The Next Level 2. Stayman (iv) Weak Stayman

Normally, you'll use Stayman when you have game-going values with a precisely four-card major. However, you can also Stayman as a rescue bid — to improve the part-score.

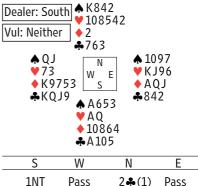
The clearest shape (facing partner's INT opener) with which to perform a Weak Stayman ("Garbage" in the USA) is a hand with five cards in one major and four cards in the other. If partner responds $2 \checkmark / \spadesuit$. you'll pass; if partner responds 2 \(\infty (no four-card major) you'll correct to Two of your five-card major, which partner will pass.

Restricting yourself to 5-4 in the majors is not being creative enough, though. Here are three other hands that can bid 2. over partner's 1NT (12-14).

AJ3 ♠KJ2 **▲** J982 **♥**J762 ♥QJ3 **♥** J532 ♦ KJ432 109842 ♦ QJ832 **.** 2 **♣**62

Your strategy is the same with all three — you'll pass whatever reply partner makes to your 2. The worst-case scenario is a 5-2 diamond fit (if, holding a $3 \spadesuit 3 \checkmark 2 \spadesuit 5 \clubsuit$ shape, partner responds $2 \spadesuit$) or a 4-3 major fit (with the second or third hand) but, given your club weakness, a 4-3 fit 2♥/♠ will probably play better than 1NT.

There's one other weak hand to consider — a hand wishing to make a weakness take-out into clubs. No longer able to bid 2. as a weakness take-out, it is best to pass 1NT unless you have six clubs. However, if you do have six clubs. the solution (if you are not playing Transfers) is to bid 2. then, over partner's response, follow with 3. which partner must pass. This is called "Phoney Stayman". If you are playing Transfers (our next topic), bid 2♠ as a weak hand with a six-card minor. Partner has to bid 3♣ and you'll pass.



(1) Weak Stayman. If partner responds 2♥/♠, you'll pass; you'll correct 2♦ to 2 ♥ (as a weakness take-out).

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Neither 1NT nor 2♥ would have made; 2♠, reached only because of Weak Stayman, handled nicely. Declarer let West's &K lead win the first trick, beat the AQ that followed with A and returned **4**10. cutting defensive communications.

West won .J and switched to ♠ Q. Winning ♠ A, declarer led ♦4 to void dummy. East won ♦J and led $\blacktriangle 9$ to $\blacktriangle J$ and $\blacktriangle K$. Declarer finessed ♥Q, cashed ♥A, ruffed ♦6, ruffed ♥5, ruffed ♦8 and ruffed ♥8. She gave up the last trick to East's \$\times 10 but that was nine tricks and 2♠ made plus one.

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