NT. With some strength in overcaller's suit, responder should consider doubling the overcall for penalty.

Notice that a spade overcall makes things even more difficult for you. You have no room to sign off. Even though it's not a jump, 3♥ should be game-forcing.

Experienced players use a convention called lebensohl to help them cope with overcalls after they open 1NT, but we have enough complications right now!

SESSION 2: Deal #8

Dealer: West

Vul: None

♠ A J 9	♠ 7 5 2	♠ K Q 10 8 3
♥ K 6	♥ 3 2	♥ A 10 8 5 4
♦ A 7 5 3	♦ J 10 9 8 6	♦ 4
♣ K J 6 3	♣ A Q 9	♣ 7 2

	♠ 6 4	
	♥ Q J 9 7	
	♦ K Q 2	
	♣ 10 8 5 4	

	N	
W		E
	S	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
	2♠	Pass	3♥	Pass
	3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East has 9 HCP plus 2 length points for a total of 11 points and a game-going hand opposite partner's 1NT opening bid. East expects there to be a fit in a major suit since a 1NT opener should not have two doubletons. East would like to show both majors. By partnership agreement, this can be done. The suggested auction with a game-going hand that is 5-5 in the majors is for responder to transfer into spades and then rebid 3♥. After a transfer, a three-level bid in a new suit is forcing to game. And, when the second suit is a major, responder promises a five-card suit. East gives opener a choice of either major suit. West has a spade fit and can bid 3♠ as above or 4♠.

Some would say that 3♠ shows a maximum and 4♠ shows a minimum. Since East-West are in a game-forcing auction, going slower shows a better hand and allows room for responder to cuebid when also holding a good hand.

Suggested Lead: North will probably lead the ♦J.

Suggested Play: It is very important for declarer to remember that East is the master hand. Declarer must count losers from East's perspective – two clubs and up to three hearts. Two losers must be avoided. There is a good chance that no one but East will be able to follow to the fifth heart. It would be optimistic to expect East's fourth heart to be good, too. The most likely split of six missing cards is 4-2. On a normal split, there are two club losers and two heart losers. Declarer might try to win a club honor, but planning to ruff a heart is better. West's trumps are all high, so there is no danger of an overruff and East's spades are strong enough to draw trumps. Declarer must delay drawing trumps until at least one heart is ruffed. Win the diamond opening lead, play the ♥K and a heart to the ace, then ruff a heart. Declarer could simply draw trumps at this point, but it should be safe to try for an overtrick. Declarer can ruff a diamond in East's hand and ruff one more heart. It's best to use the ♠A for this ruff, so that declarer can lead the remaining spade to dummy's ♠K, draw the remaining trumps and cash the fifth heart.

Could we have bid this hand without using transfers? Yes. East can jump to 3♠ which opener will raise to 4♠.



Switch West's ♠J for South's ♥Q. Can you reach 4♥ now? Yes. Over East's 3♠ bid, West will bid 3NT. East corrects to 4♥. Why is it fairly safe for East to do this? Opener's hand is balanced and opener should have at least three cards in one of the majors.

Leave the East hand face up and suit the remaining cards. East, don't let anyone touch your cards. East has: ♠K Q 10 8 3 ♥A 10 8 5 4 ♦4 ♣7 2.

Recall that the suggested way for East to bid this hand was to transfer to spades and then rebid 3♥.



Put East's ♠K into the spade pile and pull out the ♠J.

East has: ♠Q J 10 8 3 ♥A 10 8 5 4 ♦4 ♣7 2

East has 9 total points – 7 HCP plus 2 length points. East would like to invite game with this hand. East can show both suits, but should keep the bidding at a lower level than with a game-forcing hand. East can transfer to hearts and rebid 2♠. This shows a 5-5 invitational hand and opener can choose to pass 2♠ or correct to 3♥ with a hand that doesn't want to be in game, or opener can bid game in either major.

Can you show a 5-5 invitational hand if you don't use transfers? No. It's hard enough to show an invitational hand with one 5-card major. You have to use Stayman and then bid your major. There is not enough room left to show the other major. So a third advantage of using transfers is that you can show invitational hands that are 5-5 in the majors.

Let's recap this. Responder can use transfers to show 5-5 in the majors and either game-going or invitational strength.

With a game-going 5-5 hand (the higher strength hand), transfer into the higher major (spades). Then rebid 3♥. With an invitational 5-5 hand (the lower strength hand), transfer into the lower major (hearts) and rebid 2♠.

These are nifty bids but should only be used with prior discussion. Not all players would understand the bidding sequence as we've discussed. There is a lot to talk about before you add any convention to your arsenal. Bridge is a partnership game and how we treat many bids is a partnership agreement.



Let's weaken East's hand even more. Take away the ♥A and put in the ♥9.

East has: ♠Q J 10 8 3 ♥10 9 8 5 4 ♦4 ♣7 2

Now East knows there is not a game. It's probably better to play in two of a major than in 1NT. Unfortunately, East is too weak to explore for the best fit. All East can do is pick a major and transfer to it. With better spades, East will probably bid 2♥ to transfer to spades.

You may wish to include the card changes on the next page.

The following information is covered in Lesson 4A. If you choose to teach that lesson, you may stop here. And maybe you should consider stopping anyway. My class found this material very difficult.



At least you can sign off in one of your long suits with the hand on the table. What if your long suit was a minor? Take away the ♠Q J 10 8 and the ♥9 8. Put in the ♦J 10 9 8 5 and the ♣9.

East has: ♠3 ♥10 5 4 ♦J 10 9 8 5 4 ♣9 7 2.

West opens 1NT. East knows there is no game, but East's hand is likely to be useless in 1NT. The only way to get any tricks out of East's hand is to make diamonds trump. Before you used transfers, you could sign off in 2♦. But now 2♦ tells opener to bid hearts. Some players use a jump to 3♦ as a weak signoff bid. But we have discussed using this bid as invitational to 3NT. You can't have it both ways. A solution – when your partnership is ready – is to extend your use of transfers to the minors. You can use 2♠ to sign off in a long minor. Opener treats it as a transfer to clubs. Bid 2♠ to transfer to 3♣. After opener bids 3♣, responder can pass with a weak hand and long clubs. With a weak hand and long diamonds, responder corrects to 3♦. Here is the entire auction for this hand:

Opener	Responder
1NT	2♠
3♣	3♦
Must pass.	

LESSON 3 – Using Stayman

The eight deals in this lesson are from Session 3 of the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*. The first two deals provide a review of basic Stayman. The remaining deals discuss interesting situations involving the possible use of Stayman. If your students have had little or no experience using Stayman, be sure to use Lesson 2A before teaching this lesson. (With less experienced students, the recommended sequence is Lesson 2A, Lesson 2B, Lesson 2 and then Lesson 3.)

Deals can be prepared using the E-Z Deal cards. Be sure to announce dealer and vulnerability on each deal.

Related Deals from CUC and MCUC: CUC – Lesson 1, Deals 1-4

Related sections in CUC and MCUC: CUC – Lesson 2, Section labeled The Stayman Convention and all sections of Lesson 2 following that section.

SESSION 3: Deal #1

Dealer: North

Vul: None

♠ A 8	♠ Q 10 9 2	♠ 6 4 3
♥ J 8 5	♥ K 7	♥ Q 10 6 4 2
♦ K J 9 5 3	♦ 10 4 2	♦ Q 7 6
♣ 7 6 2	♣ A J 5 3	♣ 10 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K J 7 5
♥ A 9 3
♦ A 8
♣ K Q 9 4

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

Stayman finds a 4-4 spade fit and North places the contract in game. After using Stayman, responder must jump on the rebid to show a game-going hand. If North-South did not use the Stayman convention, North would have jumped to 3NT to show a game-going hand.

Suggested Lead: Against 3NT, West will get to work on setting up the long suit by leading the ♦ 5. Against 4♠, West might lead another suit for fear of giving declarer an undeserved trick.

Suggested Play: In 4♠, declarer counts losers – one spade, one heart and one diamond. Declarer draws trumps immediately and makes an overtrick by trumping the heart loser with dummy's remaining trump.

In 3NT, declarer has only seven top tricks. Two more tricks can be built in spades, but this involves losing the lead. West will cash four diamond tricks plus the ♠ A to defeat 3NT. The Stayman convention allows North-South to reach their best contract.

If you did not use Lesson 2A – Introduction to Stayman – as part of your course, you might want to review how Stayman works. You can skip the following discussion with a group that is thoroughly comfortable with Stayman.

North-South have 27 points between them and clearly belong in game, but getting to the right game is important. Since the partner of the player who opens 1NT doesn't introduce a four-card suit, we need a way to locate a 4-4 major-suit fit. The way to do that is to use the Stayman convention.

Here's how Stayman works when responder has a game-going hand with a four-card major, as North does on this deal. Responder uses a 2♣ response to ask if opener has a four-card major. With a major, opener bids it. With both majors, it is suggested that opener bid up the line and show hearts first.

Review discussion of Stayman continues on next page.

On this deal, what does opener answer? 2♠. A fit is found, and responder must jump to 4♠ because this is a game-going hand. Just as we did after using a transfer, it's important for responder to remember to jump with a game-going hand. With the exception of hands that use a convention (a transfer or Stayman), a game-going responder jumps at the first opportunity. When responder uses either a transfer or Stayman with a game-going hand, responder uses the convention at the two level and then jumps on the rebid.

When discussing the different auctions below, reinforce by writing the auction on the board.



Suit all the cards except North's.

North: ♠Q 10 9 2 ♥K 7 ♦10 4 2 ♣A J 5 3

Again South opens 1NT and North uses Stayman. Suppose opener doesn't have a major. Opener uses an artificial 2♦ bid to say, "Sorry, no major." If opener had said 2♦ on this hand, what would North say next? North still should not introduce a four-card suit. North will bid notrump. Don't forget to jump to show a game-going hand – bid 3NT.

What if South opens 1NT and answers North's Stayman bid with 2♥? It doesn't matter whether opener denies holding a major or bids the wrong major, responder's next bid is still in notrump. North still jumps to 3NT. It's opener's job to realize that responder had a reason to use 2♣ to ask for a major. Opener showed hearts but North didn't raise them. Hmm – what could North's major be? Opener can correct to 4♠ when holding a four-card spade suit.

After a 1NT opening bid, Stayman is used with both game-going and invitational hands. Responder clarifies the strength of the hand on the second bid. A game-going hand jumps; an invitational hand rebids without jumping.

SESSION 3: Deal #2

Dealer: East

Vul: N-S

♠ Q 7 6 2	♠ 9 4 3	♠ K J 10 5
♥ 5 2	♥ J 8 6 3	♥ A K 10 7
♦ A K 4 2	♦ J 7 6	♦ Q 10 3
♣ 10 4 3	♣ Q 9 7	♣ A 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 8
♥ Q 9 4
♦ 9 8 5
♣ K J 8 6 5

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT	Pass
	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
	2NT	Pass	4♠	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

Stayman can be used with either a game-going or an invitational hand. With 9 points, West uses Stayman in an attempt to find a fit and then rebids without jumping to invite game. When opener shows the wrong major, responder still does not introduce the other four-card major but bids notrump instead. East has a good 17 points and wants to accept the game invitation. Since we do not bid Stayman without a reason, East knows that partner has four spades and places the contract in the best game – 4♠.

Suggested Lead: Against 3NT, South would lead the ♣6 in an attempt to set up the long suit, but long suits aren't as valuable when there is a trump suit. Against 4♠, South might still lead a club but a spade or even a diamond is a possible choice.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts losers – one spade, two hearts and one club. A heart can be ruffed in dummy to make the contract. Declarer might decide to ruff a second heart in dummy for an overtrick, but all declarers should make that overtrick when a lucky 3-3 diamond split provides a place to discard a loser. Some declarers will make six.

A 3NT contract won't fare so well on a club lead. The defenders can take four clubs and a spade before declarer can take nine tricks.

SESSION 3: Deal #3

Dealer: South

Vul: E-W

♠ Q J 10 9 6	♠ A K 8	♠ 5 4 2
♥ Q J 10	♥ K 9 8 5	♥ 4 2
♦ K 10	♦ A 6 5 4	♦ J 9 7
♣ A 7 3	♣ K J	♣ 8 6 5 4 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 7 3
 ♥ A 7 6 3
 ♦ Q 8 3 2
 ♣ Q 10 9

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1 ♠	1NT	Pass	Pass
	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♣
	Pass	4 ♥	Pass	3 ♥
	Pass			Pass

Although 18 points is not in the range for a 1NT opening bid, it should be in your range for a 1NT overcall. Since North could have 18 points, South has no question about inviting game with only 8 points. By partnership agreement, you can respond to a 1NT overcall just as you do to a 1NT opening. South uses Stayman to find the heart fit and then makes an invitational raise to 3 ♥. North has a maximum and accepts.

Suggested Lead: East will lead partner's bid suit. The ♠ 2 is suggested. Unless you have supported the suit, it is better to lead low from three cards in partner's suit. Partner will be able to tell when you are looking for a ruff.

Suggested Play: The North-South hands don't fit that well and declarer sees a lot of losers. We usually make the long-trump hand the master hand. In a 4-4 fit, neither hand has trump length, so declarer can make either hand the master hand and generally chooses the hand with fewer losers. From North's perspective, there are at least six losers – one spade, one heart (on a 3-2 split), two or three diamonds and one club. Counted from South's perspective there is not a spade loser, which makes things a little better but not much.

Declarer must lose one heart and one club and has to avoid losing two diamonds. What is the best way to play diamonds to lose only one trick? In a vacuum, we would lead toward the ♦ Q. But we seldom play a hand of bridge in a vacuum. We have clues to help us. Can anyone tell me what clues we have on this deal? The bidding! West's opening bid shows about 13 points. North-South have 26 HCP together. Poor East can't have much. This knowledge can help declarer. It's very likely that West has the ♦ K and the normal finesse of leading toward the ♦ Q will not succeed.

Continued on next page.

Declarer might try to play every suit except diamonds first, hoping that West will be forced to lead diamonds. West, however, always has a safe exit with either a spade or a club, leaving declarer to play diamonds. The only legitimate play for the contract is to hope that West started with only two diamonds. Declarer can lead the ace and a low diamond, ducked around to West's king.

