

OPENING NO TRUMP BIDS AND RESPONSES

There are two numbers in bridge which you must keep in mind at all times. Those numbers are 8 and 25. Eight is the number of cards in a major suit you and your partner must have in your combined hands in order to bid and make game. Twenty-five is the number of points you and your partner must have in your combined hands in order to bid and make game. There are exceptions, such as distribution points, which we will discuss later, but for now, we will only consider high card points.

So from the moment you pick up and arrange your cards. As you look at your hand, your thoughts should be: do we have enough points and distribution to bid and make game, or if not, to what level can we bid and in what strain should we place the contract—whether in a major suit, no trump, or a minor suit.

Your bidding should be designed to determine what your combined point count is and whether you have a golden fit in a suit—eight or more cards of the suit in the combined hands.

If your partner opens the bidding with 1 spade or 1 heart, you will know that he has between 12 and 21 points and 5 or more spades or hearts. If you have 13 or more points and three or more of the suit your partner opened, you will immediately know that you have at least eight cards in the suit and enough combined points to bid and make game. However, it is not always that black and white. Bridge is a game that has many gray areas. Over the past 100 years, experts have devised bidding systems designed to elicit and exchange information about each other's hand to get you to the right contract. These systems are called conventions.

Most people play between 25 and 50 conventions. However, there are at least 360 known conventions which bridge players use. We will explore a few of these conventions, but for the most part we will focus on conventions that most people play.

Bridge conventions have been used to solve difficult bidding problems that can be tricky using natural bidding. There are pluses and minuses when using conventions. Since many conventions use artificial bidding, you give up the ability to use those bids naturally.

For example, if you are a passed hand and your partner bids one spade or one heart, we use a convention called 2-way reverse Drury to tell partner we have a limit raise with 3 of his suit by bidding 2 clubs and 2 diamonds to tell partner you have a limit raise with 4 cards in his suit. Using Drury, you are giving up the use of natural 2 club or 2 diamond bids. However, on balance, it is often better to use multiple conventions to assist you in reaching your optimum contract.

There are also defensive conventions used in the play of the hand which, when used properly, can improve your defense. This is not to suggest that you should use all the conventions known to man. You should use the ones you and your partner can handle.

Beyond conventions, there are treatments. A treatment is not a convention but is an understanding between partners as to when and under what circumstances conventions should be used. Meckstroth and Rodwell, one of the most successful partnerships in the history of bridge, are said to have hundreds if not thousands of pages of treatments. It is important to know when and under what circumstances to use a particular convention. For example, we all play weak two bids. Your convention cards list the point range, usually 5-10, and the responses, ROI*, and feature or Ogust asking bids. But they don't tell you when to use them. Sometimes, if you are vulnerable, it is okay to make a weak 2 bid, but you should have a decent suit and the top of your point range. If you are not vulnerable, you can make a weak 2 bid with the lower end of your point range and a weaker trump suit. You will not find a place on your convention card which discusses these options, but they should be discussed with and agreed to by you and your partner. These are treatments.

My beginning lessons will focus on communication with your partner in an effort to find a major suit fit and game points, or a no trump game if there is no major suit fit, or, rarely, a minor suit game with sufficient points and a minor suit fit where there is no major suit fit or stoppers in all suits required for a no trump game. We will explore the bidding used to communicate between partners after opening in a suit or in no-trump.

Opening No Trump and Its Ranges

For the next three or four lessons, we are going to focus on finding the right contract after your partner has opened one no trump, which is the bid we use to describe a balanced hand with 15 to 17 high card points. Purists will tell you not to count distribution points when evaluating a no-trump hand as we do in suit contracts. This is because in a no-trump contract, there is no ability to ruff losing tricks with a trump.

That being said, I am an aggressive bidder and tend to upgrade or downgrade the quality of a hand based upon distribution and texture of the hand, even in no trump. So, if you open a balanced hand with a good five-card suit, something like A K J 10 5, that suit is likely to produce four and possibly five tricks in a no-trump contract, while a five-card suit such as K 7 5 3 2 may produce one or possibly two tricks. With an equal number of total points in the hand, I am likely to upgrade the first hand by at least one point and downgrade the second hand by one point, because of their relative trick-taking values. Accordingly, with the first hand, I would likely open 1 no trump with 14 points, taking into account the upgrade. With the second hand and 14 or 15 points, I would likely open one of the bad five-card suit, rather than 1 no trump. I have an agreement with my partners that an opening bid of 1 no trump has a range of a good 14 or 14+ to 17. It is marked on our card, and partner must announce 14+ or a good 14 to 17 when I bid 1 no trump.

