

Responding to 2NT – Some Options

By Neil H. Timm

Playing 2/1 most pairs open a balance hand with 20-21 HCP. Your hand is balanced (no void, no singleton, and no more than one doubleton) or semi-balanced (5422). With 4+HCP responder may use the bid of 3♣ as Standard Stayman, Puppet Stayman, Muppet Stayman or 5-card Stayman, among others when holding at least one 4-card major. However, Jacoby Transfers are now at the 3-level and Texas Transfers are at the 4-level and the bid of 4♣ is Gerber or Expert Gerber by agreement. In addition, the response of 3♠* normally has special meaning as a relay to 3NT or perhaps as Minor Suit Stayman (MSS) and requires an alert.

A very review of several of the conventions that are initiated by the bid of 3♣ has been written recently by Pete Matthews in August, 2024. Follow the link:

<https://3nt.xyz/bridge/articles/2NTresponses.pdf>

While he reviews Standard Stayman and a new convention called Semi-puppet Stayman, he does not include the bid of 4NT.

With a balanced hand with 11/12 HCP, one bids 4NT. Partner will pass with 20HCP, a 5-level suit bid shows 4-4 in the lower bid suit with a suit bid at the 5-level shows a 5-card suit. A bid of 5NT is a re-invite or may be used to show a 6-card suit.

Another option is to redefine the opening bids of 2♣ and 2NT with a strong 2♦* bid.

2♣ - 2♦ - 2NT	20-21HCP
2NT	22-23 HCP balanced
2♦* - 2♥* (Artificial)	24+ HCP
	Kokish Balanced
	2NT 24-26
	3NT 27-29
	4NT 30+
	Unbalanced
	3♣/3♦ 4+minor
	3♥ 6+hearts
	3♠ 5+spades

With this approach, 2NTovercall 16-19 HCP.

With this approach slam is possible with only 10HCP, but it gives up weak 2♦ bids.

Finally, with 4 quick tricks and 4 or less loses one may open 2♣ with 20+HCP, this allows pairs to continue to use 2NT=20-21 HCP balanced and to re-define the meaning of both 2♦* and 2♥*.