Did anyone realize that West needed the ♦K to open the bidding? How can knowing this help declarer play diamonds? Declarer can win the ♦A and then play a low diamond from both declarer and dummy next. How confident were you that this would actually drive out West's king? Declarer can get a count by playing all the other suits first. West shows up with three clubs and three hearts. We know from the bidding that West has five spades, therefore only two cards are left for the diamond suit. There are so many clues available to help you in the play if only you take the time to think about them!

The next deal involves the use of Stayman after an overcall. Some teachers might prefer to discuss the use of the cuebid as Stayman before having the students bid. You can use the exercises from Lesson 1 of CUC in the section labeled "Handling Interference" to do this, or you can let the students start to bid and stop for discussion when it becomes evident that they have a problem. Allowing the students to discover the problem on their own makes them more eager to hear the solution.

SESSION 3: Deal #4

Dealer: West

Vul: Both

	♠ A 3	
	♥ A Q J 10 5	
	♦ 7 5	
	♣ J 10 9 8	
♠ K J 6 4		♠ Q 8 7 2
♥ K 8 7		♥ 6 4
♦ Q 10		♦ A K J 4 2
♣ A K 7 3		♣ 5 4
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="text-align: center;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> WE </div> <div style="text-align: center;">S</div> </div>	
	♠ 10 9 5	
	♥ 9 3 2	
	♦ 9 8 6 3	
	♣ Q 6 2	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	2♥	3♥	Pass
	3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

We have already mentioned the importance of talking with your partner about how you use your conventions when the opponents intervene in the auction. As the previous deal illustrated, Stayman can be used after partner's 1NT overcall. Things become more complicated when partner bids 1NT and your right-hand opponent bids. Can you still use Stayman when a 2♣ bid is no longer available? A good agreement to have is that you can bid your opponent's suit as Stayman. If the opponents overcall 2♦, you cuebid 3♦ and it is Stayman. You have at least one major suit. If they overcall 2♠, you cuebid 3♠ as Stayman. Now you show four hearts, the unbid major. If you had spades, you could make a penalty double instead. What can East do on this deal to show four spades? Cuebid 3♥. This allows East-West to reach their best game – 4♠

Suggested Lead: North wants to keep the hearts as a trap for opener's likely ♥K and leads a safe ♣J.

Suggested Play: When you are playing in a 4-4 fit and you count a lot of losers, try looking at things from dummy's perspective. The losers in the East hand are a spade and two hearts. Pretend East is the master hand and the contract makes easily – with an overtrick when declarer discards hearts on East's good diamonds.

3NT will go down one on the opening lead of the ♥Q. This gives declarer a trick with the ♥K, but gives North four heart tricks in return when the ♠A is won. North has the contract set as long as the ♠A is taken the first time spades are played.

Let's talk about North's overcall. Recall that an overcall after a 1NT opening requires a good suit and nice distribution. You don't need a lot of strength. North overcalled with two thoughts in mind. If East had been weak, North-South might make a partscore. When East does have some strength, East-West may not have agreed on the methods to help them reach the best contract. On the deal we just played, East had a game-going hand and could use the cuebid as Stayman – provided East-West both knew that a cuebid was Stayman.

Discussion continues on the next page.



East: ♠Q 8 7 2 ♥6 4 ♦A K J 4 2 ♣5 4.

Suit all hands except East's, making one pile for each suit in the center of the table. What if East had only an invitational hand? Take away East's ♦K J and put in the ♣Q 10.

East has : ♠Q 8 7 2 ♥6 4 ♦A 4 2 ♣Q 10 5 4

Suppose the auction went as before. West opened 1NT and North overcalled 2♥. East has only 8 points. There may not be enough for game. What will happen if East uses the cuebid as Stayman now? East has to bid 3♥. Holding four spades, opener will bid 3♠, but you have lost the chance to invite game. East must either bid 4♠ or pass. It could be even worse. West doesn't have to have four spades. Over 3♥, what will West bid without four spades? 3NT. Now East-West are in game on possibly only 23 points. The use of a cuebid as Stayman commits you to game. There isn't enough room left to invite game. The opponent's overcall took up the bidding room you need to invite game after using Stayman. What can East do with this hand? There is nothing comfortable to do. East's choices are to overbid and use Stayman, to bid 2NT to invite game, to wimp out and pass or to make a penalty double (not very comfortable with only two small hearts). It's a guessing game. What works one time won't work the next. Even experienced players won't have all the solutions, which is why bridge players like to interfere over your 1NT opening bid.

The basic Stayman convention is easy enough. Deciding when to use it can be more difficult. Your partnership can agree to use Stayman after a 1NT overcall. You can agree to use a cuebid as Stayman after the opponents overcall your 1NT opening but only with a game-going hand. Players who use Stayman over 1NT also use it over a 2NT opening. All bids are a level higher, so there is no room to invite game over 2NT. After a 2NT opening, Stayman is game-forcing.

On the next deal, some students may use a transfer instead of Stayman. They are likely to end up in 3NT instead of 4♥. Let them go down in 3NT to show why using Stayman is better.

Vul: N-S

♠ J 9 5 4
 ♥ A 4 3
 ♦ Q 9 8
 ♣ J 8 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 8
 ♥ 9 2
 ♦ A K 6 5 2
 ♣ 10 9 4 3

♠ A K
 ♥ Q J 7 6
 ♦ J 10 4
 ♣ A K Q 5

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	2NT	Pass
3 ♣		Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♥		Pass	Pass	Pass

Suggested Lead: ♦ A.


Suggested Play: East counts losers – one heart, three diamonds and one club. One minor-suit loser can be ruffed and one can be discarded on an extra spade winner. Since dummy should have a trump left for ruffing, declarer draws trumps first. 4♥ makes easily.

Against 3NT, South should lead the $\spadesuit 5$. We lead fourth best unless we have a sequence containing three or more high cards. Leading low from an entryless suit headed by the ace-king helps the defenders maintain an entry to the long suit. Had South played off the top two diamonds first, North would be forced to win the $\spadesuit Q$ on the third diamond trick, and there would be no entry to South's long suit. On the suggested lead, the defenders win the first five diamond tricks and 3NT is set.



Leave West's hand face up and suit the remaining hands.

West has: ♠Q 7 6 3 2 ♥K 10 8 5 ♦7 3 ♣6 2

 Let's see how using Stayman will get you to your major-suit fit whenever you have one. East opens 2NT and West bids Stayman. Do we agree that we are happy no matter which major East has? If East bids a major, raise that major to game.

West has: ♠Q 7 6 3 2 ♥K 10 8 5 ♦7 3 ♣6 2

What if East has no major and bids 3♦? West can now show a five-card spade suit. How does opener know that 3♠ is not a signoff bid? With a very weak hand, West should have transferred to begin with, giving up on the 4-4 heart fit. 3♠ is game-forcing and shows five-four distribution. What does opener need to go to 4♠? Three-card spade support. What will opener do with only two spades? Bid 3NT.

What would West do with this hand if East had opened 1NT? Sign off in 2♠ using a transfer. We usually can't afford to use Stayman with a hand of less than invitational strength.



Remove West's ♠3 and ♥10. Put in the ♠K and ♥J.

West has: ♠K Q 7 6 2 ♥K J 8 5 ♦7 3 ♣6 2

Suppose East opens 1NT. Now West has a game-going hand. How can West bid this hand? Start with Stayman. If opener shows a major, jump to game. What if opener denies a major with a 2♦ bid? With a game-going hand, West must jump. East doesn't know West has five spades, so West shows them by jumping to 3♠.



Let's make West's hand a little weaker. Trade the ♠Q for the ♠J.

West: ♠K J 7 6 2 ♥K J 8 5 ♦7 3 ♣6 2

Is this still a game-going hand? No, it is invitational. Stayman can be used with invitational hands too. Bid them the same way as you would a game-going hand but don't jump on your rebid. East opens 1NT, West bids 2♣ as Stayman. West can raise either major and may well jump to game because the hand upgrades when a fit is found. But if opener bids 2♦ denying a major, West should bid 2♠, a non-jump showing five-four in the majors with invitational strength.

Over a 2NT opening, responder needs a game-going hand to use Stayman. But Stayman is used over 1NT openings with both game-going and invitational hands. When you use transfers, you use Stayman only with a hand that has at least one major of exactly four-card length.

SESSION 3: Deal #6

Dealer: East

Vul: E-W

♠ A 4 2	♠ Q J 10 8 6	♠ 9 7
♥ 9 6	♥ K J 7 2	♥ 10 8 5 3
♦ Q J 10	♦ 8 5	♦ K 9 4 3
♣ Q 10 8 6 2	♣ J 3	♣ K 9 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 5 3
♥ A Q 4
♦ A 7 6 2
♣ A 5 4

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

North wants to invite game and look for a major-suit fit. Is there a 4-4 heart fit? Is there a 5-3 spade fit? Or will the pair end up in notrump with no fit? North starts with Stayman. After South's 2♦ response denies a four-card major suit, North can still try for a 5-3 spade fit. North's 2♠ non-jump rebid shows an invitational hand with five spades. South has a maximum and a spade fit and bids 4♠.

Suggested Lead: East might lead either a low club or a low diamond. A heart lead isn't wise because it is a bid suit – even though hearts were never actually mentioned. Because North-South use transfers, North's bidding shows four hearts and five spades. East would not have this information against a pair that did not use transfers. They would use this bidding sequence to show an invitational hand with five spades – with or without four hearts.

Suggested Play: With only three losers (one spade, one diamond and one club), declarer draws trumps and makes 4♠.



Leave North's hand face up and suit the remaining cards.

North has: ♠Q J 10 8 6 ♥K J 7 2 ♦8 5 ♣J 3

Was North's 2♠ bid forcing? No, it was invitational. It could not be weaker because Stayman tends to show invitational or better strength.



Trade the ♠6 for the ♣6.

North has: ♠Q J 10 8 ♥K J 7 2 ♦8 5 ♣J 6 3

North has 8 points and, with both majors, will probably invite game. If South shows a major, what will North bid next? Three of that major. What if South denies a major? North bids 2NT next. There is no fit. Go back to notrump when partner denies a major unless you have a five-card suit.



Trade the ♠Q for the ♠9.

North has: ♠J 10 9 8 ♥K J 7 2 ♦8 5 ♣J 6 3

Now North has only 6 points. What is the right level for North-South when South opens 1NT? Partscore. What response will North make? Pass. Even though North would love to look for a major-suit fit, North can't afford to. If you try bidding 2♣, you could come out smelling like a rose when partner shows a major and you smugly pass, having improved the contract. But what if partner has no major? Can you leave partner in 2♦, an artificial bid? Partner might have only two or three diamonds! (Opener could have a five-card club suit and three cards in each major.) Playing in your 2-2 fit is unacceptable! If you try to bail out by going to 2NT, partner will think you are inviting game and, if 2NT isn't already too high, you should be convinced that 3NT will be. When you are not prepared to pass any answer that opener might give, you cannot use Stayman with a weak hand. But, if you will be comfortable passing any answer – 2♥, 2♠ or 2♦, then go ahead and use Stayman – even without any points.

SESSION 3: Deal #7

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

	♠ J 6 3	
	♥ 9 8 5 4	
	♦ 10 9 8 4 3	
	♣ 9	
♠ 10 9 8		♠ A 7 5 4
♥ Q 10 2		♥ J 6
♦ A Q 2		♦ K 7 6
♣ K J 6 5		♣ Q 10 3 2
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="text-align: center;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> WE </div> <div style="text-align: center;">S</div> </div>	
	♠ K Q 2	
	♥ A K 7 3	
	♦ J 5	
	♣ A 8 7 4	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

Over South's 1NT opening bid, North can't sign off in 2♦ since that is a transfer to hearts. North might pass 1NT, but it is likely that playing in any suit but clubs would yield more tricks. While we don't usually use Stayman with a weak hand, we make an exception when responder can pass any answer from opener and expect to end up in a trump suit of at least seven cards. If opener bids 2♦, North is sure the partnership has at least a seven-card trump suit. If South bids 2♥, a fit is found. If South answers 2♠, the pair is once again in a seven-card trump suit. A 4-3 trump fit plays well when the hand with only three trumps also has a short suit. North gets lucky on this hand when Stayman uncovers a sure fit in hearts.

Suggested Lead: West has an interesting lead problem. The auction indicates that dummy is short in clubs. The only kind of hand that passes opener's Stayman answer is a weak hand that is short in clubs. It appears that North hopes to ruff clubs, a suit where West has some strength. The clues point to a trump lead, but West has a holding where leading a trump might give up a trick. Even if it does cost a trick, the trump lead may allow the defenders to take away two of dummy's trumps, giving them the lost trick back with interest. In fact, repeated trump leads turn out to be the best defense on this deal.

Suggested Play: Declarer's losers are one spade, one heart, two diamonds and three clubs. Declarer will ruff as many clubs as the opponents will allow! If declarer gets to ruff all of the small clubs, an overtrick will be made.

No other contract does as well as 2♥. In 1NT, the defenders will lead clubs and can set up three tricks in that suit to go with their three diamonds and one spade. 1NT should go down. If North-South reach 2♦, they will probably scramble home with eight tricks but have no chance to make the overtrick.

SESSION 3: Deal #8

Dealer: West

Vul: None

♠ A Q 3	♠ 9 5	♠ K J 6 4
♥ A J 4	♥ Q 9 8 5 2	♥ K 7 6 3
♦ Q 10 9 8 4	♦ K 7 5 2	♦ J 6
♣ K 2	♣ 8 3	♣ A 5 4

	♠ 10 8 7 2	
	♥ 10	
	♦ A 3	
	♣ Q J 10 9 7 6	

	N	
W		E
	S	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Dbl
	2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East has 12 points and knows that game should be reached opposite West's 1NT opening bid. But should the game be 3NT or four of a major? Stayman tells East that 3NT is the answer.

South's double of East's 2♣ bid is a *lead-directional double*. Doubles of the opponents' artificial bids are usually lead-directional. When West denies a major, East places the contract in 3NT. The situation could be much more uncomfortable for East. What if East had no club stopper? (East might bid 3♣ to check to see if opener had one.)