There is a very logical reason for upgrading or downgrading hands based on distribution and the weakness or strength of long suits. When Charles Goren invented the standardized point count evaluation system 70 years ago, he converted the trick-taking value of aces, kings, and queens into points and determined that to open one of a suit, a hand must have 13 points and 16 to 18 points for one no trump. Over time, the requirement for bidding one of a suit has been lowered to 12 points and the requirements for bidding one no trump has evolved to a range of 15-17 points and even a good 14 or 14¹/₂ to 17. Some people play 14-16 and many people play weak no trumps, which need 10-12, 12-14 or a similar lower range.

My system has a range of 15-17 points. However, I will upgrade 14-point hands that have a decent five-card suit, since that suit will likely add an extra trick, and since we are converting certain cards to points, I advocate using distribution in the form of a long suit to add point value to the actual high

cards. I will also add a point to a hand with combinations such as J 10 9 x or 10 9 8 x or Q 10 9 8. While the respective point total may be 1, 0, and 2 respectively, those suits are likely to produce an extra trick as opposed to hands with J x x x, 10 x x, or Q x x x. Note both sets of hands have the same point value but the combination or intermediate cards add value which does not show up in the total points. We call this element "texture." You can tell by looking at a hand whether it has good or bad texture and either add or subtract points accordingly. Here are two examples:

S.	AJxx	S.	A J 10 x
H.	K x x	H.	K 10 9
D	Qxxx	D.	Q 10 x x
C	Ax	C	A 9

Here, both hands have 14 hcps. But the hand on the right has better texture. The J 10 of spades is worth an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 point, since it is likely to add an extra trick. The 10 9 of hearts is worth an extra half point as compared to the X X on the left. The Q10 combination is worth an extras $\frac{1}{2}$ point because of the tenace.

So the hand on the right with 14 hcps is worth 15 or 16 points because of the texture. I would open 1 no trump, whereas the hand on the left, with no texture, is too weak to open 1 no trump. I would open that hand 1 diamond, planning to bid 1 spade at my next turn.

No Trump Bidding Structure

Let's talk about no trump bidding. The no trump bid is the most descriptive bid in bridge and the easiest way for a partnership to begin to ascertain the best contract. It is the most descriptive because it is limited to a three-point range (15-17) and must be balanced. For many years, the balanced aspect limited the shape of the hand to one of three kinds: 3-3-3-4, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2 and did not allow a singleton or more than one doubleton. That changed several years ago to allow up to two doubletons, with a shape of 5-4-2-2 or 6-3-2-2 still being considered balanced.

In 2016, in response to popular demand because pros were bidding 1 no trump with singletons, the ACBL again changed the requirements for a one no trump opening bid to allow a singleton Ace, King, or Queen. However, if the no trump opener was bidding it with a singleton A, K, or Q, he could not also have a doubleton. So his shape could be 1-3-4-5 or 1-4-4-4. So as of today, in order to open one no trump, you must have a hand with 15 to 17 points and one of these shapes: 3-3-3-4, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, 5-4-2-2, 4-4-4-1, 6-3-2-2, 6-3-3-1 or 5-4-3-1. In each case, a singleton must be an A, K, or Q.

Please do not open 1 no trump with a singleton in a major suit. The reason is that if partner had a 5-card suit opposite your singleton, he is likely to transfer to that suit and you would be stuck with a 5-1 fit, since your partner will expect you to have at least 2 cards in his major suit. I would also caution you not to open 1 no trump with 5-4-2-2 distribution where the five-card suit is a major, since the hand can be more accurately described by opening one of your five-card major and next bidding your other four-card suit. True, you are giving up the ability to show a hand with 15 -17 points when you do this, but it allows you to show your pattern with an opening hand, requiring you to work out the point total with partner.

It used to be that you could not open 1 no trump with a five-card major since it would be difficult to find a 5-3 fit after a one no trump opening bid. If you were to open 1 spade with A 09 xx, Kxx, Oxx, Ax, you would accurately describe a hand with 5 spades and 12-21 points. But you would have no convenient rebid if partner bid 1 no trump or 2 of another suit. Whereas if you opened 1 spade with A Q 9 x x, K x, Q x x x, A x, and partner bid 1 no trump, you can conveniently bid your 4 card suit.

