

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 use 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♥/♠, you'll pass; if partner responds 2♦ (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 INT (12-14).

♠ J982	♠ AJ3	♠ KJ2
♥ J532	♥ J762	♥ QJ3
♦ QJ832	♦ KJ432	♦ 109842
♣ -	♣ 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♠3♥2♦5♣ shape, partner responds 2♦) 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 INT.

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 INT 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.

Dealer: South ♠ K842
♥ 108542

Vul: Neither ♦ 2

♣ 763

♠ QJ
♥ 73
♦ K9753
♣ KQJ9

N		E
W		S

♠ A653
♥ AQ
♦ 10864
♣ A105

♠ 1097
♥ KJ96
♦ AQJ
♣ 842

S	W	N	E
1NT	Pass	2♣(1)	Pass
2♠	End		

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

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 ♣Q that followed with ♣A and returned ♣10, cutting defensive communications.

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

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