Suggested Lead: North should lead a club (the ♣8, top of a doubleton) after South went out of the way to double for a club lead. If South did not double, North's likely heart lead gives declarer a cheap trick with the jack.

Suggested Play: In 3NT, declarer counts winners – four spades, two hearts and two clubs. One more trick must be developed. On a heart opening lead, declarer develops diamonds to take 11 tricks. With a club lead, only one stopper remains and declarer may be afraid to play diamonds. Declarer might try a heart finesse or hope that hearts split 3-3 when the finesse loses, but there is a better alternative. Hope that the diamond honors are split between North and South. The opening lead appears to be from a doubleton club, which makes sense given South's double. If South doesn't have both diamond honors, declarer can bring the suit home safely. All declarer has to do is refuse to win the first club trick. The defenders can lead clubs again and force out the king, but declarer is in charge with one more club stopper. After winning the ♦K, North cannot lead another club. As long as declarer holds up on the club lead, declarer can afford to lose both high diamonds. Played this way, not only does 3NT make – it makes an overtrick! Declarers who try the heart finesse first will make only three, and those who win the first club lead are destined to go down.

South may be disappointed that a club lead didn't set 3NT, but it did prevent at least one overtrick. At duplicate bridge, preventing overtricks is as important as setting the contract. When you make a lead-directional double, you need both strength and length in the suit you double. If you don't have both, your opponents could decide to stop in the suit you doubled. Worse yet, they might redouble and make the contract for a huge score.

LESSON 4A – Notrump, Minors and Slams

The first four deals are intended for more advanced students who are already playing duplicate. These deals cover how to show various strength hands containing a minor suit – game-invitational, signoff and slam-going. Teachers can decide how best to incorporate this material into their lessons (if they decide to include it at all). I know from my own experience that this is very difficult for intermediate students to grasp.

Deal 1 uses the invitational minor-suit jump response to 1NT, which violates the rule that a game-going hand jumps the bidding after a 1NT opening.

Deal 2 shows a responding hand that wants to sign off in partscore in a minor, but the use of Stayman and transfers prevents this from happening at the two level. You can use this deal to remind students of what they give up when they add a convention and quit there. For a more advanced group, you can use this deal to introduce the use of the 2♠ response as a transfer to sign off in responder's minor.

Deal 3 simply reviews what to do with a game-going hand containing a long minor and can be used with any group.

Deal 4 uses Stayman as a prelude to a minor-suit slam try and should be used only with advanced students. This method violates the basic rule that responder must have a major to use Stayman. Exceptions can be very confusing to intermediate students.

Reference sections in CUC and MCUC Teacher Manuals for the above are:

CUC – Lesson 1, section entitled Stayman as a Minor-Suit Slam Try;

CUC – Lesson 2, sections entitled Signing Off in a Minor Suit and Other Responses to 1NT.

The next four deals are intended to be used to introduce slam-bidding conventions – 4NT and 5NT as invitational bids and the use of Gerber – to your less advanced students who have had little or no previous exposure to these bids. You can start with Deal 5, where slam should be bid directly, and continue with the remaining hands.

Reference sections in CUC and MCUC Teacher Manuals for this section:

MCUC – Lesson 5, sections entitled The Gerber Convention, When Is 4♣ Gerber?

Related Deals from CUC and MCUC: MCUC – Lesson 5, Deal 4

These deals do not appear in the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*. You will have to prepare boards or create hand records for the students to prepare the deals.

Remind students of dealer and vulnerability on each deal of the lesson.

If you have advanced students and wish to discuss responding to a 1NT opening bid with a long minor, use the following discussion and then play Deals 1-4.

Much of bidding involves partnership agreements. What bids have we discussed lately that require an agreement between you and your partner? Stayman, transfers, even the ranges you use to open 1NT and 2NT.

Today we will look at agreements used by some partnerships that allow responder to show a long minor after partner opens 1NT.

Recall that responder decides how high to go after a notrump opening bid. Possible levels are:

Partscore with 0-7 points

Invite game with 8-9 points

Game with 10-15 points

Slam – possible when responder has 16 or more points. With 18 points, responder is sure there is enough strength for slam. With 16 or 17 there could be enough but slam is not certain. It depends on how strong opener is.



We already know that you tend to ignore a long minor when you have a game-going hand.

Lay out for South: ♠5 ♥J 4 2 ♦A 4 2 ♣K Q 9 6 5 3

North opens 1NT. What response will South make? 3NT. South has a game-going hand and knows that it is better to be in 3NT than five of a minor. Declarer has at least two clubs and should be able to set up South's long suit to provide tricks in notrump. If there were a bid that told opener that responder has club length and wants to play in 5♣ when opener doesn't have good spades, I'd be all for that bid, but it doesn't exist. Bid 3NT and hope for the best.



Let's weaken South's hand a little. Trade the ♦A for the ♦J.

South has: ♠5 ♥J 4 2 ♦J 4 2 ♣K Q 9 6 5 3

What kind of responding hand does South have now? Invitational. How can South show this hand? South could respond 2NT. Do you see any possible problems with bidding 2NT? One problem is the shortness in spades as before. But an even bigger problem is that 3NT isn't going to make unless partner can use your clubs. South's suit has no entry outside of clubs. Unless opener has a good club fit, the contract is in jeopardy. What does opener need? The ♣A would be nice, as would length in clubs. Instead of 2NT, there is a more specific bid used by some partnerships to tell opener not to go on to 3NT without a good fit for South's clubs. It is a jump to 3♣. If you and partner agree, a jump to three of a minor is a very specific game invitation. Opener should pass with a poor fit for responder's minor and should bid 3NT when expecting to be able to use responder's minor to take enough tricks to make 3NT. Please be aware that this use of a jump response of three of a minor is a partnership agreement. Some players use the 3♣ and 3♦ responses as strong bids, a style we are more comfortable with because we have always said that a jump in response to a 1NT opening commits your side to game. Now we are offering a jump in a minor as an exception. You can't have it both ways. Many duplicate players like this minor-suit jump to be a game invitation. They bid stronger hands differently.

Continued on next page.



Weaken South's hand even more. Take away the ♥J and the ♣K. Put in the ♣10 2.
South has: ♠5 ♥4 2 ♦J 4 2 ♣Q 10 9 6 5 3 2

What does South want to do now? Sign off in clubs. But 2♣ is Stayman and not a signoff bid. It wouldn't help if South's minor was diamonds either. If you use transfers, 2♦ is a transfer and not a signoff bid.

There is a way to sign off in your minor provided you are willing to play at the three level. By partnership agreement, you can extend the use of transfers to use 2♠ as a transfer to clubs, **Illustrate auction on the board.** Opener bids 3♣, which responder passes holding a weak hand with long clubs. If responder's suit is diamonds, responder corrects to 3♦, a signoff bid. In order to want to sign off at this high level, responder should have a weak hand with a very long suit – at least six cards. You want to be certain you have a fit when you choose to go all the way to the three level. Please be aware that you and partner may have agreed to use transfers, but partner might not use this particular transfer. Don't try this without prior discussion. By partnership agreement, the 2♠ response can be a transfer that says responder wants to sign off in a minor. Opener must bid 3♣. Responder will pass with clubs as the minor and will bid 3♦, as a signoff, when the minor is diamonds. Notice that responder ends up playing the hand when holding diamonds.



Now let's look at a nice strong hand with a minor suit. Take away the ♣3 2 and the ♦2.
Put in the ♥A, the ♦K and the ♣A.
South has: ♠5 ♥A 4 2 ♦K J 4 ♣A Q 10 9 6 5

With 16 points, South is thinking about a small slam in clubs. But it is not certain that North-South have enough for slam. To show a hand that wants to invite a minor-suit slam, responder "fakes" Stayman and bids 2♣. No matter what opener answers, South's rebid is 3♣. Bidding Stayman followed by three of responder's minor is a slam try in that minor. Opener should bid 3NT with no interest in slam and bid anything else when interested. So 4♣, a cuebid of an ace, or even 6♣ would say opener wants to cooperate in getting to slam. 3NT is a signoff saying opener doesn't like partner's minor-suit slam try.

The examples we've just seen present only one way your partnership can agree to show various strength hands having a long minor. You must have already discussed these methods with partner before you use them or you might have a serious misunderstanding. Let's recap.

With a game-going hand and a long minor, bid 3NT and hope for the best.

With an invitational hand having most of your 8-9 points in a long minor, jump to three of your minor. Opener should decide whether to bid 3NT based on the strength of the minor-suit fit, not on how strong the 1NT opening bid is. We still use 2NT to invite game, but it shows a more balanced hand.

With a weak hand having a long minor of at least six cards, you can sign off in three of the minor by using a transfer. You bid 2♠ as a transfer to 3♣. Pass 3♣ when clubs is your suit and correct to 3♦ when diamonds is your suit. Opener must understand 3♦ as a signoff bid.

With a slam invitation and a long minor, "fake" Stayman first and then bid three of your minor. Now it's up to opener whether to sign off in 3NT or move toward slam. Let's practice!

SESSION 4A: Deal #1

Dealer: North

Vul: None

	♠ J 10 7 5	
	♥ A K 5 3	
	♦ 5 2	
	♣ A K Q	
♠ A 8 4 2		♠ K 9 3
♥ Q J 8 6		♥ 10 9
♦ A J 9		♦ 10 3
♣ 10 9		♣ J 8 7 4 3 2
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ Q 6	
	♥ 7 4 2	
	♦ K Q 8 7 6 4	
	♣ 6 5	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	3♦
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

With 9 total points, South might invite game using 2NT. North has 17 points and would accept the invitation.

Some players use a jump response to three of a minor as a game invitation. A 3♦ response asks opener to bid 3NT with a good fit for diamonds and to pass 3♦ otherwise. It is an invitational bid but is based on opener's support for responder's suit rather than on opener's point count. When responder has an invitational hand containing a six-card minor with strength in that suit but no other high cards that are likely to be entries to that long suit, 3NT will work only if opener has a good fit for responder's minor. North's small doubleton is definitely not a good fit, so North-South will end up in 3♦.

Suggested Play: Declarer has two diamond losers, one heart loser and two quick spade losers. To make 3♦, the heart loser must be eliminated. It can be discarded on dummy's third club. Declarer should start by drawing two rounds of trumps. The last diamond may be left outstanding, since the opponents are always entitled to it. Then declarer can play clubs and take the discard. West can ruff the third club, but declarer's heart loser is gone and 3♦ makes.

Declarers ending up in 3NT will have a difficult time. Declarer will not be able to use dummy's diamonds, since there is no entry to dummy once diamonds are good. Declarer should win only one diamond, three clubs and two hearts, but some declarers may end up with one or two spade tricks. Even then 3NT goes down.

Trade West's ♦A for North's ♥A. Now 3NT is a good contract and opener will accept East's invitation with three diamonds to the ace – a good fit.

You can see why players like to use 3♣ and 3♦ to invite game. These bids give opener specific information on how to evaluate the hand. But they also add complication to your bidding. Each partnership must decide on the meaning of a 3♣ or 3♦ response. You can agree to use jumps to 3♣ and 3♦ to invite 3NT. Opener should only accept with length in responder's minor. Opener has to have reason to believe the long suit in dummy is usable. With length, opener expects to use a small card in responder's suit as an entry. With shortness, opener had better have high cards in responder's suit. Playing this way, a raise to 2NT is still invitational but with a more balanced responding hand.

SESSION 4A: Deal #2

Dealer: East

Vul: N-S

♠ 10	♠ J 8 5 3	♠ A 7 6 2
♥ 4 3	♥ A 9 7 2	♥ K Q J 5
♦ J 10 9 6 5 4 3	♦ 8	♦ K 7
♣ Q 7 2	♣ A 10 8 3	♣ K J 4

	♠ K Q 9 4	
	♥ 10 8 6	
	♦ A Q 2	
	♣ 9 6 5	

	N	
W		E
	S	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT	Pass
	2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
	3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

West has the transfer user's nightmare – a hand that wishes that 2♦ was a drop-dead signoff bid. But East-West are using transfers and 2♦ shows hearts. One alternative is for West to pass 1NT and hope for the best. Many partnerships agree to use 2♠ as a transfer to sign off in three of a minor. 2♠ forces opener to bid 3♣. On this hand, West corrects to 3♦. If West's long suit had been clubs, West would have passed 3♣.

Suggested Lead: North is likely to lead the ♠3. In a suit contract, we don't like to lead a suit that is headed by an unsupported ace.

Suggested Play: With only four losers, declarer should draw trumps and then promote hearts and clubs. If West passes partner's 1NT opening bid, things won't be as easy. Declarer has one top spade trick and can promote two hearts and two clubs. The diamonds will be ready to run after losing to the ♦A and ♦Q but there is no entry to dummy to use them. North should use the ♣A to capture the ♣Q in dummy. Good defense will hold declarer to five tricks. Being in the right contract sure does make a difference!

Remember that using a 2♠ bid as a transfer to sign off in a minor is by partnership agreement. When someone tells you that they use transfers, they may not be talking about this particular use of transfers.

SESSION 4A: Deal #3

Dealer: South

Vul: E-W

♠ K 7 6 2	♠ A Q 8 3	♠ 5
♥ K 7 5	♥ Q J 10 9	♥ A 8 4
♦ A Q	♦ K 9 4	♦ 10 5 2
♣ K 10 6 5	♣ 9 2	♣ A Q J 8 4 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 10 9 4
♥ 6 3 2
♦ J 8 7 6 3
♣ 7

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		Pass

East has no reason to avoid 3NT. West has balanced distribution and can probably stop spades and diamonds. East wants to be in the best scoring game that is likely to make. Some players might want to bid 3♣ because they are concerned about spades, but there is not any standard partnership agreement where a 3♣ bid means, “Partner, I want to play in 3NT if you aren’t scared of spades!”

Suggested Lead: North leads the ♥Q, top of a sequence in a long suit.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts winners: two hearts, one diamond and six clubs. 3NT should make. Pairs ending up in 5♣ should go down. Losers are one spade, one heart and one diamond.

