



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(158) Transfer McCabe

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Level: 6

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General

When partner opens a weak two bid and RHO makes a takeout double, we know that the auction is about to become competitive. We want to compete in the bidding in this kind of auction most often when we have a fit for partner's suit. Since this is the case, then it makes sense to assign more than one bid to promise a fit for preemptor's suit to allow us more than one way to show a fit for partner's suit. This approach is called *McCabe*. We can further improve this approach by allowing responder to use transfer bids. This approach is called *Transfer McCabe*; Let's see how it works.

Transfer McCabe

Playing Transfer McCabe, we have the agreement that after a weak two bid from partner and a takeout double by RHO, a new suit bid is not natural. Instead, these bids are transfer bids, either showing Responder's own suit or showing a fit for Opener and asking for another suit lead. Opener accepts the transfer and then responder shows which hand type they have on the next round of the bidding – by either bidding, passing, or returning to partner's suit.

2♠ X ___?

- XX* A transfer to ♣, either showing a long ♣ suit or a ♠ fit asking for a ♣ lead.
- 2NT Feature or Ogust, whatever your partnership plays when there is no competition.
- 3♣* A transfer to ♦, either showing a long ♦ suit or a ♠ fit asking for a ♦ lead.
- 3♦* A transfer to ♥, either showing a long ♥ suit or a ♠ fit asking for a ♥ lead.
- 3♥* A raise to 3♠, with either the ♠A or ♠K – asking for a ♠ lead.
- 3♠* A raise to 3♠, usually without a top ♠ honor.

We can make one of these Transfer McCabe bids with any hand that was planning to compete to the three-level, either in our own suit or in partner's suit. By using these bids as we compete to the 3-level, we more accurately help partner defend and/or compete in the bidding.

Note: These Transfer McCabe bids are all alertable.



Examples

♠ J

♥ 986

♦ AQJ9872

♣ 82

2♠ X ___

With this hand, bid 3♣* as a transfer to ♦, planning to play in 3♦ if the opponents let you.

♠ J98

♥ 9862

♦ AQJ8

♣ 82

2♠ X ___

With this hand, bid 3♣* planning to later bid 3♠ to show good honors in the ♦ suit and a ♠ fit.

Conclusion

When partner opens a weak two bid, you will often raise that bid to at least the 3-level. This is particularly true when RHO makes a takeout double and you have 3-card support, or even honor doubleton, as you may want to raise partner to compete in the bidding. Using Transfer McCabe raises allows you more ways to raise partner's suit (a frequent trend in modern bidding) and creates better communication with partner – you either show a fit for partner and help them get off to a good opening lead by showing honors in another suit or you just show a suit of your own. This transfer bid allows Responder to immediately show where their values are and leaves the opponents in the dark about whether this initial transfer is “lead directing with a fit” or shows a long suit of Responder's own.