But there is merit to opening 1 no trump with a five-card major as long as you don't have another 4 card suit to rebid, since it describes your point range, which is half of what you need to know to bid game. However, with no four-card major, partner will not bid Stayman to look for a 4-4 major suit fit. This conundrum militates against opening one no trump with a five-card major.

However, as they say, necessity is the mother of invention, and Bridge Pro Kit Woolsey developed a convention called Puppet Stayman in the 1970s. The convention was subsequently refined by pros Steve Robinson and Neil Silverman. Puppet Stayman, when properly used, enables the responder to find out from his partner who opened 1 no trump whether he has a five-card major or one or both four-card majors. It is an invaluable tool to add to your arsenal, and I will be teaching Puppet Stayman as well as regular Stayman, two of numerous conventions used to determine the best contract after one no trump (or two no trump) opening.

The same rules and guidelines apply to hands where you can open 2 no trump, except that there your point count will be 20-21. Balanced hands with 18-19 points are described by bidding one of a suit and then jumping to 2nt at your next turn.

This works easily when you don't have a 5-card major. You simply bid 1 of a minor and after partner bids 1 of a major, you jump to 2nt, which is most descriptive. It gets a little sticky when you have a balanced hand with 5 of a major and 18-19 points. You do not have the ability to jump to 2 no trump at your next bid to show 18-19, but you have several options: With a bad 5 card suit, consider downgrading to 1 no trump or open a 3 or 4 card minor and jump to 2nt. With a good 5 card suit and the top of your bid, upgrade to 2 no trump. There is no perfect bid here.

Balanced hands with 22-24 points are described by first bidding 2 clubs and then rebidding 2 no trump. Hands with 25-27 points are described by bidding 2 clubs and then rebidding 3 no trump. An opening bid of 3 no trump is not used as a strong bid. Rather, it describes a hand with a solid seven-card minor suit (clubs or diamonds) headed by the AKQJ and invites partner to pass if he has one or more stoppers in the other three suits. If he does not, he must bid 4 clubs, directing you to pass if your long suit is clubs or to correct to 4 diamonds if your long suit is diamonds. This is called the Gambling 3 no trump convention.

Please note that after showing 1 no trump, 18-19 point no trump hands, 2 no trump hands and 22-24 no trump hands, all conventions and treatments which we are going to review are in play.

No Trump Bid Ranges

Bidding

1 no trump
1 minor, then rebid 2 no trump
2 no trump
2 clubs followed by 2 no trump
2 clubs followed by 3 no trump
2 clubs followed by 4 no trump
2 clubs followed by 5 no trump

Shows

14+ to 17 pts — balanced hand
18-19 pts — balanced hand
20-21 pts — balanced hand
22-24 pts — balanced hand
25-27 pts — balanced hand
28-29 pts -- balanced hand
30-31 pts -- balanced hand

The single weakness of this bidding structure is the inability to use Stayman or Puppet Stayman to unearth a major suit fit after 2 clubs followed by a 3 no trump bid, since any subsequent bids are at the 4 level and may get you too high.

A Canadian pro named Eric Kokish developed a bidding sequence which bears his name to resolve that conundrum and it is used by many bridge players including most experts. The responses can be difficult to remember and since I will be loading you up with other conventions, i will not teach Kokish at this time unless requested. Suffice it to say, the goal of Kokish is to describe hands with 20-21, 22-24 and 25+ hands at the two level, which enables responder to bid Stayman or Puppet Stayman at a lower level.

Responder's Role After Partner Opens 1 No Trump Responses to 1 no trump

So back to responses and rebids. The first thing to remember is that when your partner opens one no-trump, you become the captain of the ship. You ask all the pertinent questions and make most of the decisions on setting the final contract. You already know partner's point range and that he has a balanced hand, so based upon your hand, you will want to ask partner certain questions about his hand. For example, does he have a five-card major, does he have one or both four-card majors, does he have

the upper end of his range (16-17) or the lower end of his range (14^{1/2}-15). Based upon opener's response to responder's inquiry, responder can accurately place the contract. Or if opener's response is ambiguous, responder can make a further inquiry to narrow down opener's response.

One thing we know without asking is that if responder has 10 or more points, there are enough combined points for game we have enough points for game when added to opener's 14 to 17.

