

## WHAT TO DO AFTER MINOR SUIT TRANSFERS

This is a hand from the South Australian State Teams Championship finals.

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

Both teams played in 3NT, going down one when the opposition cashed five heart tricks. However, 6-minor is cold. How do you avoid the 'ridiculous' 3NT contract in lieu of 5-minor or 6-minor (6♣)?

Admittedly, at one table West opened 3♣ which gave East a challenging bidding problem. As my husband has suggested, you need some bid to discover more about partner's hand, rather than just punting 3NT with the heart suit wide open. His suggestion is that a bid of the lower minor (or other minor over a 3-minor pre-empt) should ask partner to clarify their hand – or be natural and forcing. It's not a bad idea, though it isn't one I have explored fully.

At the other table, after East's 1NT opening bid, West transferred to clubs then rebid 3NT. I don't know how you play that, but I play it as a mild slam try in clubs, with no splinter. After all, why transfer to a minor (and tell the opposition about your hand) if you just plan to play in 3NT?

Once you have transferred to a minor, you need some planned continuations. Bidding 3-Major now should show a singleton or void in that suit. It doesn't have to be a slam hand (for instance, this hand doesn't look like a slam hand!) but it's an investigatory bid, checking for the best final contract, whether that is 3NT, 5-minor or 4-Major (if, for example, East has a 5-card Major).

On the hand above, my auction would proceed:

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
Pass	1NT
2♠ (transfer to clubs)	2NT (1)
3♥ (2)	4♣ (3)
4♦ (4)	4NT (RKCB)
5♦ (1 key card)	6♣

- (1) Not a super accept. (I shall explain more about this below.)
- (2) 0 or 1 heart
- (3) Agreeing clubs, committing to at least 5♣. You are now working with 30 HCP between your two hands, given there is no wastage of values in the heart suit.
- (4) 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> cue bid – therefore showing the ♦K

Now you can easily reach 6♣.

Assuming that you play 2♠ as a transfer to clubs and 2NT as a transfer to diamonds, then the super accept should be the acceptance of the transfer, and the minimum hand/non super accept should be the 'gap' bid. There is a reason for this, though it is not an obvious reason until it is explained:

Imagine your partner opens 1NT and you have a hand like this:

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

If you play this way, you 'plan' to transfer to diamonds via 2NT. If partner super accepts (likes diamonds), then you pass their 3♦ bid. However, if partner does not super accept, by bidding 3♣, you are able to pass the 3♣ bid and hopefully you are playing in your better fit.

In its own way, it's a little like using Junk Stayman with a weak hand and both Majors – so that you can find your better Major fit. Only this way, you find your better minor fit with a weak hand and both minors. It does mean that partner has to super accept whenever they have 3 decent diamonds.

Why does the new suit show a splinter? I do know some people use the bid to show a 4-card Major. However, that is illogical if you analyse the situation. With a 4-card Major and a longer minor, you should still use Stayman. If partner either denies a 4-card Major (2♦) or bids the other Major from the one you hold, you can now bid your minor at the 3-level, which is game forcing and showing at least 5 cards in your minor and a 4-card Major. Once you realise you can bid that way, you can adopt the use of the splinter bid after the minor suit transfer!

Thus:

1NT	2♠ (club transfer)
2NT/3♣	3♦ )
	3♥ ) are all splinter bids
	3♠ )
	3NT is a mild slam try, with no splinter (or a singleton Ace/King)

because otherwise you would have just jumped to 3NT over 1NT

1NT	2NT (diamond transfer)
3♣/3♦	3♥ )
	3♠ ) are all splinter bids
	4♣ )

The 4♣ bid, however, is a definite slam try because you have by-passed 3NT.

Something worth considering:

1NT	2♠
3♣	3♦ splinter
3♥/3♠	

are not cue bids. Instead, they are better used to show a 5-card Major, in case you have a 5-3 fit in the Major. If you want to look for slam, you have to bid 4♣ to start a cue bidding sequence (by going past 3NT you are looking for slam).

If you show a splinter, then opener rebids 3NT, you can still indicate you originally had a better hand with slam interest by removing the contract from 3NT to 4-minor, asking for cue bids.

By the way, I don't use Minorwood. I find that using the 4-minor bid to set the trump suit, asking for cue bids, works better. Then we can still use 4NT as RKCB. Here's an example 'why':

Playing pairs with an irregular partner, she had advised me that 4-minor was always Minorwood.

♠ A 10 4 2  
♥ K J 3 2  
♦ Q 4  
♣ K Q 6

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠ (clubs)
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣ (1)
Pass	4NT (2)	Pass	6♣

(1) I knew this was Minorwood, but I didn't want it to be. I wanted to bid 4♣ to find a diamond cue bid for slam!

Fortunately for us, East did not lead a diamond. What was more 'ridiculous' was that we made 6♣ but the field was going down in 3NT, with East usually leading diamonds, holding 10-9-x-x-x. However, this outright top was undeserved.

If not playing Minorwood, then the auction would have been:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠ (clubs)
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣ (1)
Pass	4♥ (2)	Pass	5♣

- (1) Asking for cue bids
- (2) Heart cue bid, denying a diamond cue bid

Now I know we are missing the diamond control, so we play in 5♣. Since 3NT was failing across the board, this would have been our deserved top!

See, I'm not really a result merchant. I do actually like to earn my good results.

(It is also one of the reasons that, playing online bridge, I do not say "WPP" when the opposition have defended poorly. If partner has me say, "Well bid" or "Well played", they have earned their kudos!)

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