

6.1 4♣ is Gerber

Directly after a 1NT opening a bid of 4♣ is Gerber. It only really makes sense for responder to jump directly into Gerber if he is certain of the eventual strain (the suit or NT) and simply needs to check upon aces (and maybe kings).

Hand A	Hand B	Partner opens a strong NT. Hand A bids 4♣, Gerber, and then the appropriate number of NT depending upon missing aces.
♠ KQ8	♠ KQJ1074	Hand B also wants to know about aces and will then bid the appropriate ♠ contract.
♥ K7	♥ 8	
♦ K8	♦ AKQ85	
♣ KQJ986	♣ 4	

The direct 4♣ Gerber bid really is rather infrequent as it is usually better to glean more information from opener (perhaps using SARS).

There are variations on Gerber – Roman Gerber, Exclusion Gerber etc. but they really are not worthwhile as Gerber is so rarely used.

The direct Gerber, 1NT - 4♣, is rarely used and rather primitive. One can always find another bid before asking for aces/key cards. So you might like to consider another meaning; take a look at South African Texas – sections 6.2.1 and 7.4.

6.2 Texas Transfers (4♦ & 4♥)

Suppose partner opens 1NT and your hand dictates that you want to play in 4♥. You have various options. You can always transfer with 2♦ and then bid 4♥. You could also bid 4♥ directly, but it is normally better for the 1NT opener to be declarer and so we have Texas transfers which immediately transfer opener to 4♥/♠. Transferring immediately to the 4 level is normally a sign off, i.e. not interested in slam.

There are two different versions of these Texas transfers: -

Scheme A (South African Texas)

Scheme B

4♣ = transfer to ♥

4♦ = transfer to ♥

4♦ = transfer to ♠

4♥ = transfer to ♠

Which is to be preferred? Presumably scheme B as this is more efficient and leaves 4♣ available for another use such as Gerber (Section 6.1). One drawback with scheme B is that opener may forget and pass a 4♥ bid! Let's assume that readers will not forget and so we will be using 4♦ and 4♥ as the transfer bids, not because I think it's better (it probably isn't) but because it is the most popular variety and people believe that they need Gerber in their arsenal (although they never use it).

So why do we want these Texas transfers when we can always go via Jacoby? Consider these two sequences: -

Sequence 1 1NT - 2♥ - 2♠ - 4♠

Sequence 2 1NT - 4♥ - 4♠

What is the difference? Both show 6+ ♠'s and a game going hand. Sequence 1 is mildly slam interested whereas sequence 2 is not, it may even be pre-emptive in nature. If opener is max and likes ♠'s then he may bid on in sequence 1.

Example 1

West	East	West	East	
♠ A109	♠ KQJ762	1NT	4♥ (1)	(1) Texas transfer for ♠'s.
♥ QJ84	♥ K103	4♠ (2)	pass	
♦ KQJ8	♦ 92			
♣ A8	♣ J4			

West is max and likes his hand for ♠'s, but he is not allowed to do anything more than bid 4♠ at (2). Actually, this West hand is from example 3 in section 3.1.2, where 6♠ was reached; but because East had a better hand and used the Jacoby transfer.

Example 2

East

♠ 5
♥ KQJ654
♦ Q105
♣ 765

West	East
1NT	4♦ (1)
4♥	pass

We met this hand back in section 3.1.2 when (the Dutch?) East incorrectly bid a Jacoby transfer at (1) and then invited with 3♥. The hand is worth game and a Texas transfer is correct.

A Texas transfer may be used with a very weak distributional hand: -

Example 3

Dealer:	♠ J3	West	North	East	South
West	♥ AK93				
Love all	♦ 9432	1NT	pass	4♥ (1)	pass
	♣ AQ3	4♠	pass	pass	pass

♠ A109	N	♠ Q876542
♥ QJ84	W E	♥ 5
♦ KQJ8	S	♦ 765
♣ K8		♣ 97
	♠ K	
	♥ 10762	
	♦ A10	
	♣ J106542	

4♠ may make, but even one down is an excellent score against N-S's ♥ or ♣ partscore or game. If East hand simply transferred with 2♥ at (1) then North would have had an easy double of West's 2♠ response. Neither North nor South can really say anything at the 4 level.

As we have seen, a Texas transfer is a weak bid or else a reasonable hand without slam interest. It is possible to have continuations by responder after the completion of a Texas transfer, and some players do play that 4NT (or Kickback) is RKCB. This would then free the 4♣ bid in a Jacoby transfer sequence for another use (some sort of slam try similar to our 4♦, or perhaps a splinter). Quite playable and up to you.

New suits at the 5 level by responder can also be bid. These are probably best played as Exclusion Blackwood, asking for key cards outside the exclusion suit which would be a void. But you could play this equally well after a Jacoby transfer.

6.2.1 South African Texas

As I said just now, there is another version of Texas transfers that utilises the 4♣ and 4♦ bids. There are a couple of advantages here: -

- Both the 4♥ and 4♠ bids are available (presumably as natural).
- Partner is less likely to forget.

So if you play South African Texas you have, directly after partner's 1NT opening: -

- 4♣ = transfer to 4♥
- 4♦ = transfer to 4♠
- 4♥ = to play
- 4♠ = to play.

Thus we have three distinct ways to reach our 4 of a major contract: -

- 1) Use a Jacoby transfer and then jump to the 4 level
- 2) Use South African Texas
- 3) Jump to 4 of the major to play.