This means that you have a combined 25-27 points without asking (a 14+ hand should be considered 15 since it has an extra trick value). In this case, with an appropriate hand, you need only search for a major suit fit by using Stayman or Puppet Stayman or bid 3 no trump if your hand is not suitable for game in a major suit.

Requirements for responding to 1 no trump opener;

0-7	pass, unless you use Stayman when short in clubs, or make a Jacoby Transfer
8-9	invitational: raise to 2 no trump or use a Jacoby Transfer or Stayman and suggest game
10-15	3 no trump or game in a major suit after stayman, a transfer, or smolen
16-17	4 no trump, a quantitative raise in no trump, inviting 6 no trump with max
18-19	6 no trump
20-21	5 no trump, forcing to 6 no trump, inviting 7 no trump with a max
22+	7 no trump

STAYMAN

Stayman is a convention designed to unearth whether the partnership has a 4-4 major suit fit after opener bids 1 no trump. So with one or both 4 card majors, responder bids 2 clubs asking opener to bid a 4-card major if he has one. There are requirements for using Stayman. Responder should have 8 or more points and one or both 4 card majors. With 8-9 points, his hand is invitational. With 10 or more points, his hand is game forcing.

With the 8-9 point hand, responder bids 2 clubs. If opener responds with 2 of a major suit that responder has 4 cards in, responder invites to game by bidding 3 of that suit.

If opener has the maximum of his range, he should bid 4 of the suit. With a minimum he should pass, since there are not sufficient total points for game.

SMOLEN

We also use Stayman when responder has 10 or more points and 5-4 in the major suits. If opener bids one of responder's suits, responder simply bids game in that suit. If opener bids 2 diamonds, denying a 4 (or 5-card) major, we use a convention called Smolen, named after Pro Mike Smolen who invented it. This bid enables the pair to locate a 4-4 or 5-3 major suit fit.

Here's how it works: Opener bids 1 no trump. Then:

With 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors and 10+ plus points, responder first bids Stayman 2 clubs.

If opener has a 4 card major, he bids it and responder bids game in that suit.

If opener does not have a 4 card major he bids 2 diamonds. That means there is no 4-4 major suit fit, but there could still be a 5-3 major suit fit.

So after opener bids 2 diamonds, responder jumps to 3 or his 4-card major. This bid must be alerted as Smolen showing 4 cards in the bid suit and 5 cards in the other major. This sequence tells opener that responder has 5-4 in the majors with 4 cards in the suit bid by responder at the 3 level and 5 cards in the other major suit. So if opener has 3 cards in responder's 5 card major, opener bids game in that suit as there is an 8-card fit. If not, opener bid 3 no Trump.

Here's an example:

<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
1 no trump	2 clubs
2 diamonds	3 hearts (showing 5 spades and 4 hearts)
4 spades with 3 cards or 3 no trump with two	
 Opener's hand	 KQx Ax KJxxx Qx

Some Bids and Rebids after partner's 1NT

If you hold 10 points, get to game. When you have 1 or both 4 card majors, you would like to play in game in a major suit, so you bid Stayman 2c. If opener replies with 2 Spades or 2 Hearts, you jump to game in the suit with a 4-4 fit and at least 25 pts.

If you have AQxx QJxx xxx xx, bid Stayman, if opener bids 2 spades or 2 hearts, raise to 3 of that suit, which tells opener that you have a 4-4 fit in that suit but only 8 or 9 points. With a minimum opener will pass. With a maximum of a good 16 to 17 points, opener will bid 4 of his major suit. Of course responder could have a hand 15-18 points, in which case he can pursue bidding slam which usually requires 33 total points.

The general rule is that when opener bids 1 no trump and you have 0-7 points, you pass. The exception is when you have 0 to 7 points and one of these short-in-clubs distributions:

XXXX XXXX XXXX X
- or -
XXXX XXXX XXXXX (void)
- or -
XXXX XXX XXXXX X

Here you should bid Stayman and pass whatever partner bids in response to your Stayman bid. The logic here is that with your weak hand partner will not do well in his 1 no trump contract. However, with your shortness in clubs, your hand as trick taking value by ruffing losing clubs in your hand, which is worth 2 or 3 more distribution points for shortness which are not helpful in a no-trump contract. This is called the GARBAGE STAYMAN CONVENTION. Since you are captain and will pass any response opener makes, there is no danger in the contract being advanced beyond the 2 level.

