

Esther Discusses the "Texas 'Two-Step' Transfer" Response to Partner's 1NT or 2NT Opening

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Bruce: Today, we are honored to have with us Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, Quintuple Gold Emerald Life Master (20 Million+ ACBL MasterPoints), who will talk us through the "**Texas 'Two-Step' Transfer" response to Partner's 1NT or 2NT opening**. Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, thanks for taking time to be with us today!

Esther: D**n it, Bruce! How many times do I have to tell you to **NEVER, ever** call me Ms. Klinktoast-Houstonhousen! Always, **ALWAYS, ALWAYS** instead call me, Esther!

Bruce: Errr, well, sorry again about that, Ms. Klinktoast..., err, I mean Esther.

Esther: Well, Bruce. Please try to exercise at least a modicum of empathy, assuming you have at least the limited capacity to do so. Can you imagine how relentlessly all the other girls in grades K through 4 of my elementary school years relentlessly, endlessly tormented me about my last name, Klinktoast-Houstonhousen? As I have previously told you, they would encircle me routinely, **loudly** singing:

*Klinktoast-Houstonhousen,
Klinktoast-Houstonhousen,
What a stinky name!
And you stink too,
Klinktoast-Houstonhousen!*

Bruce: Well, yes, sorry again, Esther! I do understand that young girls can indeed be quite vicious to each other. Well, in any case, Esther, is this convention name, "**Texas**

'Two-Step' Transfer" commonly used in duplicate bridge circles?

Esther: Well, my *malodorous misanthrope*, absolutely not! Everyone except me calls this convention the "**Texas Transfer**." But I like to call the convention the "**Texas 'Two-Step' Transfer**" simply because I think this title is hilarious! The Texas country/western "two-step" is an extremely common Texas dance involving a one-two, one-two, slide-shuffle movement, or two long steps followed by a half-step or a step-close-step.

Bruce: Well, errrr..., OK, Esther. Whatever you say, since you have 20 million plus MPs! What then are the conditions necessary for Responder to respond with a Texas Transfer demand bid?

Esther: Well, my *simpering simpleton*, Partner/Opener must open either **1NT** or **2NT**. Both these bids "**limit**" the Opener's hand, and Opener must not bid again, unless Responder demands a further bid or demands the answer to a question that Responder is asking. For example, Responder can bid Stayman, by bidding **2C**, which says, "(1) I hold (1) 8-10 HCPs (*probably 9-10*, in case the contract ends up being **3NT**, in which case [unlike in suit contracts] HCPs become more important), (2) at least 1 4-card Major, and (3) do you as Opener hold a 4-card Major also, such that if we hold an 8-card fit, Game in a Major may be possible?" Or, Responder can bid **2NT** in response to a **1NT** opening, which says, "Partner, if you are at the top of your **1NT** bid, please bid **3NT**." Or, Partner responding to a **1NT** opening can bid a Jacoby Transfer: A response of **2D** tells Opener, you must bid **2H** (or **3H**, or **4H**), while a response to a **1NT** bid of **2H** says to Opener, "You must bid **2S** (or **3S**, or **4S**)."¹

Bruce: Well, OK, Ms. Klink..., errr, I mean, Esther. You have mentioned conventional Jacoby Transfer bids. I assume that the "**Texas Transfer**" bid is also a transfer bid in which a Diamond response demands that Opener bid Hearts, and a

¹ Similarly, a **3D** bid in response to an opening by Partner of **2NT** demands a Heart bid by Opener, while a **3H** bid in response to Partner's opening of a **2NT** bid demands a Spade bid by Opener.

Heart response demands that Opener bids Spade. Is this correct?

Esther: Well, my *bodacious bobblehead*, BINGO! A "**Texas Transfer**" response by Responder is a 4-level "jump" bid by Responder that demands that Opener then bids, respectively, either **4H**, to Responder bidding **4D**, or **4S**, to Responder bidding **4H**.

Bruce: OK. What then does a "**Texas Transfer**" bid say to Opener?

