



Texas Transfers

Many fans of Jacoby transfers play Texas transfers as well. The treatments are similar, but there are some important differences.

After a 1NT opening by partner, the Texas transfer may be used to describe a hand with a six-card or longer major suit with appropriate values. When playing a suit contract, it's desirable for the partnership to have a trump fit of at least eight cards. When partner opens 1NT, she promises at least two cards in each suit, so when you have six cards in a major suit, you usually know right away which suit you want to be the trump suit.

Playing Texas transfers, responder jumps to 4♦ or 4♥ asking opener to bid the next higher suit (4♥ or 4♠, respectively). This allows the stronger hand to become declarer. For example:

<i>Opener</i>	<i>Responder</i>
1NT	4♦ ⁽¹⁾
4♥ ⁽²⁾	

(1) I have at least six hearts. Please bid 4♥.

(2) Okay.
or

<i>Opener</i>	<i>Responder</i>
1NT	4♥ ⁽¹⁾
4♠ ⁽²⁾	

(1) I have long spades. Please bid 4♠.

(2) I'll be declarer.

What kinds of hands are appropriate for the use of the Texas transfer? Some examples:

♠A7 ♥KQ10954 ♦9842 ♣6

Bid 4♦, a Texas transfer to 4♥, after partner opens 1NT (strong, 15 to 17 high-card points). (Note that opener must Announce "transfer" to the opponents when responder employs this method.)

♠A Q 10 7 6 5 ♥8 ♦K 9 3 ♣J 5 2

Bid 4♥, a transfer to 4♠, after partner's 1NT opening.

♠A K J 5 4 3 2 ♥A 7 ♦K Q 2 ♣9

Bid 4♥, a transfer to 4♠, after partner's 1NT opening. This hand is so strong that you will continue toward slam after partner accepts the transfer.

Be careful not to use the Texas transfer on a hand that is too weak. For example, you hold

♠J 10 9 6 5 3 ♥Q 6 5 ♦7 4 ♣10 5.

Using the Texas transfer after partner's 1NT opening would be far too aggressive. This hand doesn't have enough strength to force the partnership to game. It would be better to simply use the Jacoby transfer (2♥), asking partner to bid 2♠, which you will pass.

Speaking of Jacoby transfers, a question that sometimes comes up is this: why play both Jacoby and Texas transfers?

Consider these two auctions:

<i>Opener</i>	<i>Responder</i>
1NT	4♥ ⁽¹⁾
4♠	Pass

(1) Texas transfer.

and

<i>Opener</i>	<i>Responder</i>
1NT	2♥ ⁽¹⁾
2♠	4♠

(1) Jacoby transfer.

In both cases, the partnership gets to the same contract. In both cases, responder promises a six-card (or longer) spade suit. Does this mean that the Texas transfer is unnecessary or redundant? No. These two auctions show different types of responding hands.

In the first case, responder transferred at the game level and passed after partner accepted the transfer. Responder wants to be in game, but has no slam interest. Responder says, "Partner, we belong in 4♠, but no higher." (If responder had a really strong hand with spades such as this

♠AKJ5432 ♥A7 ♦KQ2 ♣9,

he could transfer and then use Blackwood or make some other slam try to let opener know about the strength of the hand.)

In the second auction, however, responder forced to game in a two-step fashion, using the Jacoby transfer instead of the Texas transfer. Why?

Experienced players typically use this sequence to show a hand with slam interest, but not enough to insist on slam by itself. Something like this:

♠KQ8742 ♥KQ ♦AJ5 ♣106

If partner has a maximum for her 1NT opening, slam will have a reasonable play. With a minimum, it's probably better to stay in 4♠. Bidding the hand in this manner allows opener to contribute her opinion as to whether the partnership belongs in game only or slam. Two heads are better than one. □

Don't forget! If you use Texas transfers, the sequence 1NT–4♥ is a transfer to spades, not to play. Forgetting agreements is common when learning new conventions, especially if the conventional bid sounds natural, as in the case of 1NT–4♥. If partner "forgets" that your 4♥ bid is a transfer, don't worry — it's happened to plenty of others before and will happen to plenty of others after!