The one drawback of garbage Stayman is where opener has a hand with 5 clubs. If so, you can still ruff losing clubs but the contract will be fraught with danger. The possibility of this scenario is outweighed by the benefit of finding a fit in diamonds, hearts or spades at the 2 level which is better than having your partner play in 1 no trump.

With a balanced hand and 0-7 points, you should simply pass partner's 1 no trump opening.

PUPPET STAYMAN

Puppet Stayman can be played when partner opens 1 no trump, bids a minor and jumps to 2 no trump, or opens 2 no trump. The purpose of using Puppet Stayman is to determine whether opener has a 5-card major or one or both 4 card majors.

Puppet Stayman is used only when there are enough points for game. You must have 10 plus points opposite 1 no trump, 6+ points if your partner has shown 1819 points by jumping to 2 no trump at his second turn, at least 4 points (with an ace, a king or 2 queens) if partner opened 2 no trump showing 20-21 points, or at least 3 points with an ace, king or queen.

You should never use Puppet Stayman over opener's 1 no trump bid with 4-4. Use Regular Stayman since you are not looking for a 5-3 major suit fit.

The requirements for Puppet Stayman are having enough points for game when combined with partner's hand and having one of these major suit holdings:

3-3, 3-4, 3-1, 3-2.

The reason is, when you are 4-4 in the majors, you will find a fit by using regular Stayman. When you have 1 or both 3 card majors, you will find a 5-3 fit by using Puppet. When you have a 3 and 4 card major, you can find out if you have a 5-3 or 4-4 major suit fit. If there is no 8-card fit, you can sign off at 3 no trump.

Here's how the bidding goes in Puppet:

Partner opens 1 no trump. Since 2 clubs by you would be regular Stayman, you bid 3 clubs, which opener must alert. Opener will know what your possible holdings are as described above. Here are opener's possible responses to your 3 club Puppet bid.

3 diamonds by partner says he has one or both 4 card majors but no 5-card major.

3 hearts by opener says he has a 5-card heart suit

3 spades by opener says he has a 5 card spade suit

3 no trump says opener has neither a 5-card major or 4 card major.

If you have a four-card major when opener shows one or both major suits, you bid the major suit in which you don't have 4 cards. If opener has four of your suit, he will bid game in your suit (the one you didn't bid). If there is no 4-4 major suit fit, opener will bid 3 no trump.

If opener responded 3 hearts or spades showing a 5-card suit, you bid 4 of that suit, otherwise you bid 3 no trump.

The same bidding sequence applies when opener bids 2 no trump or 2 clubs followed by 2 no trump, with one exception. Since you are already at the 3 level,

you cannot distinguish between Regular Stayman or Puppet Stayman by bidding 3 clubs, so we use only Puppet Stayman.

After 2 no trump — 3 clubs or 2 clubs — 2 diamonds — 2 no trump, 3 clubs is Puppet Stayman. Opener's responses are the same as over 1 no trump — 3C

3 diamonds shows one or both 4-card majors but no 5 card major.

3 hearts or 3 spades shows 5 cards in the suit bid

3 no trump shows no 4 or 5 card major.

After partner bids 3 diamonds showing 1 or both 4 card majors, if you have both 4 card majors, you cannot bid one major denying 4 cards in that suit, telling opener you have the other major. To show both 4 card majors, you must bid 4 diamonds over opener's 3 diamonds. This tells opener you have both 4 card majors and allows him to set the contract.

JACOBY TRANSFERS

This convention developed by Oswald Jacoby nearly 90 years ago. This is an invaluable tool for bidding after partner open's 1 or 2 no trump. It has several purposes: 1. **To** get the strong hand to play the contract in your suit; 2) to tell partner you have a long suit, 3) to initiate a bidding sequence to determine the best contract.

After opener bids 1 no trump, if responder has 5 or more cards in a major suit, he bids 2 of the suit directly beneath his long suit, at which time opener is required to verbalize the suit to which he is transferred. So if responder bids 2 diamonds, opener must say hearts or transfer to hearts. Similarly, if responder bids 2 hearts, opener must announce spades or transfer to spades.

At this point all we know is that responder had 5 or more hearts or spades. His point count is unknown. Opener is then obligated to bid 2 of the transferred suit. Opener may bid 3 of the transferred suit if he has 4 card support and the top of his bid, inviting responder to bid game if his hand is suitable.

Once opener bids 2 of the transferred suit, responder has several options.