Having three options certainly may be advantageous, consider these examples. West has opened 1NT: -

West	East	Example 1
♠ AQ6	♠ J109754	Here East is concerned with the possibility that if he transfers with 2♥ (or a 4♥ Texas transfer) then South may double for a lead and ♥'s may be wide open. A South African 4♦ prevents a double of ♥'s by South.
♥ Q95	♥ 76	
♦ AK65	♦ Q	
♣ J52	♣ AQ94	

West	East	Example 2
♠ KJ6	♠ A109754	This time East is again worried about the ♥'s but all's well if he is declarer. Playing South African Texas means that responder can choose who declarer is. A direct 4♠ bid prevents a ♥ through from North.
♥ 952	♥ K6	
♦ AKQ5	♦ 7	
♣ QJ10	♣ A942	

Conclusion?

Having three different options to get to the same 4♥/♠ contract may sometimes be beneficial. One disadvantage is that you lose the 4♣ Gerber bid (it's not really that useful). So is it a good idea?

Probably, but standard Texas is more popular and fairly well established. Quite a dilemma, I'll assume we use standard Texas in this book.

6.3 4NT Quantitative? And what is 4♠?

What is the sequence 1NT – 4NT ?

Traditionally this is a quantitative bid, denying a 4 card major and inviting slam. Opener should pass with a minimum NT opener; any other bid suggests slam and minor suits are bid naturally in order to establish if there is a fit there. I did, however, say ‘traditionally’. With our SARS sequences, responder can find any minor suit fit below the level of 3NT and can then invite, so this traditional meaning of the direct 4NT bid is redundant. That is just something that happens when things (and people) get older.

So, let’s inject some young blood into this bid (the direct 4NT over partner’s 1NT). Now as the bid takes up so much bidding space it needs to be pretty specific. It is a ‘spare’ bid, and you could choose any meaning you like, but how about: -

‘I have a hand that is totally flat (4333, any order). I have sufficient points to invite slam, about 17 pts, but my 4 card suit is so feeble (Jxxx or worse) that I don’t want to suggest that suit as trumps in a slam contract. Obviously I have good holdings in all three of my 3 card suits.’

So, a similar meaning to the traditional bid, but a lot more explicit. But what about that direct 4♠ bid? Also a redundant bid so far in our system. So let’s use it as a very similar bid to our jump to 4NT; we can then define these 4333 type hands even more accurately: -

- a) 1NT - 4♠ = 4333 or 3433, 17 pts.
- b) 1NT - 4NT = 3343 or 3334, 17 pts.

It may be a good idea to restrict these bids to hands containing exactly two aces as the bids preclude the use of Blackwood/Gerber.

Neither bid is forcing. Any subsequent bid by opener is to play. I guess that you could invent some conventional bids, but opener should know enough to select the final contract.

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Partner opens a strong 1NT. Your turn...
♠ AQ3	♠ KQ7	♠ KJ76	Hand A bids 4♠
♥ J963	♥ AJ3	♥ A93	Hand B bids 4NT
♦ KQ7	♦ AQ6	♦ AQ6	With Hand C, the ♠ suit is far too good and so
♣ AJ5	♣ J874	♣ QJ7	it starts off with 2♣ and then a quantitative 4NT
			if there is no ♠ fit.

Example 1

West	East	West	East	
♠ K96	♠ AQ3	1NT	4♠ (1)	(1) 4333 or 3433
♥ K82	♥ J963	4NT (2)	pass	(2) let’s stay out of this one.
♦ AJ9	♦ KQ7			
♣ KQ92	♣ AJ5			
		Bundles of points, but West knows that there is a dodgy major, no fit, and no source of tricks.		

Example 2

West	East	West	East	
♠ A9	♠ KQ3	1NT	4♠ (1)	(1) 4333 or 3433
♥ A8	♥ J963	7NT (2)	pass	
♦ KJ92	♦ AQ7			
♣ KQ962	♣ AJ5			

(2) West knows that the KQ of one major are missing and also one jack. He can count the tricks, 5 ♣'s, 4 ♦'s, 3 in one major and one in the other. It looks like West's heavyweight 1NT opener was a success on this deal.

Example 3

West	East	West	East	
♠ KJ96	♠ AQ10	1NT	4♠ (1)	(1) 4333 or 3433
♥ Q8	♥ 9632	pass (2)		
♦ A864	♦ KQJ			
♣ KQ6	♣ AJ5			

West knows that East has 3 good ♠'s or else 4 poor ones, and the same for his ♥ suit. Either way, 4♠ will play nicely, but if partner has 4 very poor ♥'s then it may be essential to play in ♠'s.

That last hand was very instructive. West knows almost everything about East's hand, and may have a good idea that a suit is unprotected. Now normally after a quantitative 4NT, a new suit at the five level accepts the slam invitation and suggests that suit as trumps. In this case, however, opener knows enough about responder's hand to make that unnecessary, and so new suits at the 5 level are to play!

Example 4

West	East 1	East 2	West	East
♠ A86	♠ KQJ	♠ KQ9	1NT	4NT (1)
♥ KQ6	♥ AJ5	♥ AJ5	pass	
♦ KJ1062	♦ AQ9	♦ 9543		
♣ Q8	♣ 9543	♣ AK10		(1) 3343 or 3334

This is a similar situation to example 3. This time West knows that it's the ♣'s that may be wide open. Does East have hand 1 or hand 2? The odds are with a hand of type 2 and a pass of 4NT is certainly a reasonable option at pairs scoring. But at teams it may be prudent to pull it to 5♦, you know that partner has 4 trumps or else 3 good ones.

*** End of Chapter 6 ***