

Gold by Derrick Browne

Do Stayman and transfers apply over interference? Traditionally not – “system off” after an opponent doubled or bid over partner’s 1NT was the standard. Nowadays, after partner opens 1NT and the next player doubles, many pairs still use transfers and Stayman, especially if the double was one of the many artificial ones that now abound, rather than a normal penalty double.

Even after partner opens 1NT and the next player bids 2C, some players keep their normal system of transfers, and use double to replace their lost Stayman call. There is nothing wrong with this style, as long as you agreed it with partner first... more on this shortly.

At the recent Gold Coast congress, the main pairs and teams events were won by visiting Polish champions. Aussies got a guernsey in the Open Graded Pairs, won by Canberra pair Peter Kahler and Hashmat Ali. They gained a top – an unassailable one, as you will see – as North-South on this board:

Dealer East, NS vul.

NORTH			
S QT7			
H AK87654			
D 72			
C 7			
WEST		EAST	
S A96432		S KJ	
H 32		H T9	
D T5		D Q64	
C KT5		C AQ9643	
SOUTH			
S 85			
H QJ			
D AKJ983			
C J82			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2H	Pass	1NT	2C*
3S	Pass	Pass	3D
Pass	Dble	4H	Pass
		All pass	

East opened an offshape weak notrump. South overcalled 2C, alerted as showing 5+ diamonds. West intended 2H as a transfer to spades but East took it as natural. South rebid his diamonds. West bid 3S but East still figured West must have longer hearts, so gave preference by bidding 4H. Finally North could restrain himself no longer and doubled. West declined to run to 4S, presumably hoping that East had good reason to keep opting for hearts.

North led the two top hearts, drawing trumps. The D7 lead next finessed East’s DQ. South cashed all the diamonds, leaving North with only trumps. Ten off not vulnerable was worth 2600 points. It may seem that North was greedy to double – there was a danger that West would run to 4S, which is only two off – but if West is allowed to play in 4H not doubled, ten down is only 500 points, a bad board for North-South who make 620 points by playing in 4H their way, making.

On the very next board, Kahler and Ali scored a bottom against Sydney pair Kelela and Tony Allen:

Dealer South, EW vul.

NORTH			
S Q643			
H JT7			
D T8			
C 7642			
WEST		EAST	
S 7		S T985	
H A2		H 9653	
D AQJ642		D K9753	
C AK93		C —	
SOUTH			
S AKJ2			
H KQ84			
D —			
C QJT85			

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1C
Dble	Pass	1D	Dble
5D	Pass	Pass	Dble
All pass			

There are other ways to bid the East-West hands but none more successful than this. On any lead, East makes 11 tricks for 750 points, losing only a heart and a spade.