

Here is a hand I played with Erika on 8th September. Partner opens 1NT:

S	med029	3
♠	KJ1092	
♥	AQ102	
♦	72	
♣	93	

There are a number of ways of showing 5-4 in majors after partner opens 1NT, with the option of going through Stayman or transfers. I will describe my preferred system.

With a weak hand of <10 points simply bid Stayman. If partner responds in a major you can pass, and if they respond 2♦, bid your 5 card major.

This hand has game invitational strength, 10-11 points. I would recommend playing this hand through a transfer- in this situation transfer to Spades and then bid 3♥. With a weak hand, partner can either pass or convert to 3♠. With 5 hearts and 4 spades, transfer to hearts then bid 2♠. Again, partner has the option of passing or converting to 3♥. In either situation partner can choose their preferred game if they have a suitable strength or shape.

With a game forcing hand, I would go through Stayman. If partner bids a major then raise to game. If they respond 2♦, however you now raise to the 3 level, but in your 4 card major ie with 5 hearts and 4 spades bid 3♠ and with 5 spades and 4 hearts bid 3♥. This might seem counter intuitive as you know partner does not hold your 4 card major, but it should wake partner up to the fact you have a strong hand and describes your shape better so gives partner more information about which game to bid.

It is worth discussing with partner as you have the option of just bidding your 5 card major at the 3 level if that is your preference.

The full hand:

D	9	N Erika Pick	3	
		♠Q43		
		♥43		
		♦KQ65		
		♣AK75		
W HXPatM	3+	E hxrexajm	3+	
♠7		♠A865		
♥KJ9876		♥5		
♦J104		♦A983		
♣J62		♣Q1084		
		S med029	3	
		♠KJ1092		
		♥AQ102		
		♦72		
		♣93		
				3♥ South
				0 0

In this case partner has a maximum hand and spade support so should convert your 3♥ to 4♠

Martin tells me this system is called Smolen, and directed me to an excellent website which contains more information on this system and others:

<https://www.bridgebum.com/smolen.php>

Talk to your partner about how you want to bid 5-4 shape after a 1NT open!