SESSION 4A: Deal #4

Dealer: West

Vul: Both

♠ 10 8 5 4 3	♠ A K Q 9	♠ J 7 2
♥ 10 7 5 2	♥ K 9 3	♥ A 8 4
♦ J 9	♦ 6 4	♦ Q 10 3
♣ K 3	♣ Q J 7 2	♣ 10 9 8 5

	♠ 6	
	♥ Q J 6	
	♦ A K 8 7 5 2	
	♣ A 6 4	

	N	
W		E
	S	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦
	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

South has 16 points across from 15 to 17. If opener has a good diamond fit and a maximum, there is a chance for slam. Your partnership can agree to invite a slam by “faking” Stayman and then showing a minor.

Once South rebids 3♦, North realizes that partner is interested in looking for a diamond slam. But North doesn't like diamonds and has a minimum 1NT opening. North's 3NT bid is a signoff, denying slam interest.

I have to stress again that this method for inviting slam is a partnership agreement. Some partnerships might show slam interest by jumping to 3♦ immediately, but we have seen the value in using that jump as a game invitation rather than a slam invitation. If you and partner have not discussed the meaning of all these minor-suit bids, it's best not to use them. Don't assume partner will know what you mean.

Suggested Lead: East leads the ♣10, top of a sequence in the four-card suit.

Suggested Play: On a club lead, declarer plays low from dummy. West wins the ♣K, but declarer gets three club tricks. Some declarers will play to set up hearts and will end up with ten tricks. Others will play to set up diamonds. Declarers who play diamonds might end up winning 11 tricks, but the defenders can play hearts to hold declarer to ten tricks.

This concludes our discussion of responding to 1NT with a long minor. Deals 5 through 8 are much easier and are intended for use as an introduction to Gerber and the 4NT and 5NT invitational responses to a notrump opening bid. If your students are quite inexperienced, it is suggested that you use these deals before playing those in Session 4 of the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*.

SESSION 4A: Deal #5

Dealer: North

Vul: N-S

	♠ A Q J 10	
	♥ Q 10 9 5	
	♦ K 10 4	
	♣ K 5	
♠ 8 7 4 3		♠ K 9 2
♥ 8 7 4 3 2		♥ 6
♦ A 9		♦ 8 7 6 2
♣ 3 2		♣ 10 9 8 7 6
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ 6 5	
	♥ A K J	
	♦ Q J 5 3	
	♣ A Q J 4	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	6NT
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

Using 15-17 point 1NT openings, South can add to the 33 points required for slam. When you know you have enough for slam, bid it. With balanced hands, you don't have to worry about checking for aces, but Gerber may be used for those who insist.

Suggested Lead: East leads the ♣ 10, a safe top of a sequence lead against a slam.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts nine top tricks. Options for developing three more tricks are to promote diamonds (lose to the ♦ A and three tricks are a sure thing) or repeating a spade finesse (the finesse must work to get the needed three tricks). Declarer should go for promoting diamonds as the sure way to make the contract and drive out the ♦ A right away. Declarer must be careful when playing those lopsided suits and should win the ♣ K first (high card from the short side). In hearts, declarer plays the ♥ A, the ♥ K and then overtakes the ♥ J to take four heart tricks.



Trade South's ♦ Q for East's ♦ 6.

North: ♠ A Q J 10 ♥ Q 10 9 5 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ K 5

South: ♠ 6 5 ♥ A K J ♦ J 6 5 3 ♣ A Q J 4

South has 16 points. Partner might have only 15, which is not enough for slam. But partner could have 17. South doesn't know what North really has. South should bid 4NT to invite 6NT. North, with a minimum, passes. (To make six, you need two working finesses, or the ♠ K onside tripleton or less.)



Trade North's ♦ 4 for East's ♦ Q.

North: ♠ A Q J 10 ♥ Q 10 9 5 ♦ K Q 10 ♣ K 5

South: ♠ 6 5 ♥ A K J ♦ J 6 5 3 ♣ A Q J 4

North opens 1NT, South invites slam with 4NT, and North, with a maximum, accepts by bidding 6NT. (North promotes diamonds and takes 12 tricks.)

SESSION 4A: Deal #6

Dealer: East

Vul: E-W

♠ K 6	♠ 5 4 2	♠ A Q 7 3
♥ K J 6	♥ A 4	♥ Q 10 9
♦ K Q 5 2	♦ J 10 9 8	♦ A 7
♣ A 8 7 6	♣ 5 4 3 2	♣ K Q 10 9

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 10 9 8
♥ 8 7 5 3 2
♦ 6 4 3
♣ J

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT	Pass
	4NT	Pass	6NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

West has 16 points. What does partner need for slam? 17 points. Slam is possible, but not certain. West should invite slam by bidding 4NT.

Now East must decide. Using 15-17 notrump, East has as good a hand as possible and accepts the invitation. (Players who use 16-18 should also accept because of East's excellent spot cards and 4-4-3-2 distribution.)

Suggested Lead: ♠J.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts winners — three spades, three diamonds and three clubs for nine sure tricks. Hearts can be promoted for two more tricks. The 12th trick is likely to come from clubs when they split. Declarer pays attention when playing clubs. The suit doesn't split but the ♣J drops, which makes the ♣10 good. Declarer should play hearts, the suit where tricks must be developed right away.



Trade West's ♥J for North's ♥A, and also West's ♣6 for South's ♠J.

East: ♠A Q 7 3 ♥Q 10 9 ♦A 7 ♣K Q 10 9

West: ♠K J 6 ♥A K 6 ♦K Q 5 2 ♣A 8 7

Again, East opens 1NT, West has 20 points! How high should West go? East-West have between 35 and 37 points. There is definitely enough for a small slam and, if the total is 37, there is enough for a grand slam! We use 5NT to invite a grand slam. There's one catch to this invitational bid though. Opener must bid six — even with the worst 1NT opening bid. A raise directly to 5NT tells opener that six is there. It forces to a small slam and invites a grand slam. Here, East has 17 points and will bid 7NT.



Trade East's ♠Q for North's ♠2.

East: ♠A 7 3 2 ♥Q 10 9 ♦A 7 ♣K Q 10 9

West: ♠K J 6 ♥A K 6 ♦K Q 5 2 ♣A 8 7

East opens 1NT and West invites a grand slam again by bidding 5NT. East has only 15 points. Can East pass 5NT? No. 5NT forces to a small slam. Not wanting to accept the grand slam invitation, East signs off in 6NT. These raises to 4NT and 5NT work over any notrump opening, including 2NT.

SESSION 4A: Deal #7

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

♠ 10 9 8 7	♠ K 5 3	♠ 6 4 2
♥ 8 3	♥ 10 7 4	♥ K Q J 9
♦ Q 7 4	♦ A J 6	♦ 10 9 8 5
♣ 9 7 4 3	♣ K J 10 2	♣ 8 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q J
♥ A 6 5 2
♦ K 3 2
♣ A Q 6

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	4NT	Pass	2NT
	Pass			Pass

North has 12 points across from a hand of either 20 or 21 points. Is there enough strength for slam? Maybe. North can invite slam by bidding 4NT.

South has 20 points, the bottom of the 2NT opening range. South should pass the slam invitation.

Suggested Lead: ♠ 10.

Suggested Play: Winners are three spades, one heart, four clubs and two diamonds. Declarer sees enough tricks to make 4NT. Declarer should be careful when playing clubs – cash the ♣ A Q before dummy's longer clubs.

Duplicate players, who are always on the lookout for overtricks, should try the diamond finesse. As long as declarer makes this play early, there is no risk to the contract. The best scores will go to the declarers who saw the chance for the overtrick.

We have seen that 4NT does not ask for aces when it is a raise of a notrump bid. We use Gerber to ask for aces after a notrump bid. 4♣ asks for aces. Gerber answers are in steps similar to Blackwood. What is the lowest step after a 4♣ bid? 4♦ shows the worst possible answer – no aces. Then 4♥ shows one ace, 4♠ shows two aces and 4NT shows three aces.

We want to keep 5♣ to ask for kings so therefore a 4♦ bid has to do double duty. The 4♦ answer to Gerber shows no aces or all four aces. A difference of 16 points between no aces and all four makes it obvious which one partner has.

SESSION 4A: Deal #8

Dealer: West

Vul: None

♠ A K Q 4	♠ 10 9 7 5	♠ 3
♥ Q J 3 2	♥ A K 5 4	♥ 6
♦ A 9 7	♦ 6 5 3	♦ K Q J 4
♣ A 3	♣ 10 8	♣ K Q J 7 5 4 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 8 6 2
♥ 10 9 8 7
♦ 10 8 2
♣ 9 6

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	2NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
	4NT	Pass	6♣	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East has such a distributional hand that the tricks for 6♣ or even 7♣ can be counted if partner has enough aces. Gerber allows East to find out how many aces opener has. With one ace missing, East is only sure of having control of all suits if clubs are trump. If West had shown all four aces, East could go for the highest scoring grand slam and bid 7NT.

Suggested Lead: South will probably lead the ♥10.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts just one loser – a heart. Declarer should draw trumps immediately. On a non-heart lead, declarer can discard a heart on the spades to take all 13 tricks.

Notice that 6NT won't make on the actual cards because the top two hearts are missing, and North will certainly lead hearts on opening lead.

In our next lesson, we'll get to use Gerber and 4NT invitational to bid more slams. We'll also see how these bids work together with Stayman and transfers.

LESSON 4 – Bidding Slam after a Notrump Opening

Deals 1 to 8 of this lesson appear in Session 4 of the *Modern Notrump Bidding “Play” Course*. The focus is on slam bidding after a notrump opening bid and how to get to slam after using Stayman or a transfer. If you think the students need more practice in bidding slam using Gerber or invitational 4NT and 5NT bids, use the last four hands of Lesson 4A first.

Students can make up the deals using the E-Z Deal cards. Remind students of the dealer and vulnerability on each deal.

Related Deals from CUC and MCUC: MCUC – Lesson 5, Deal 4

Reference Sections in CUC and MCUC:

CUC – Lesson 1, last section (Stayman as a Minor-suit Slam Try)

MCUC – Lesson 5, sections entitled When Is 4NT Blackwood?, The Gerber Convention, When Is 4♣ Gerber?

Points are a pretty good judge of how high to bid when both you and partner have balanced hands. Using the 15-17 point range for a 1NT opening bid, how much does responder need to bid a small slam? To be sure that the partnership has the suggested 33 points, responder needs 18 points. ($15 + 18 = 33$.) When your hands are balanced, your points come from high cards, and having 33 points means you aren't very likely to be missing two aces. You can bid slam on balanced hands without even checking for aces. Players who think that the road to slam is paved with ace-asking bids can ask for aces if they wish. But, after a notrump bid, we do NOT use Blackwood to ask for aces. We use Gerber, where 4♣ is used to ask for aces. We'll go over the Gerber responses later.

Sometimes when responding to a 1NT opening bid, you will have 16 or 17 points. Should you give up on slam? NO. You should invite a slam. A voluntary raise to one level past game is a slam invitation. So a 4NT response to a 1NT opening bid does not mean that 3NT is the game contract in notrump. It is an invitation for opener to go to 6NT. Opener bases this decision on point count in exactly the same way opener decides whether to carry on to game when responder raises 1NT to 2NT. Opener passes with 15 and accepts the invitation with 17 or a very good 16.

Let's practice.

SESSION 4: Deal #1

Dealer: North

Vul: None

	♠ A K J 5										
	♥ A 6 5										
	♦ K Q 10										
	♣ 7 4 2										
♠ 4 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 8 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J 10 7 2		♥ K 9 4									
♦ 8 7 6		♦ 9 4 3									
♣ Q 9 8 5		♣ 10 6 3									
	♠ Q 6 3										
	♥ Q 8 3										
	♦ A J 5 2										
	♣ A K J										

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	4NT
	Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

South has 17 points opposite partner's 15-17. The partnership *could* have the 33 points suggested for slam, but it is not guaranteed. South wants to invite a slam. Most players are accustomed to a bid of 4NT to be used as Blackwood, asking for aces, but 4NT is not Blackwood when it is a raise of a notrump opening bid. A raise of a notrump opening bid to 4NT is an invitational bid that works just like the invitational raise to 2NT. A maximum opener accepts the invitation and bids slam while a minimum opener passes and plays in 4NT. North has a 17-point maximum 1NT opening and accepts the slam invitation.

Suggested Lead: East leads the ♠10, top of a sequence in the longest suit.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts winners – four spades, one heart, four diamonds and two clubs for a total of 11 top tricks. One more trick must be established. The only way to establish tricks in notrump is through length and high cards. Declarer already counted four tricks in both long suits, so the extra trick has to come from unused high cards – either the ♣J or the ♥Q. A finesse can be taken in either suit. All declarer needs to make 6NT is for one of the two finesses to work.

If the play is timed correctly, declarer can make the hand whenever either finesse works. There are two types of finesses – those that give the opponents the chance to gain the lead when the finesse works and those that do not allow them in when the finesse works.

The heart finesse is taken by leading from North's hand toward South's ♥Q. If East holds the ♥K, it can win the trick since North's ace can no longer be played to the trick. A working club finesse will not allow the defenders to gain the lead.

When you have one of each type of finesse to try and can only lose the lead once, take the finesse that allows the defenders to get in first – the heart finesse on this deal. Since the heart finesse works, 6NT makes without needing the club finesse. If declarer takes the club finesse first, West wins the ♣Q. Declarer cannot afford to take the winning heart finesse, because that finesse would allow the defenders to cash the setting trick.

I'm going to write the auction we just had on the board: 1NT-Pass-4NT

What was the meaning of 4NT? Inviting 6NT.

Let's change the auction to: 2NT-Pass-4NT

What do you think 4NT means? Invites 6NT. Any raise of a notrump opening bid to 4NT invites a small slam.

How would you take this auction: 1NT-Pass-5NT?