1. He can pass with a minimum hand (fewer than 8 points);
2. He can bid a new 4-card suit, showing better than the minimum and inviting opener to take appropriate action.
3. He can bid 2 no trump, showing a 5 card transfer suit, with 8-9 points and values outside the transferred suit.
4. He can bid 3 hearts with 8-9 points and a 6-card transferred suit, inviting opener to bid game with an appropriate hand.
5. He can bid 3 no trump, showing 5 hearts and 10 or more points with values outside the transferred suit.
6. He can bid 4 hearts with a 6-card transferred suit and slam interest if opener has a suitable hand to pursue.

Note: While there are point requirements for bidding Stayman over opener's 1 no trump, there are no such requirements for using Jacoby Transfers. The reason for that is if you have a weak hand and a 5 or six card major, the hand will play better in 2 of your long suit than in 1 no trump, since the opponents are likely to have more points than your side, and your long suit will have trick taking value as trump but not in no-trump.

Each one of these bids is descriptive, the purpose of which is to exchange information in an effort to arrive at the optimum contract.

TEXAS TRANSFERS

Texas Transfers are similar to Jacoby Transfers except they are initiated at the four level, promise a 6 card or longer suit and enough points for game but no interest in slam (likely 10-14 points). A typical bidding sequence is:

1 no trump 4 diamonds

4 hearts pass

if responder is interested in slam with 15 or more points and a six card heart suit, he shows it as follows:

1 no trump 2 diamonds

2 hearts 4 hearts

Opener will recognize the difference between the two sequences and proceed accordingly.

Alternatively, if responder has 17 or more points and a good 6 card suit (A KJxx x), he will take the reins as follows:

1 no trump 4 diamonds

4 hearts 4 no trump (RKC)

There is one more transfer convention, called Delayed Texas Transfer. This is used when responder has a game forcing hand (10+ points) and 6-4 or 4-6 distribution in the major suits. Here, after opener bids 1 no trump, we start out with Stayman to unearth a 4-4 or 6-2 fit in a major suit. Note you have a guaranteed 8-card fit in your 6-card suit, but you may have a 4-4 fit in the other suit. Playing in the 4-4 fit is favorable, since the 6 card suit will likely produce discards. So how do we bid it?

Start out with a regular Stayman bid. If partner responds in your 4-card suit, bid game in that suit. If he denies a 4-card major by bidding 2 diamonds, jump to 4 of the suit below your six card suit, to which opener must announce transfer to the transferred suit. By using this method, opener with the stronger hand will play game in the 8-card suit.

4-SUIT TRANSFERS

4-suit transfers can be very effective for use in addition to Jacoby Transfers which only transfer to major suits. Using 4-suit transfers denies a four card major and enables the pair to find a fit for game or possibly slam in no trump of a minor suit.

4-suit transfers are used when responder has a six-card minor suit or two weak 5 card minor suits. Point count and fit will govern whether to pursue game, slam or play at the 3 level in the long minor suit.

There are several ways to play minor suit transfers. One way, which is

common but which I do not recommend, is minor suit Stayman where responder bids 2 spades asking opener to bid 3 of his best minor suit. Typically, responder will have something like:

X x

X

K 10 x x x

QJxxx

... And will pass whatever opener bids.

I prefer minor suit transfers, where responder will bid 2 spades, transferring to clubs or 2 no trump, transferring to diamonds. Opener is required to bid the transferred suit if he likes it, usually 2 or 3 cards with one or two honors. If he doesn't like the suit, he bids the gap (2 no trump), after which responder can pass, bid 3 of his suit or 3 no trump.

This is especially effective when responder has 2 weak minor suits, in which case he bids 2 no trump, transferring to diamonds. If opener doesn't like diamonds, he bids 3 clubs, which responder can pass.

The drawback of playing 4-suit transfers is that it gives up the ability of responder to invite to 3 no trump by bidding 2 no trump, invitational, with 8-9 points.

However, there is a workaround for that.

If responder wishes to invite to game in no trump with 8-9 points, he starts out by bidding Stayman 2 clubs, if opener responds with a 4 card suit and there is a 4-4 fit, responder can raise to 3 of the suit inviting game. If he does not have a fit in opener's 4-card suit, he bids 2 no trump. This must be alerted by opener explaining that responder is inviting to 3 no trump with 8-9 points and may have but does not guarantee a 4-card major. Opener may then pass with a minimum or bid 3 no trump with a maximum.