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This Week in Bridge

(170) They Double Our Transfers

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Level: 2, 6

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General

When we open 1NT, Responder transfers, and the opponent doubles the transfer bid, this is a lead-directing double. This double gives us additional bidding options of pass and redouble. We should be prepared for the auction to become competitive and we want to use our bidding options of pass, XX, and accepting the transfer to prepare our side to make good decisions. Let's see how this works.

Vs. a Lead-Directing X of a Jacoby Transfer

When the auction begins:

1NT P 2♦* X or 1NT P 2♥* X

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

- Pass 2c♥ support
- XX 2c♥ support and a good, long ♦ suit, willing to play 2♦XX if Responder has some values and a couple of ♦.
- 2♥ 3c+♥ support
- Other bids are the same as if there were no X.

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

Example

1NT P 2♦* X
P P —?
• XX Retransfer to ♥
• 2♥ To play
• 3♥ Invitational, 6c♥
• 4♥ To play, 6c♥

Opener's 2♥ bid directly over the X is valuable because now Opener has shown support and if LHO competes in the bidding, Responder can make a better-informed

decision about competing. Opener does not want to make that decision unilaterally because Responder might have 0 points.

Vs. a Lead-Directing X of a Texas Transfer

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

Example

1NT P 4♦* X
—?

- Pass Open to either side declaring
- XX "You play it, partner."
- 4♥ "I want to play it."

About the Auction

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

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

2NT Openings

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

Modern XX Alternative Agreement

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

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

Conclusion

When the opponent doubles our transfer bid, we need agreements for how to handle it and how to use the new possible bids created by the interference, XX and Pass. These agreements give us a good set of tools for having good auctions in these situations.