The 5NT response invites a grand slam. Responder should have 20 or 21 points! You don't have to remember the point count because it's logical. Imagine yourself hearing partner open 1NT and you hold 20 points. What is your partnership point total? Somewhere between 35 and 37 points. You know you have the 33 points suggested for a small slam, but you could have the 37 points suggested for a grand slam. Your 5NT bid tells partner exactly that – to bid the grand slam when holding the top of the opening range. What should opener do holding only 15 points? Don't get caught on this. 5NT says you have enough for a small slam. Opener has to choose between six and seven. Opener cannot pass 5NT! A raise of any notrump opening bid to 5NT forces to six and invites seven.

SESSION 4: Deal #2

Dealer: East

Vul: N-S

♠ K 3	♠ 7 5 4 2	♠ A Q
♥ A K 9	♥ J 10 2	♥ Q 8 7
♦ A 10 8 5	♦ 6 3	♦ K Q J 4
♣ Q 6 5 4	♣ J 9 7 3	♣ A K 10 2

	♠ J 10 9 8 6	
	♥ 6 5 4 3	
	♦ 9 7 2	
	♣ 8	

	N	
W		E
	S	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2NT	Pass
	5NT	Pass	7NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East's 2NT opening bid shows a balanced 20-21 points. West has 16 points and knows the partnership point total is 36-37. There could be a grand slam if opener is maximum! West raises to 5NT to invite the grand slam. East accepts with this nice 21-point hand. The two good four-card suits will be a source of tricks in notrump.

Suggested Lead: South leads the ♠J.

Suggested Play: Declarer can count 12 top tricks. If the ♣10 becomes good, it will be the needed 13th trick. Chances are good that clubs will split 3-2 making the ♣10 good, but that split is not guaranteed. Is there anything declarer can do if clubs don't split? Yes, if North has the club length, declarer can finesse the ♣10. Unfortunately, there is nothing to be done if South turns up with the club length. When will declarer know that clubs are splitting badly? On the second lead of clubs. Declarer must keep a finessing position over North. This means declarer must still have one high club plus the ♣10 in the East hand the third time clubs are led. Since South showed out on the second club lead, declarer is able to finesse against North's jack by leading toward the remaining honor-ten. Cashing your high cards in the right order can help protect against bad splits.

North has to defend carefully. If declarer plays other suits before the clubs, North must not discard a club. North's clue to keep all four clubs comes from the dummy. The defender holding length in dummy's long suit should maintain parity with the dummy – keep the same number of cards as dummy has.



Turn all cards but the clubs face down to review the play in the suit. Then have North and South trade their clubs to show that declarer cannot avoid losing a club. South will play the ♣J on the ♣10 to promote a trick for the defense. Then have North-South put the clubs back where they started and turn all four hands face up.

Continued on next page.



Trade East's ♥ Q for North's ♥ J. How will the bidding go now? 2NT-5NT-6NT. Remember, opener cannot pass the 5NT invitation. 5NT says there is a slam, but responder isn't sure if it's a grand or only a small slam. Opener must go to six with a minimum. Making a grand slam would require the ♥ Q 10 to be in South. We don't like to bid a grand slam that relies on a simple finesse and this is even worse!

We've seen that raises of notrump opening bids to 4NT and 5NT are used to invite slams. These raises are used in the same way when the notrump bid is not the opening bid. For example, look at these auctions:

1 ♦ -Pass-2NT-Pass

4NT invites a small slam (more likely if you use the 2NT response to show 13-15).

1 ♣ -Pass-1 ♥ -Pass

2NT-Pass-5NT invites a grand slam and forces to a small slam.

2 ♣ -Pass-2 ♦ -Pass

2NT-Pass-4NT invites a small slam.

On our next deal, I have one word of advice to North. Sometimes it pays to go slowly and gather information.

SESSION 4: Deal #3

Dealer: South

Vul: E-W

♠ Q 2	♠ K 9 7 3	♠ J 10 8 6
♥ 10 6	♥ A K J 5	♥ 9 8 4 3
♦ 9 7 5 3 2	♦ A K J	♦ 10 8
♣ Q 8 4 2	♣ 6 5	♣ K 10 7
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ A 5 4	
	♥ Q 7 2	
	♦ Q 6 4	
	♣ A J 9 3	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				1 ♣
	Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1NT
	Pass	4NT	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

North has 19 points, enough strength to jump shift, but with many possible contracts, it is better to go slowly to leave room for exploration. North's 1♥ response is forcing. North's restraint pays off when opener makes a descriptive 1NT rebid. South can't support hearts, does not have four spades and shows a balanced hand in the 12-14 point range. North knows the partnership point total is between 31 and 33 points. 4NT can be used as a slam invitation over opener's 1NT rebid. Unfortunately, opener does not have a good hand with only 13 points, 4-3-3-3 distribution, two unsupported queens and mostly low spot cards. South passes to decline the invitation.

Suggested Lead: West will probably lead a diamond against 4NT.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts winners – two spades, four hearts, three diamonds and one club for a total of ten tricks. 4NT should make without any problem. A duplicate bridge player is always on the lookout for extra tricks. Declarer might develop an extra trick in clubs or spades.



Do we agree that declarer has plenty of transportation to get back and forth between North and South's hands? Turn over all the suits except clubs. The missing high clubs are the ♣K, ♣Q and ♣10. The presence of the ♣9 in declarer's hand offers potential for an overtrick if the king and queen are split between the defenders *and* East has the ♣10. Declarer leads the ♣5 from dummy and, if East plays the ♣7, inserts the ♣9. That forces out the ♣Q. Now declarer goes back to dummy and finesses the ♣J. East is helpless. No play can stop declarer from taking two club tricks. In fact, West has to be careful not to discard a club when other suits are led or declarer will make six! The bidding gives West a clue to hold on to the clubs. Declarer bid clubs and is likely to have greater length in clubs than in diamonds. So when it comes to a choice between discarding a club or a diamond, West should discard a diamond.

My class was not ready for the above discussion about looking for another overtrick, so I skipped it. There is also a chance for an extra trick in spades and declarer can resort to that if the ♣9 loses to the ♣10. Use your judgment here.

4NT does not ask for aces after a notrump bid. But the Gerber convention does. If the last bid in your auction was notrump, use a jump to 4♣ to ask for aces. Gerber works like Blackwood. The answers are in steps with the cheapest step showing zero or all four aces. I'll put the answers to Gerber on the board:

4♣ asks for aces
4♦ = zero or four aces
4♥ = one ace
4♠ = two aces
4NT = three aces (this is NOT Blackwood)

The fact that 4♦ shows either zero or four aces should not be confusing. There is a 16-point difference between the two, and your auction should have already pinned down your strength so you will know which it is. We have 4♦ doing double duty, so we can use 5♣ to check for kings. Let's put the answers for kings on the board, too:

5♣ asks for kings
5♦ = zero kings
5♥ = one king
5♠ = two kings
5NT = three kings
6♣ = four kings. We don't have to keep 6♣ available for any more questions, so there is no reason to have 5♦ do double duty.

You might want to use Gerber on some of the remaining deals. But remember, we don't use any ace-asking convention unless we know what to do with the answer. Before you ask for aces, you have to know what will be trumps or know that you want to play in notrump, and you have to know that you have the strength for slam. A pair could have all four aces and only 16 points – clearly not enough for slam. It takes strength and aces or controls to make enough for slam. Ace-asking bids are to check for controls when you know you have the strength for slam but might be missing two aces. Slam-invitational bids are used when you might have enough strength for slam but are not sure.

The player who asks for aces can do one of two things when rebidding. Either ask for kings or place the contract. Remember, if you bid 4♣ as Gerber, your next bid is either 5♣ or a bid that places the contract.

SESSION 4: Deal #4

Dealer: West

Vul: Both

♠ Q J 9	♠ A 6 4 2	♠ K 3
♥ A Q 10	♥ 9 7 6 2	♥ K J 5
♦ 10 9	♦ A 8 7	♦ K Q J 6 5 4
♣ A Q J 7 3	♣ 9 8	♣ K 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 8 7 5
♥ 8 4 3
♦ 3 2
♣ 10 6 5 4

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
	4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

While at most 1 of West's points can come from distribution, 2 of East's 18 points are from length. This means that the partnership could be missing two aces even though they have the 33 points suggested for slam. East should check for aces before bidding a slam. After a notrump opening bid, 4NT is quantitative, so 4♣, Gerber, is used to ask for aces. When West shows only two aces, East wants to stop below slam. East could simply sign off in 5♦, but matchpoint duplicate players prefer the higher-scoring notrump contract. East can sign off in 4NT. Since East used Gerber to ask for aces, West should take 4NT as natural and not as another ace-asking bid. Using Gerber kept East-West from bidding a bad slam – exactly what ace-asking conventions were intended to do.

Suggested Lead: North's hand has no clear lead. North might lead a heart, North might lead a low spade or even cash aces. The opponents have shown enough strength for slam on the auction but stopped because they were missing two aces. It is unlikely that South has anything to contribute to the defense.

Suggested Play: Declarer has 12 tricks once the ♦ A is knocked out, but North can take both aces to hold declarer to 11 tricks.

Many partnerships have had misunderstandings about when 4♣ is Gerber. Let's look at some auctions on the board and see what you think.

Put each auction on the board and give the class time to think about it before discussing the auction.

2NT	Pass	4♣	Pass	A jump to 4♣ is Gerber when bid directly over a notrump bid.
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass	This is still a jump to 4♣ over a notrump bid. It's still Gerber.
2NT	Pass	4♣		
3NT	Pass	4♣		4♣ is bid over a notrump bid but it's not a jump. It could be Gerber but some might interpret it as Stayman. Your partnership should not use this bid unless you have made a prior agreement.
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	This is a jump to 4♣ but not directly over a notrump bid. While some experts would give 4♣ a different meaning, it is common to use this as Gerber. The guideline is that a player who uses Stayman can bid 4♣ as Gerber next.
2♥	Pass	4♣		
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	Responder transferred and jumped to 4♣. Again, you should discuss this with your partner, but a reasonable agreement is that this bid is Gerber asking for aces. Responder probably has a six-card heart suit but wants the notrump opener to declare. You can transfer first and then use Gerber to ask for aces.
2♥	Pass	4♣		

If these bids are Gerber, you don't need Blackwood, so what do you think our next two auctions mean?

1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	Responder used Stayman and now is inviting a slam. Does responder have hearts? No. Responder could use 5♥ to invite a slam. A raise to one level past game is a slam invitation. With a minimum, opener can pass or bid 5♠ holding both majors (because 2♣ showed a major that was not hearts). With a maximum, opener can bid 6♠ or 6NT.
2♥	Pass	4NT		
2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass	Again, 4♣ could be used to ask for aces, so 4NT invites a small slam. A minimum opener can pass or bid 5♥ with a good fit. A maximum opener chooses either 6NT or 6♥.
3♥	Pass	4NT		

While different partnerships have different agreements, a simple agreement to have is that 4♣, 4NT and 5NT retain their usual meaning after responder uses Stayman or transfers. It is wise to discuss these auctions with your regular partners before trying them.

SESSION 4: Deal #5

Dealer: North

Vul: N-S

♠ J 10 6 2	♠ A 3	♠ 7 4
♥ 9 8 4 2	♥ A K 6	♥ Q J 10 5
♦ 6 4	♦ K J 9 3	♦ 8 7 5 2
♣ A 7 3	♣ Q 10 6 4	♣ 9 8 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q 9 8 5
 ♥ 7 3
 ♦ A Q 10
 ♣ K J 5

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass	2♥
	Pass	2♠	Pass	4NT
	Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

South has 16 points across from partner's 15-17. The partnership might have the 33 points needed for slam. Not only doesn't South know if there is a slam – South isn't even sure if it's better to play in notrump or spades. South can have it all. Transfer to spades to show a five-card suit and then invite a slam by bidding 4NT. Since we can use Gerber to ask for aces, 4NT is quantitative here. North has 17 points and two four-card suits, a hand that should accept the invitation. With only two spades, North chooses 6NT as the final contract.

Suggested Lead: East leads the ♥Q.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts winners – three spades, two hearts and four diamonds. Three club tricks can be promoted to make the slam. Declarer must not be seduced by the spade suit, which won't provide enough tricks even when they split.



Keep North's hand face up and put the remaining three hands into suits, making one pile for each suit in the center of the table. Trade North's ♥K for the ♥J.

North has: ♠A 3 ♥A J 6 ♦K J 9 3 ♣Q 10 6 4

Now, North has only 15 points and will decline the slam invitation by passing 4NT.



Trade North's ♥J for the ♠Q.

North has: ♠A Q 3 ♥A 6 ♦K J 9 3 ♣Q 10 6 4

Now, North has 16 HCP plus one for the doubleton heart. North will accept the slam invitation, but wishes to play with spades as trumps where there is a fit and the doubleton might be useful. North will bid 6♠.



Take away North's ♦J and ♣10. Put in the ♠2 and the ♥2.

North has: ♠A Q 3 2 ♥A 6 2 ♦K 9 3 ♣Q 6 4

Do you want to accept partner's 4NT slam invitation now? Not with only 15 points. But you might prefer to go back to 5♠ with such a good fit for partner's suit.

SESSION 4: Deal #6

Dealer: East

Vul: E-W

	♠ K Q 9 5	
	♥ K Q 7 3	
	♦ 9	
	♣ K Q 10 4	
♠ 10 7		♠ 8 4 3
♥ 10 9 8		♥ J 6 2
♦ Q 10 8 6 3		♦ J 7 5 2
♣ 9 5 2		♣ A J 8
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ A J 6 2	
	♥ A 5 4	
	♦ A K 4	
	♣ 7 6 3	

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
	Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
	Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

In support of spades, North's hand is worth about 18 points. There is enough strength for a small slam, but North-South could easily be missing two aces since some of the points come from distribution. North uses Gerber to check for aces once the spade fit is discovered. With only one missing ace, North can bid a small slam.

Suggested Lead: West might lead the safe-looking ♥ 10 or the ♦ 6.

