

## Five-Card Puppet Stayman

When opening 2NT there is a reasonable prospect that **opener** may have a five-card major. **Five-card Puppet Stayman** enables responder to investigate for both possible 4-4 major fits and 5-3 major fits. The bid is game-forcing. The ‘puppet’ method enables the stronger hand to be declarer (i.e. concealed). (Don’t confuse with transfers in which the **responder** may have a **5-card major**).

Responder uses the 3♣ bid if:

- a) he has a hand containing a four card major – and would prefer to play in the 4-4 major fit if it exists (e.g. ♠K74 ♥Q832 ♦98 ♣J764).
- b) he has a hand containing at least one three card major and would prefer to play in a 5-3 major fit if one exists (e.g. ♠K74 ♥Q83 ♦98 ♣J7642).

The basic method is (there are more complicated methods):

3♣ primarily asks opener for either **4- or 5-card** majors, with the 2NT opener then responding:

- 3♦ - no five-card major, but at least one four-card major.

The responder (i.e. the original Stayman bidder) then bids:

- 3♥ - **denies** four hearts, but **shows** four spades.  
 3♠ - **denies** four spades, but **shows** four hearts.  
 4♣ - 4-4 in **both** majors.

Opener bids 3NT or 4♠  
 Opener bids 3NT or 4♥  
 Opener bids better 4-card major (4♥ or 4♠)

3NT – no 4-card major (i.e. the original 3♣ bid was an attempt to find a 5-card major).

Opener will pass

- 3♥ - 5 hearts.  
 3♠ - 5 spades.  
 3NT - denies a four or five-card major.

a) ♠ AKJ93  
 ♥ A7  
 ♦ AJ4  
 ♣ K82

b) ♠ AKJ  
 ♥ AK7  
 ♦ J84  
 ♣ KJ83

c) ♠ AKJ  
 ♥ AK7  
 ♦ J84  
 ♣ KJ83

d) ♠ AK63  
 ♥ AKJ  
 ♦ J84  
 ♣ KJ8

♠ Q74  
 ♥ K83  
 ♦ Q7652  
 ♣ 94

♠ Q74  
 ♥ Q83  
 ♦ Q7652  
 ♣ 94

♠ Q74  
 ♥ Q832  
 ♦ Q7652  
 ♣ 9

♠ Q74  
 ♥ Q832  
 ♦ Q7652  
 ♣ 9

e) ♠ AK6  
 ♥ AKJ7  
 ♦ Q84  
 ♣ K83

f) ♠ AK3  
 ♥ AKJ7  
 ♦ Q84  
 ♣ K83

g) ♠ AKJ93  
 ♥ A7  
 ♦ AJ4  
 ♣ K82

h) ♠ AK3  
 ♥ AKJ  
 ♦ J84  
 ♣ KJ83

♠ Q4  
 ♥ Q832  
 ♦ J7652  
 ♣ 9

♠ Q742  
 ♥ Q832  
 ♦ J765  
 ♣ 9

♠ Q7  
 ♥ K832  
 ♦ Q7652  
 ♣ 94

♠ Q7642  
 ♥ Q83  
 ♦ Q765  
 ♣ 9

- a) 2NT – 3♣ - 3♠ - 4♠  
pass      Responder would prefer a 5-3 major game on account of the fragile club suit, so bids 3♣. 3♠ from opener shows a five-card spade suit.
- b) 2NT – 3♣ - 3NT - pass      As (a), but 3NT from opener denies a four-card or a five-card major
- c) 2NT – 3♣ - 3NT - pass      Responder would prefer to play in hearts if opener can support – 3NT from opener shows he can't.
- d) 2NT – 3♣ - 3♦ - 3♠  
3NT - pass      Responder would prefer to play in hearts so bids 3♣.  
Opener shows at least one four-card major. South denies four spades (and hence shows four hearts), but North can't support.
- e) 2NT – 3♣ - 3♦ - 3♠  
4♥ - pass      As (d), but now opener can support hearts.
- f) 2NT – 3♣ - 3♦ - 4♣  
4♥ - pass      4♣ from responder shows both majors; North supports hearts.
- g) 2NT – 3♣ - 3♠ - 3NT - pass      Responder would like to find a 4-4 heart fit, but when opener shows the five card spade suit, he could bid either 4♠ or 3NT. Despite being only a doubleton spade, the poor club suit would probably persuade me to bid 4♠, hoping for a possible club ruff before defenders can draw trumps.
- h) 2NT – 3♥ - 3♠ - 3NT  
4♠ - pass      **Not 5-card Stayman** – an ordinary transfer sequence when **responder** has the 5-card major.

AFH