Esther: Well, Responder knows that Opener holds (1) **15-17** HCPs, (2) no voids or singletons, (3) no more than **1** doubleton, but (4) may hold a 5-card Major. So, Responder is saying, "Because your bid as Opener said you hold at least **2** cards in the Major I am demanding that we bid Game in a specified Major, (1) I then must hold at least **6** of the Major bid that I am demanding (such that we hold at least **8** cards in that Major), and, (2) with your **15-17** HCPs (or **20-22** HCPs), I hold enough HCPs or a distribution that means I know we will make a Game contract in a Major, and (3) I know, knowing my hand, plus your "*limited*" hand, that we cannot **make a slam!**"

Bruce: WOW, Esther! Amazing! But what are the advantages of this bid that you (and you alone) call the "**Texas 'Two-Step' Transfer**"?

Esther: Well, my *dandruff-ridden dufus*, here are the advantages of the "**Texas 'Two-Step' Transfer**": (1) the contract is placed in the hand of the Opening Partner, who holds the strongest hand, with the strongest hand remaining hidden from the Opponents, and (2) the "rapid arrival" denies Opponents the opportunity to communicate information by bidding, and (3) the bid avoids the calamity of the Partnership bidding *above* the **4H** or **4S** level, and thus getting set, and a bad Board, when a Game contract (but no more) is virtually assured!

Bruce: Well, what if you as Responder hold?

6 cards (10 HCPs)

S A3
H KQT982
D T94
C J5

Esther: Well, Responder knows the Partnership holds (1) 10 + ~16 = ~26 HCPs, (2) 8+ Hearts, and Responder holds long Heart trumps combined with doubleton shortness in 2 suits! The Responder also knows that the Partnership may lose 1 Spade, and/or 2 or 3 Diamonds, and/or 1 or 2 Clubs, so slam is unlikely.

Bruce: Well, what if you as Responder hold?

7 cards (7 HCPs)

S AJT7642
H 8
D QT
C T94

Esther: Well, Responder knows the Partnership holds (1) 7 + ~16 = ~23 HCPs, (2) 9+ Spades, and Responder holds long Spade trumps plus 1 singleton and 1 doubleton. The Responder also knows that the Partnership may lose 1 Heart, and/or 1 or 2 Diamonds, and/or 1 to 3 Clubs, so slam is unlikely.

Bruce: Well, what if you as Responder hold?

8 cards (8 HCPs)

S --
H KJT96532
D AT3
C 42

Esther: Well, Responder knows the Partnership holds (1) 8 + ~16 = ~23 HCPs, (2) 10+ Hearts (**NEVER** forget the "**Law of Total Tricks**"!!!!), and Responder holds long Heart trumps plus a void (NO loser in Spades) and a doubleton in Clubs! But the Partnership may lose 2 Clubs, 2 Diamonds, and maybe even a Heart.

**When to Not "Texas Transfer" When Holding
6+ Cards in a Major and Partner Opened 1NT or 2NT**

Bruce: Well, are there ever situations when you hold (1) **6+** cards in a Major and (2) sufficient HCPs or distributions to likely make a Game contract that you would not execute a "Texas Transfer"? What if you as Responder hold?

8 cards (**11** HCPs)

S K2

H KJT96532

D AT3

C --

Esther: Well, Responder knows the Partnership holds (1) 11 + ~16 = ~27 HCPs, (2) **10+** Hearts (**NEVER** forget the "**Law of Total Tricks**"), a void, 1st-Round "control" in Diamonds, and 2nd-Round "control" in Spades. So, it might be better to keep the "conversation" at a "lower" level.

You as Responder could first bid a Jacoby Transfer to Hearts, and *then* bid 4**H**. This says to Partner, "Partner, I think we may make a slam contract. What do you think? Should we 'talk' further?"

Another alternative is for you to execute a Jacoby Transfer, and then "jump" to a bid of 4**C** which is a "splinter" bid² showing (1) interest in slam and (2) either a Club void or a "loser" singleton.³

² Within the "**Esther Bridge Lessons**", see: "Esther Convention Lesson #16: '**Splinter**' Bids by Responder or Opener Showing a Singleton or Void and Inviting a Possible Slam Bid":

<https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/splinter.pdf>

³ For further discussion of various options see Larry Cohen's web posting, "**Jacoby or Texas**", at: <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/jacoby-or-texas>