Suggested Play: Declarer's losers are one diamond and possibly two clubs. The diamond loser can be ruffed in dummy later. There are two possible plays to hold the club losers to one. Declarer can hope that West has the ♣ A and finesse twice by leading toward the ♣ K Q in dummy. Or declarer can play West for the ♣ J and finesse the ♣ 10. Any time making the contract hinges on a finesse, ask yourself if there is any other alternative. On this hand, there might be a lucky 3-3 heart split, allowing dummy's fourth heart to provide a place to discard a club loser and avoid worry about a finesse. Declarer should play hearts first to see if they do split. When hearts split 3-3, no finesse is needed. The ♣ K Q will take care of the remaining clubs with only one loser.

North's 6♠ bid was a wise choice since 6NT should not make. Declarer needs the diamond ruff for the 12th trick. In 6NT, declarer will be forced to play clubs and, as the cards lie, cannot avoid losing two tricks.

Do not suit hands. Card changes on the next page.



Suit all hands but North, making one pile for each suit in the middle of the table. Take away North's ♣10 and ♠K. Put in the ♦3 and the ♣A.

North now has: ♠Q 9 5 ♥K Q 7 3 ♦9 3 ♣A K Q 4

South opens 1NT. North uses Stayman in hopes of finding a 4-4 heart fit. Suppose South responds 2♠. North has 16 points. Should North stop in game? Is North sure of slam? Not unless South has 17 points. Gerber won't help. South could have three aces and only 15 points. North can bid 4NT to invite a slam and let South decide whether to go on.

What if South had shown four hearts in response to Stayman? I still would only want to invite a slam. If we bid 4NT, partner won't know we have hearts. Bid 5♥. A raise to one higher than game invites a slam and asks partner to go on holding the top of the range.

SESSION 4: Deal #7

Dealer: South

Vul: Both

♠ K 7 4	♠ 9 3 2	♠ A 8 6 5
♥ A 6	♥ 10 9 3	♥ K 8 7 2
♦ A K 5	♦ Q 9 8	♦ J 10 2
♣ K Q J 10 2	♣ 9 8 7 6	♣ A 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q J 10
♥ Q J 5 4
♦ 7 6 4 3
♣ 4 3

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
				Pass
	2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
	3♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
	6NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

If a major-suit fit is found, the doubleton brings the value of East's hand up to 13 points, which makes just enough strength for a small slam. East plans to use Stayman followed by Gerber if a fit is found. Unfortunately, West denies a major suit. Now East is not sure if the partnership has sufficient strength for a small slam. East can use 4NT to invite slam. West has a good 21 points counting length and accepts East's invitation. West might accept by bidding 6♣, suggesting that as a possible contract if East has support. With only a doubleton club, East will correct to 6NT.

Suggested Lead: North probably won't lead away from an honor into declarer's strength. That play risks giving declarer an undeserved trick, which is exactly what happens on a diamond lead. The ♥10 or ♣9 is a better choice.

Suggested Play: Declarer counts 11 tricks off the top and must find one more trick. The diamond finesse seems like the obvious choice. Declarer can lead dummy's jack and let it ride. As long as South has the ♦Q, an extra trick is established even if South chooses to cover an honor with an honor.

We've seen that a wise declarer looks for other alternatives before counting on a finesse to make the contract. Finesses work only half the time. There is no harm in checking to see how spades split before committing to the finesse, which will be unnecessary if spades do split 3-3. Doing this increases declarer's chances of making 6NT from 50% to about 68%.



It does not matter on this lie of the cards, but declarer should duck the first spade. Trade North's ♦Q for South's ♠J to see why. Declarer wants to see if spades split before trying the diamond finesse. Declarer will go down by playing the top two spades because, when the third spade is lost, North will be able to collect another spade trick, too. So declarer gives up a spade and then plays the ♠A K. When spades don't split, declarer leads the ♦J to finesse and makes 6NT that way.

In order to take advantage of two opportunities to make your contract, make the play that lets the opponents in first before trying a finesse that will not let the opponents in when it works.

SESSION 4: Deal #8

Dealer: West

Vul: None

♠ A K 5 4	♠ Q J 7 3	♠ 6 2
♥ K 6	♥ 10 9 8 7	♥ A J 5
♦ A 7 6	♦ K Q 10 5	♦ J 3
♣ Q 10 4 2	♣ 9	♣ A K J 6 5 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 9 8
♥ Q 4 3 2
♦ 9 8 4 2
♣ 8 7

<i>Suggested Bidding:</i>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
	2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
	3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
	3♠	Pass	6♣	Pass
	Pass	Pass		

East has about 16 points. There is a good chance for slam. Different partnerships have different ways to look for a minor-suit slam after a 1NT opening bid. The important thing is that you and partner agree on some method. The method suggested in this course is for responder to bid Stayman even without a major and then rebid the long minor. The only time responder uses Stayman without holding a major is when responder is looking for a minor-suit slam. Without slam interest, East's first response would be 3NT, going for the best-scoring game contract. West has an excellent hand in support of clubs with 17 dummy points, a good fit and controls in all suits. How the slam is reached depends on partnership agreements. The auction above shows a cuebidding sequence where both partners show their controls. West could simply bid 6♣. Even a raise to 4♣ by West shows slam interest, since there is no point in bypassing 3NT unless you want to bid slam.

Suggested Lead: South doesn't have a clear-cut lead. Even though West showed spades, the ♠10 looks safe. A heart lead gives declarer a cheap trick with the ♥J, but luckily, it does not cost a trick. Some might decide to lead a trump.

Suggested Play: 6♣ makes easily when a heart loser is ruffed in dummy. This couldn't happen in 6NT. A notrump slam shouldn't make. As long as the defenders don't discard badly, declarer has to take the losing heart finesse to try to make 6NT.

It's good that East-West chose the safest slam. While we choose notrump over the minors for game contracts, a close slam contract has more chance of gaining the needed trick when you have a trump suit. With a lot of extra strength, East-West could opt for 6NT, but this slam was bid on only 30 HCP.

Make sure your partnership agrees on how to show minor suits with hands of all strengths after a 1NT opening. The following methods are suggested in this course.

- Responder bids 2♠ as a transfer to 3♣ to sign off in either minor. Responder passes the forced 3♣ rebid with clubs and corrects to 3♦ with diamonds.
- Responder makes an immediate jump to three of a minor to invite 3NT. Opener accepts the invitation with a good fit for responder's minor and passes otherwise. This is a possible 3♦ response: ♠4 3 ♥J 10 7 ♦K Q 9 7 6 3 ♣7 4.
- Responder bids 2♣, which appears to be Stayman, and then shows a long minor with a hand that wants to invite a minor-suit slam.
- With sufficient strength for slam and a long minor, responder can use Gerber to check for aces.
- Another slam invitational bid that is suggested after a 1NT opening is responder's jump to 3♥ or 3♠. By failing to transfer, responder shows a six-card major and slam interest.

As you see, there are many things that you and your partner must agree on when you use conventions. If you have not discussed how to bid slams, you may be disappointed when one of you is dealt a strong hand.

NOTES

Introduction to Stayman

Deal 1

Dlr: North

Vul: None

♠ K Q 5		♠ 10 8 7 6	
♥ Q 10 9 5		♥ A 7 2	
♦ K J 5 2		♦ 9 8 7	
♣ 10 2		♣ A 9 3	
	W	N	E
		S	
		♠ J 9 3	
		♥ 4 3	
		♦ 10 6 4	
		♣ K J 7 6 4	
		♠ A 4 2	
		♥ K J 8 6	
		♦ A Q 3	
		♣ Q 8 5	

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
		Pass	1NT	Pass
	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
	4♥	All Pass		

- There are two possible contracts – 3NT and 4♥. It is reasonable for West to raise East's 1NT opening to 3NT, but E-W have a major-suit fit. When we have an eight-card fit in a major, we prefer the

major-suit game to 3NT.

- Responder to an opening notrump bid never introduces a four-card major. To reach 4♥, E-W must use Stayman. West's 2♣ response is Stayman and asks opener to show a four-card major if there is one. East shows four hearts and West chooses the best game – 4♥.
- South has a marvelous lead against 3NT – the ♣6. North wins the ♣A and returns a club, and the defenders win the first five tricks and still have the ♥A coming. Against 4♥, this lead is nowhere near as effective. West can ruff the third club. In fact, South might choose to lead the ♠3 or the ♦4 instead. We don't always lead our longest suit against trump contracts.
- Declarer's losers are one heart and three clubs, but one club loser can be ruffed in dummy. Declarer can even afford to draw trumps first. There will still be a trump left in dummy after trumps are drawn. What a difference being in the best contract can make. East went from taking only seven tricks in 3NT to taking ten tricks in 4♥!

Deal 2

Dlr: East

Vul: N-S

♠ J 4 3		♠ A 7 6	
♥ A 6		♥ Q J 8 7	
♦ 8 7 5		♦ K J 2	
♣ K J 7 4 2		♣ 9 5 3	
	W	N	E
		S	
		♠ K 9	
		♥ K 10 9 3	
		♦ A Q 4 3	
		♣ A 10 6	
		♠ Q 10 8 5 2	
		♥ 5 4 2	
		♦ 10 9 6	
		♣ Q 8	

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT
	Pass	4♥	All Pass	2♥

- South opens 1NT. North has 11 points and is sure of game. Responder to a notrump opening bid does not introduce a four-card suit, so North uses Stayman to locate a major-suit fit. When South shows four hearts, North jumps to game. The one who knows goes.
- West might lead the ♣4 or the ♠3.
- Declarer will win the opening lead and draw trumps. Losers are two clubs and one trump. On a non-club lead, one club loser might go away on the extra diamond winner.
- 3NT would not fare as well. West's long suit is clubs. While opener has the ♣A, the defenders get in again with a heart and take that trick plus four clubs to set 3NT.

THE STAYMAN CONVENTION

To locate a 4-4 major-suit fit after a 1NT opening bid, responder bids 2♣ (an artificial bid).

To use Stayman, responder must have:

- at least 8 points and
- at least one four-card major.

Opener answers: 2♥ with four hearts (or both majors)
 2♠ with four spades (but not four hearts)
 2♦ with no major (2♦ is artificial; opener may not have diamonds)

Responder's rebid when opener shows the right major:

- Raise to game with 10 or more points
- Raise to the three level with 8-9 points.

Responder's rebid when opener bids 2♦ or the wrong major:

- Bid 3NT with a game-going hand (10 or more points)
- Bid 2NT with an invitational 8-9 point hand.

After a 2NT opening bid, 3♣ is Stayman.

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Deal 3

Dlr: South

Vul: E-W

♠ A Q 2
♥ Q J 5
♦ A 6 3
♣ K 8 5 2

♠ 9 7 5
♥ 9 2
♦ K 8 7 4 2
♣ A J 9

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 8 3
♥ 10 8 7 3
♦ Q J 10
♣ Q 10 4

♠ K J 6 4
♥ A K 6 4
♦ 9 5
♣ 7 6 3

- East has enough points for game but would prefer to play in a major suit if there is a fit. Stayman will tell. Opener's 2♦ answer denies possession of a major suit. Now East knows the best game is 3NT.
- The opening lead is the ♦4, fourth best in North's long suit.
- Declarer counts winners in notrump. There are four spades, four hearts and one diamond. Take them and run! Be careful to take the high cards in the short hand (West) first in spades and hearts.

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
				Pass
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
	2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Deal 4

Dlr: West

Vul: Both

♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ 6 3
♦ A 9 5 2
♣ 10 6 2

♠ A 6 3 2
♥ 7 5 4
♦ K Q J
♣ A Q 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 8 4
♥ A K 8 2
♦ 7 4
♣ K J 7 4

♠ K 9
♥ Q J 10 9
♦ 10 8 6 3
♣ 9 8 3

- South uses Stayman to check for a heart fit before bidding game. When North answers in the wrong major, South goes to 3NT. When opener shows the wrong major, responder still doesn't introduce the four-card suit but bids notrump instead.
- East leads the ♥Q, top of a sequence in the longest and strongest suit.
- Declarer needs nine tricks. Winners are one spade, two hearts and four clubs. Declarer can promote two more diamond tricks and should do this right away while still holding high cards everywhere.

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
	Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT
	All Pass			

Deal 5

Dlr: North

Vul: N-S

♠ A 7 3 2
♥ J 2
♦ K 7 5 4
♣ 10 6 4

♠ J 10 6 5
♥ A K 8 5
♦ A 8
♣ K J 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q 8 4
♥ 7 6 3
♦ 6 2
♣ A Q 8 5

♠ 9
♥ Q 10 9 4
♦ Q J 10 9 3
♣ 9 3 2

- South knows there is a game, but in spades or notrump? South can use Stayman to ask. North shows four hearts. When opener bids the wrong major, responder goes back to notrump, so South bids 3NT.
- North realizes that the only reason for South to bid Stayman is to find a major-suit fit. Since South didn't like hearts, South must have spades. North should bid 4♠ because we prefer a major-suit game when there is a fit. It is important to use Stayman when responder wants to hear about a four-card major, because opener will assume responder has a four-card major and bid accordingly.
- East leads the ♦Q, top of a sequence.
- Losers are one spade, two hearts and one diamond. There is an extra club winner in dummy. That will be a perfect place to discard a loser. North should draw trumps first, so no one can ruff those good clubs. A heart could also be ruffed in the dummy.

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
		1NT	Pass	2♣
	Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT
	Pass	4♠	All Pass	

Deal 6

Dlr: East

Vul: E-W

♠ K 8 7		♠ A 5
♥ A 9 7 4		♥ 8 3
♦ 9 3		♦ A 7 6 4 2
♣ J 5 4 2		♣ 9 8 7 6
	W	E
	N	S
		♠ 9 6 4 3 2
		♥ J 6 2
		♦ K Q J 10
		♣ 3

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
			1NT	Pass
	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

- West has 8 points and wants to invite game. There might be a heart fit. Stayman will tell. East shows four hearts. West knows the hand should be played in hearts but is not sure if there is enough strength for game. With an invitational hand and a fit, West raises to the three level.
- East has 17 points and will accept the invitation.
- South has a strong sequence and will probably lead the ♦K. Some players might lead the ♣3, looking for a ruff.
- Declarer counts losers – one spade and two diamonds. As long as the hearts split, there are no other losers. Declarer should draw trumps before a winner turns into a loser.

Deal 7

Dlr: South

Vul: Both

♠ Q J 8		♠ A 7 6 4
♥ Q 10 5 2		♥ 7 6 3
♦ A 7 5		♦ J 6
♣ 8 7 4		♣ K J 5 2
	W	E
	N	S
		♠ K 5
		♥ K 9 4
		♦ K Q 10 3
		♣ A Q 10 9

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
				1NT
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
	All Pass			

- North uses Stayman to check for a 4-4 spade fit before inviting game. After South denies a four-card major, North bids 2NT to invite game.
- With a 17-point maximum, South should accept the invitation.
- The opening lead is the ♥2, fourth best in West's longest suit.
- Winners are two spades, four clubs and (with the opening lead) one heart. Two more tricks are needed. The only place to get them is in diamonds. Declarer promotes the suit, losing to the ace. Declarer should not be worried about giving up the lead because of the hearts. The ♥2 was led. If that is fourth best, West cannot have a fifth heart, so the suit is breaking 4-3 and the defenders can take only three hearts plus the ♦A.

Deal 8

Dlr: West

Vul: None

♠ K 6 3 2		♠ J 9 4
♥ K Q 4		♥ 10 8 7 2
♦ A 6 4		♦ Q 10 8 3
♣ A 5 3		♣ Q 10
	W	E
	N	S
		♠ Q 10 8 7
		♥ 9 5
		♦ K J 9
		♣ K J 9 6

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
	2♠	Pass	2NT	All Pass

- East has 9 points and wants to invite game. Stayman will find a heart fit if it's there. After West shows the wrong major, East bids 2NT to invite 3NT.
- West has only 16 points and 4-3-3-3 distribution. There is no reason to accept the invitation.
- The opening lead is the ♦3, fourth best from North's longest and strongest suit. North might have considered leading a heart, but the bidding showed that East has four hearts.
- Winners are two spades, four hearts, one diamond and one club. There's no hope for another trick so declarer should take them and run!

NOTES

Introduction to Jacoby Transfers

Deal 1

Dlr: North
Vul: None

♠ Q 9 5		♠ 10 8 2
♥ 8 7 4 3		♥ A 6 2
♦ Q J 10		♦ K 6 5
♣ 7 4 2		♣ A K Q 3
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	
		♠ 3
		♥ K Q 10 9
		♦ A 9 3 2
		♣ 10 8 6 5
		♠ A K J 7 6 4
		♥ J 5
		♦ 8 7 4
		♣ J 9

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
		1NT	Pass	2♥
	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
	All Pass			

- The auction shows the use of Jacoby transfers. Responder doesn't bid a major; responder bids the suit directly below it. South's 2♥ bid shows at

least five spades! A transfer commands opener to bid responder's suit. Once North bids spades, the contract is placed where South knows it belongs – in 4♠.

- In 4♠, there is a possibility of one trump loser, one heart loser and three diamond losers. With a nine-card trump fit, declarer will play the top two spades, hoping the queen will drop. It does not, so there is a trump loser. If the ♦A captured North's ♦K, there are three diamond losers. Given enough time, declarer can discard two diamond losers on clubs, so it's not necessary to rely on the diamond finesse.
- Having the opening lead come up to the strong notrump hand is one advantage of using transfers.** There is no opening lead that East can make that will stop declarer from playing as described above. But without transfers, South's first response is 4♠, making South the declarer and West on opening lead. West has a good top of sequence lead – the ♦Q to trap opener's king. With this lead, the unfortunate (South) declarer will not be able to discard diamond losers later because the defenders will have taken three diamond tricks before declarer gets the lead, and West's trump trick will defeat 4♠.

Deal 2

Dlr: East
Vul: N-S

♠ 7 4		♠ K 9 8 5
♥ 9 8 7 5 3 2		♥ 10 6
♦ A 6 5		♦ J 10 3 2
♣ 5 2		♣ K J 9
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> N W E S </div>	
		♠ J 6 3 2
		♥ A Q
		♦ K Q 8
		♣ A 7 6 3
		♠ A Q 10
		♥ K J 4
		♦ 9 7 4
		♣ Q 10 8 4

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
			1NT	Pass
	2♦	Pass	2♥	All Pass

- West knows that there is no game but wants to improve the contract. There is definitely a heart fit, and West's hand will provide more tricks if hearts are trump. West wants to sign off in 2♥. Using transfers, 2♦ forces

opener to bid 2♥. East must follow instructions even with only two hearts. If East-West do not use transfers, West simply bids 2♥, which East must recognize as a signoff bid.

- South will probably lead the ♣4 against either 1NT or 2♥. If on lead against 2♥, North might choose the ♠5, a diamond or even a low club.
- Whoever is declarer, losers should be counted from West's perspective. **In a transfer auction, declarer should count losers from dummy, where the trumps are longer.** Losers are two spades, one club and some trumps. On a 3-2 split, there could be two heart losers. Declarer can afford five losers and should draw trumps early. Declarer might go to West's hand to take a trump finesse, but it loses.
- If East is left in 1NT, there are only five top tricks. The heart suit cannot be used, since dummy's ♦A entry has to be spent to drive out the last high heart. This is why we prefer to make a weak responder's long suit the trump suit. When that suit is trump, ruffing provides needed entries to responder's hand.

RESPONDING TO NOTRUMP BIDS

Responder is in charge and must decide two things:

Level – based on partnership point total (partscore, game, slam)

Denomination – A major suit is our top priority. When responder has a six-card suit, you are certain to have a fit. When responder has only five cards, a fit is likely but not guaranteed. With a long minor, notrump is usually the best game, but minor-suit slams are fine.

HOW TRANSFER BIDS WORK

After a notrump opening, responder can show a long major (long means five or more cards in the suit) by bidding the suit just below responder's real suit. Opener must bid the suit shown by the transfer bid.

- After partner opens 1NT:
- 2♦ shows a long heart suit
 - 2♥ shows a long spade suit
- After partner opens 2NT:
- 3♦ shows a long heart suit
 - 3♥ shows a long spade suit

Deal 3

Dlr: South

Vul: E-W

♠ A 9 7 3	♠ Q J 10	♠ 5
♥ K 6 4	♥ A 9 3	♥ Q J 8 7 5 2
♦ A 3	♦ Q 10 8 7 5	♦ 9 4 2
♣ K Q 6 2	♣ 9 4	♣ A 5 3
	♠ K 8 6 4 2	
	♥ 10	
	♦ K J 6	
	♣ J 10 8 7	

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
	2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
	4♥	All Pass		

- East knows there is a fit in hearts and wants to invite game with 9 total points. First, East transfers to hearts by bidding 2♦. East's raise to 3♥ shows a six-card suit and invites opener to go to 4♥. West has a heart fit plus a doubleton, which brings the hand up to 17 points, and West accepts the game invitation.
- The bidding is more difficult for players who don't use transfers. East has to start with 2♣ as Stayman. When West answers 2♠, East can bid 3♥ to invite game in hearts.
- North might lead the ♠Q. South would be likely to lead the ♣J.
- Count the losers from East's hand – one heart and two diamonds. Declarers who hope to make an overtrick will play diamonds before drawing trumps in order to ruff a diamond loser in West's hand. All declarers should make game, but top duplicate scores go to the declarers who make the overtrick.

Deal 4

Dlr: West

Vul: Both

♠ Q 10 9	♠ A K 5	♠ 8
♥ Q 8 7 2	♥ A 6 4	♥ K J 9 5 3
♦ 7 6 2	♦ K Q J 3	♦ 10 9 8 4
♣ Q J 10	♣ K 6 5	♣ A 9 4
	♠ J 7 6 4 3 2	
	♥ 10	
	♦ A 5	
	♣ 8 7 3 2	

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
	All Pass			

- Jacoby transfers are used after all balanced notrump opening bids including a 2NT opening bid. South has enough points for game and is sure of a spade fit opposite partner's balanced hand. South uses a transfer to make the stronger hand declarer in 4♠. Players who do not use transfers will immediately respond 4♠ and South will declare.
- East will lead the ♦10. If on lead, West will find the attacking ♣Q lead.
- Count losers from South's perspective – one spade on the most likely 3-1 split and four clubs. Two discards will be available on diamonds once trumps are drawn, so declarer will lead off the top two trumps, hoping to see the ♠Q drop. Then declarer will discard club losers on diamonds. Trumps don't split, but luckily, West has to follow suit to three diamonds, and declarer is able to discard two club losers. West can ruff the fourth diamond, but the defenders will take only that trump plus two club tricks.

TRANSFERS WHEN RESPONDER HOLDS A SIX-CARD OR LONGER MAJOR

Responder's first bid regardless of point count (0 HCP and up): Transfer – bid diamonds to show hearts and hearts to show spades. Opener must accept the transfer to the next higher suit regardless of the number of cards held in that suit. (But opener is permitted to jump with four-card support and a super maximum.)

Responder's second bid:

- Pass with a hand having no game interest
- Invite game by raising to three of your suit
- Go to game with a game-going hand and investigate slam with a stronger hand.

TRANSFERS WHEN RESPONDER HAS A FIVE-CARD MAJOR

Responder's first bid regardless of point count (0 HCP and up): Transfer – bid diamonds to show hearts and hearts to show spades. Opener must accept the transfer to the next higher suit regardless of the number of cards held in that suit. (But opener is permitted to jump with four-card support and a super maximum.)

Responder's second bid: DO NOT REBID YOUR SUIT– BID NOTRUMP

- Pass with no interest in game
- Invite game with 8-9 total points (raise to 2NT)
- Go to 3NT with enough strength for game
- Investigate for slam if your combined strength is around 33 points.

Deal 5

Dlr: North

Vul: N-S

♠ A J 7 4 3		♠ Q 10 8 6
♥ A 5		♥ 6 3 2
♦ K 8 6 4		♦ 9 2
♣ 10 3		♣ A 7 5 2
	W	E
	S	
		♠ 9 5
		♥ K Q 10 7
		♦ J 7 5 3
		♣ 9 8 6

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
		Pass	1NT	Pass
	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
	3NT	All Pass		

- West wants to be in game once East opens 1NT. The question is which game will be best – 4♠ or 3NT?

West can let East choose. First West transfers to spades to show a five-card suit. Next, West bids 3NT to show values for game. **Responder must not rebid a major with only a five-card suit.** This sequence tells East to bid 4♠ with three or more cards in support and to pass with only two spades. East has only two spades and chooses 3NT. If you weren't using transfers, West would immediately jump to 3♠ and East would choose 3NT as the best game.

- South will lead the ♥K, top of two touching honors with three cards that are nearly in sequence. Declarer must win the first trick with the ♥A. This guarantees a second heart stopper no matter who leads hearts next.
- Count winners in notrump – one heart, three diamonds and two spades. Three club winners can be promoted (use the ten wisely). On a diamond lead, declarer can make an overtrick when winning cheaply with the ♦10.

Deal 6

Dlr: East

Vul: E-W

♠ K 7 2		♠ 8 5
♥ A 9 4		♥ Q J 8 7 2
♦ 8 4		♦ K 10 2
♣ J 10 9 5 3		♣ A 7 4
	W	E
	S	
		♠ A Q 6 4
		♥ 6 5 3
		♦ A Q J 5
		♣ K 8

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
			Pass	1NT
	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♥
	All Pass			

- North shows five hearts with the 2♦ transfer bid. North rebids 3NT to show enough strength for

game and exactly five hearts. South must decide whether the best game is 3NT or 4♥. We usually choose a major when there is an eight-card or longer fit. The doubleton club makes the major-suit contract attractive despite the weak trumps. Without transfers, North's first response is 3♥, which South will raise to four.

- West might lead the ♣J, top of a sequence. If East is on lead, the ♠J will be chosen.
- Count the losers in North's hand – one possible spade, one club and two or three hearts. The diamond suit might provide a spade discard. South's doubleton club avoids a loser in that suit. When North does draw trumps, North should lead toward the ♥Q J twice. If East does not lead spades early, declarer will make an overtrick when discarding the spade loser on diamonds.
- Note that West would lead clubs in 3NT and, since declarer must set up hearts to take nine tricks, the defenders get the lead often enough to set up the club suit and defeat 3NT.

WHEN DO JACOBY TRANSFERS APPLY?

Transfers apply over any notrump opening bid that shows balanced distribution. (Over a 1NT opening bid, over a 2NT opening bid and over a 3NT opening bid when it shows a very strong balanced hand.)

Transfers also apply in the following auctions:

AUCTION 1

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
2NT	3♦/3♥ is a transfer

AUCTION 2

Opener	Responder
2♣	2♦
3NT	4♦/4♥ is a transfer

Deal 7

Dlr: South

Vul: Both

♠ A 6	♠ Q 3	♠ J 8 7 5 4
♥ Q J 3	♥ A 9 8 4 2	♥ 7 6 5
♦ Q J 6 2	♦ 10 8 4	♦ A 5 3
♣ A Q 9 4	♣ J 8 6	♣ K 2
	♠ K 10 9 2	
	♥ K 10	
	♦ K 9 7	
	♣ 10 7 5 3	

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
				Pass
	1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
	2♠	Pass	2NT	All Pass

- East wants to invite game while showing five spades and transfers first. Then East bids an invitational 2NT. West has an awful 16-point hand. Opener has to use judgment with 16 points and should accept the invitation to game only with a good 16 count. This hand has too many queens and jacks to be good, and it has only two spades. Pass 2NT.

- This deal is easier to bid with transfers than without. With an invitational hand, responder cannot show spades immediately and has to start with Stayman. Opener answers 2♦ to deny a major and responder invites with 2♠. Opener has to decide whether to pass 2♠ or to sign off in 2NT. It's hard for opener to know what to do because opener doesn't know how many spades East has – only that East has at least five spades.
- North will lead the ♥4 – fourth best from the long suit.
- Count winners in notrump – three clubs, one spade, one diamond and one heart as the suit lies. Two more tricks are needed. There are two possible ways to get these tricks. Declarer could work on spades, hoping for a 3-3 split. But the most likely split is 4-2. Or declarer could try for the two extra tricks in diamonds. The best way to play diamonds is to lead up to the queen-jack twice. If South has the ♦K, declarer will get the two needed tricks no matter how diamonds split. This 50% finesse coupled with the possibility of a 3-3 diamond split gives a 68% chance to make 2NT.
- If East-West end up in 2♠, they will probably go down, losing two hearts, three spades and one diamond.

Deal 8

Dlr: West

Vul: None

♠ 9 5 4 3	♠ A K J	♠ 10 8 6 2
♥ 7 6 4	♥ K J 3	♥ A 5
♦ J 9 2	♦ A K Q 3	♦ 10 8
♣ J 10 9	♣ K 6 4	♣ A Q 8 5 2
	♠ Q 7	
	♥ Q 10 9 8 2	
	♦ 7 6 5 4	
	♣ 7 3	

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♦
	Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
	Pass	4♥	All Pass	

- North's 2NT rebid shows a balanced 22-24 point hand. South wants to be in game. If there is a heart fit, South prefers 4♥ to 3NT. South uses a transfer to make the

strong hand declarer in either contract. Then South rebids 3NT to give North the final choice. Since North knows there is a heart fit (the transfer guarantees a five-card suit), North should choose 4♥.

- East will probably choose to lead either a spade or a diamond. A club lead right into the strong hand would be foolish. If West is on lead, the ♣J will be led.
- 4♥ makes no matter which hand declares. With East on lead, declarer can avoid a second club loser. One of South's clubs can be discarded on North's extra spade to make an overtrick.
- If North-South reach 3NT, East's opening lead is another story. The club lead isn't so risky now. Look at the reward for letting declarer have the ♣K – four club tricks for East when gaining the lead with the ♥A.
- We use transfers to prevent a dangerous opening lead through the strong hand. When that hand is very strong, as with a 2NT opening or with a strong 2♣ opening followed by 2NT, transfers are even more valuable than they are over 1NT opening bids.

ANNOUNCING JACOBY TRANSFERS

Because responder's transfer bid sounds like responder has a suit other than the suit responder really has, it is necessary to announce the use of a transfer to your opponents. This is done immediately after responder makes the transfer bid and before the next player in rotation bids. The notrump bidder simply announces, "transfer." Only explain what responder's bid means if your opponent asks. You may ask your opponents about the meaning of a call at your turn to call as well as before you play to any trick.

Notrump, Minors and Slams

Deal 1

Dlr: North

Vul: None

♠ A 8 4 2
 ♥ Q J 8 6
 ♦ A J 9
 ♣ 10 9

♠ J 10 7 5
♥ A K 5 3
♦ 5 2
♣ A K Q

♠ Q 6
 ♥ 7 4 2
 ♦ K Q 8 7 6 4
 ♣ 6 5

♠ K 9 3
 ♥ 10 9
 ♦ 10 3
 ♣ J 8 7 4 3 2

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
		1NT	Pass	3♦
	All Pass			

- With 9 total points, South might invite game using 2NT. North has 17 points and will accept the invitation. Some players use a jump response to three of a minor as a game invitation. **By partnership agreement, a**

3 ♦ response can be used to ask opener to bid 3NT with a good fit for diamonds and to pass 3 ♦ otherwise. It is an invitational bid but is based on opener's support for responder's suit rather than on opener's point count. When responder has an invitational hand containing a six-card minor with strength in that suit and but no other high cards that are likely to be entries to that long suit, 3NT will work only if opener has a good fit for responder's minor. North's small doubleton is definitely not a good fit, so North-South will end up in 3 ♦.

- Declarer has two diamond losers, one heart loser and two quick spade losers. To make 3♦, declarer must eliminate a heart loser. It can be discarded on dummy's third club. Declarer should start by drawing two rounds of trumps and can leave the last diamond outstanding since the opponents are entitled to it. Then declarer can play clubs and take the discard. West can ruff the third club, but declarer's heart loser is gone and 3♦ makes. 3NT should go down.

Deal 2

Dlr: East

Vul: N-S

♠ 10
♥ 4 3
♦ J 10 9 6 5 4 3
♣ Q 7 2

♠ J 8 5 3
 ♥ A 9 7 2
 ♦ 8
 ♣ A 10 8 3

♠ K Q 9 4
♥ 10 8 6
♦ A Q 2
♣ 9 6 5

♠ A 7 6 2
♥ K Q J 5
♦ K 7
♣ K J 4

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
		1NT	Pass	
	2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
	3♦	All Pass		

- West has the transfer user's nightmare – a hand that wishes that 2♦ was a drop-dead signoff bid. But East-West are using transfers and 2♦ shows hearts. One

alternative is for West to pass 1NT and hope for the best. But many partnerships agree to use 2♠ as a transfer to sign off in three of a minor. 2♠ forces opener to bid 3♣. On this hand, West corrects to 3♦. If West's long suit had been clubs, West would have passed 3♣. (Use this transfer only with prior partnership discussion!)

- North is likely to lead the ♠3. In a suit contract, we don't like to lead a suit that is headed by an unsupported ace.
- With only four losers, declarer should draw trumps and then promote hearts and clubs.
- If West passes partner's 1NT opening bid, things won't be as easy. Declarer has one top spade trick and can promote two hearts and two clubs. The diamonds will be ready to run after losing to the ♦A and ♦Q but there is no entry to dummy to use them. North should use the ♣A to capture the ♣Q in dummy. Good defense will hold declarer to five tricks. Being in the right contract sure does make a difference!

SHOWING MINORS

*By partnership agreement, you can show various strength hands with minor-suit length. **With a long minor and a game-going hand:** Simply bid 3NT. 3NT is usually easier to make than five of a minor.*

An invitational hand having a good minor and not much else: Bid three of your minor, an invitation to opener to bid 3NT when opener fits your minor and to pass when opener has poor support. Save 2NT for more balanced invitational hands.

A slam invitational hand: Fake Stayman (2♣) then bid three of your minor. Opener goes to 3NT with no slam interest and makes any other bid when interested in slam.

Deal 3

Dlr: South

Vul: E-W

♠ K 7 6 2		♠ A Q 8 3
♥ K 7 5		♥ Q J 10 9
♦ A Q		♦ K 9 4
♣ K 10 6 5		♣ 9 2
	W	N
		E
	S	
		♠ J 10 9 4
		♥ 6 3 2
		♦ J 8 7 6 3
		♣ 7

- With a game-going hand, responder chooses 3NT over five of a minor.
- North leads the ♥Q, top of a sequence in a long suit.
- Declarer counts winners: two hearts, one diamond, and six clubs. 3NT should make. Pairs ending up in 5♣ should go down. Losers are one spade, one heart and one diamond.

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
				All Pass

Deal 4

Dlr: West

Vul: Both

♠ 10 8 5 4 3		♠ A K Q 9
♥ 10 7 5 2		♥ K 9 3
♦ J 9		♦ 6 4
♣ K 3		♣ Q J 7 2
	W	N
		E
	S	
		♠ J 7 2
		♥ A 8 4
		♦ Q 10 3
		♣ 10 9 8 5
		♠ 6
		♥ Q J 6
		♦ A K 8 7 5 2
		♣ A 6 4

- South has 16 points across from 15-17. If opener has a good diamond fit and a maximum, there is a chance for slam. **Your partnership can agree to invite a minor-suit slam by “faking” Stayman and then showing a minor.** Once South rebids 3♦, North realizes that partner is interested in looking for a diamond slam. But North doesn't like diamonds and has a minimum 1NT opening. North's 3NT bid is a signoff, denying slam interest.
- East leads the ♣10, top of a sequence in his four-card suit.
- On a club lead, declarer plays low from dummy. West wins the ♣K, but declarer gets three club tricks. Some declarers will play to set up hearts and will end up with ten tricks. Others will play to set up diamonds. Declarers who play diamonds might end up winning 11 tricks, but the defenders can play hearts to hold declarer to ten tricks.

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦
	Pass	3NT	All Pass	

INVITING SLAM AFTER A NOTRUMP OPENING

Sometimes responder suspects there is enough strength for slam but is not certain. A raise of a notrump bid to 4NT invites 6NT.

Holding 16 or 17 points, responder raises a 15-17 point 1NT opening bid to 4NT. Opener should bid 6NT with 17 points or a very good 16 points. With 15 or a normal 16, opener passes.

Holding 18 points, responder has enough to bid slam after a 1NT opening bid. He must not bid 4NT, which could be passed.

Holding 12 points, responder raises a 2NT opening to 4NT. Opener passes with only 20 points and bids 6NT with 21 points. With more than 12 points, responder must bid the slam without bidding 4NT.

5NT can be used to invite a grand slam.

After a 1NT opening bid, responder invites a grand slam with 20-21 points. To invite a grand slam, responder raises the notrump bid to 5NT. OPENER CANNOT PASS 5NT. With a minimum 1NT opening opener signs off in 6NT. With a maximum, opener goes to 7NT.

5NT can also be used to invite a grand slam after a 2NT opening. Responder should have 16 points. Again, opener must either go to 6NT with 20 points or 7NT with 21 points.

Dlr: North
Vul: N-S

North

S

♠ 8 7 4 3
♥ 8 7 4 3 2
♦ A 9
♣ 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6 5
♥ A K J
♦ Q J 5 3
♣ A Q J 4

♠ A Q J 10
♥ Q 10 9 5
♦ K 10 4
♣ K 5

♠ K 9 2
♥ 6
♦ 8 7 6 2
♣ 10 9 8 7 6

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
		1NT	Pass	6NT
	All Pass			

- Using 15-17 point 1NT openings, South can add to the 33 points required for slam. When you know

you have enough for slam, bid it. With balanced hands, you don't have to worry about checking for aces, but 4♣, Gerber, may be used for those who insist.

- East leads the ♣10, a safe top of sequence lead against a slam.
- Declarer counts nine top tricks. Options for developing three more tricks are to promote diamonds (lose to the ♦A and three tricks are a sure thing) or repeating a spade finesse (the finesse must work to get the needed three tricks). Declarer should go for promoting diamonds as the sure way to make the contract. Declarer should drive out the ♦A right away. And declarer must be careful when playing those lopsided suits. Declarer wins the ♣K first (high card from the short side). In hearts, declarer plays the ♥A, the ♥K, and then overtakes the ♥J to take four heart tricks.

Dlr: East
Vul: E-W

st
W

♠ 5 4 2
♥ A 4
♦ J 10 9 8
♣ 5 4 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 6
♥ K J 6
♦ K Q 5 2
♣ A 8 7 6

♠ A Q 7 3
♥ Q 10 9
♦ A 7
♣ K Q 10 9

♠ J 10 9 8
♥ 8 7 5 3 2
♦ 6 4 3
♣ J

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
			1NT	Pass
	4NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

- West has 16 points. Partner could have the 17 points needed for slam. West should invite slam by bidding 4NT.
- Now East must decide. Using 15-17 notrumps, East has as good a hand as possible and accepts the invitation. (Players who use 16-18 should also accept because of East's excellent spot cards and 4-4-3-2 distribution.)
- South leads the ♠J.
- Declarer counts winners – three spades, three diamonds and three clubs for nine sure tricks. Hearts can be promoted for two more tricks. The 12th trick is likely to come from clubs when they split. Declarer must pay attention when playing clubs. The suit doesn't split but the ♣J drops, which makes the ♣10 good. Declarer should play hearts, the suit where tricks must be developed right away.

GERBER TO ASK FOR ACES AFTER A NOTRUMP BID

Since 4NT is NOT Blackwood after a notrump bid (see previous page), the Gerber convention is used when responder to notrump needs to ask for aces.

In Gerber, $4\clubsuit$ asks for aces.

Answers are:

- 4♦ = zero aces (or all 4 aces)
- 4♥ = one ace
- 4♠ = two aces
- 4NT = three aces

After using 4♣ to ask for aces, the Gerber bidder can use 5♣ to ask for kings.

Answers are:

- 5♦ = zero kings
- 5♥ = one king
- 5♠ = two kings
- 5NT = three kings
- 6♣ = four kings

With a balanced hand, responder can bid slam when the points are there without asking for aces. When your hands are balanced, point count is a good judge of how high to bid.

Deal 7

Dlr: South

Vul: Both

♠ 10 9 8 7
♥ 8 3
♦ Q 7 4
♣ 9 7 4 3

♠ K 5 3
♥ 10 7 4
♦ A J 6
♣ K J 10 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q J
♥ A 6 5 2
♦ K 3 2
♣ A Q 6

♠ 6 4 2
♥ K Q J 9
♦ 10 9 8 5
♣ 8 5

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	Pass	4NT	All Pass	2NT

- North has 12 points across from a hand of either 20 or 21 points. N-S could have 33 points. North can invite slam by bidding 4NT.
- South has 20 points, the bottom of the 2NT opening range. South should pass the slam invitation.
- West leads the ♠10.
- Winners are three spades, one heart, four clubs and two diamonds. Declarer sees enough tricks to make 4NT. Declarer should be careful when playing clubs – cash the ♣A Q before dummy's longer clubs. Duplicate players, who are always on the lookout for overtricks, should try the diamond finesse. As long as declarer makes this play early, there is no risk to the contract. The best scores will go to declarers who saw the chance for the overtrick.

Deal 8

Dlr: West

Vul: None

♠ A K Q 4
♥ Q J 3 2
♦ A 9 7
♣ A 3

♠ 10 9 7 5
♥ A K 5 4
♦ 6 5 3
♣ 10 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 8 6 2
♥ 10 9 8 7
♦ 10 8 2
♣ 9 6

♠ 3
♥ 6
♦ K Q J 4
♣ K Q J 7 5 4 2

The Bidding:	W	N	E	S
	2NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
	4NT	Pass	6♣	All Pass

- East has such a distributional hand that the tricks for 6♣ or even 7♣ can be counted if partner has enough aces. Gerber allows East to find out how many aces opener has. With one ace missing, East is only sure of having control of all suits if clubs are trump. If West had shown all four aces, East could go for the highest scoring grand slam and bid 7NT.
- South will probably lead the ♥10.
- Declarer counts just one loser – a heart. Declarer should draw trumps immediately. On a non-heart lead, declarer can discard hearts on the spades to take all 13 tricks.
- Notice that 6NT won't make on the actual cards because the top two hearts are missing and North will certainly lead hearts on opening lead.