



St Annes Bridge Club

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STAYMAN CONVENTION

If partner opens/overcalls 1NT he may have a 4 card major.

So how do you find a fit if you have a 4 card major?

You cannot bid 2 of the major - that would show a 5-card or longer suit and no ambition to proceed any further (weak takeout).

You cannot bid 3 of the major - that would be forcing, but would promise a 5-card suit and invite support from opener with 3 cards.

Why bother?

When responder has a 4-card major suit and values for game, and the opener also has 4 cards in that major, then the combined 8-card trump fit will usually produce a superior game contract in the major rather than 3NT.

West

♠ K 7
♥ K J 9 4
♦ A 6 5
♣ Q 9 3 2

East

♠ A 6 2
♥ Q 10 5 3
♦ 8 2
♣ A K 8 4

West opens 1NT. With a balanced hand and 13 points, we have enough to raise to 3NT. However, a diamond lead may well defeat this contract.

The solution is to be found in the Stayman Convention
- the most useful artificial bid of all!

A response of 2♣ to the opening 1NT is nothing to do with clubs! Instead, it is artificial, and asks the 1NT opener if he holds a 4-card major suit. This loses the use of 2♣ as a weak takeout into clubs, but the benefits outweigh the loss.

Opener must reply as follows:

2♠ I have a 4-card spade suit

2♥ I have a 4-card heart suit

2♦ I have no 4-card major suit

(it says nothing about the diamonds!)

How strong do you need to be to use Stayman?

You will perhaps hear players saying that “they wanted to bid Stayman, but they were not strong enough”. So, the question is: how strong must you be to bid Stayman?

Since the bid of 2♣ (Stayman) is a question, and in itself promises nothing specific, the only requirement is that the responder should not be embarrassed by any response that opener may make.

Remember that there are only three possible responses to your 2♣ bid: 2♦, 2♥, and 2♠.

Usually responder will hold enough strength to continue with a bid of at least 2NT (ie. 11+) if the response does not reveal a fit.

Examples:

1NT(partner) - ?(you)

♠ K J 8 4
♥ K 7 5 3
♦ A 5
♣ Q 10 8

The response to 1NT should be Stayman. Bid 2♣ since you have game values and want to find out if you are better playing in a major. You raise a 2♥ or 2♠ reply to game in the major, or bid 3NT over a 2♦ reply.

♠ K J 8 4
♥ K 7 5 3
♦ Q 5
♣ Q 10 8

You have the strength to invite game. There might be a major suit fit. Invites to game can be used with Stayman. If partner responds 2♥ or 2♠ to your 2♣ enquiry you invite game with 3♥ or 3♠, or bidding 2NT over 2♦.

Typical Stayman sequences

1NT	2♣	(do you have a major suit?)
2♥	4♥	(good, so do I, plus values for game)
pass		

1NT	2♣	(do you have a major suit?)
2♥	2NT	(don't like hearts, pass or bid 3NT)
3NT		(better than minimum)

1NT	2♣	(do you have a major suit?)
2♦ (no)	2NT	(OK no major fit but I have 11/12 pts can we make game in NT?)
3 NT/pass		

What if you have both majors?

If partner asks with Stayman over your 1 NT opener and you have both majors bid hearts.eg

You
1NT

2 ♣ Partner
(Stayman)

You
?

You hold:

♠ K J 8 7
♥ 6 5 4 3
♦ A K 8
♣ J 9

Partner has

♠ 6 3 2
♥ A Q J 10
♦ Q 6 2
♣ A 8 3

Respond 2♥

Bid 4♥

What if you have both majors?

If partner asks with Stayman over your 1 NT opener and you have both majors bid hearts.eg

You
1NT

Partner
2 ♣ (Stayman)

You
?

You hold:

♠ K J 8 7
♥ 6 5 4 3
♦ A K 8
♣ J 9

Partner has

♠ A Q 6 2
♥ A Q J
♦ Q J 6 2
♣ 8 3

Respond 2♥

Bid 3 NT

Convert to 4♠

Partner's Stayman +no trumps - he MUST have one 4 card major

Quiz on using stayman

Which of the following hands are suitable for using a Stayman 2♣ response to partner's opening bid of 1NT?

♠ A J 8 4
♥ K 9 8
♦ 7 5
♣ A Q 10 8

This is a good hand for Stayman. If opener bids 2♠ you raise to 4♠. Otherwise, you will simply bid 3NT over a 2♦ or 2♥ response to your Stayman enquiry.

♠ A J 8 4
♥ K 9 8
♦ 7 5
♣ K 10 8 7

Again, responder should start with Stayman. This time, he has values to invite game, so he raises 2♠ to 3♠ (invitational) or rebids 2NT over 2♦ or 2♥, inviting 3NT/4♠.

Quiz on using stayman

Which of the following hands are suitable for using a Stayman 2♣ response to partner's opening bid of 1NT?

♠ A J 8 4
♥ K 9 8 3
♦ 7 5
♣ Q 10 8

A bad hand for Stayman. If opener bids 2♥/2♠ you can pass and feel smug. But if partner bids 2♦ you have no sensible bid and could end up in a 3-2 Diamond fit!

However, there are some situations where Stayman can be used on a weak hand instead of making a weak takeout. Consider the following hands after partner has opened 1NT:

1NT - ?

♠ J 8 4 2
♥ K 7 5 4 2
♦ Q 3 2
♣ 6

A Stayman 2♣ works. Over a 2♦ response you can bid 2♥ (not forcing), and you are happy to pass if opener bids 2 of either major. All 3 possible replies are OK

♠ J 8
♥ K 7 5 4 2
♦ Q 5 3 2
♣ 6 4

You bids 2♥, a normal “weak takeout”. Do not use Stayman here, as a reply of 2♠ would embarrass you!

Stayman Recap

- Is used over partners 1NT opener or overcall
- Generally used with 11+pts (7+for 1 NT overcall) and at least one 4 card major
- Partner must respond:
 - 2 ♥ with 4 hearts (not denying 4 spades)
 - 2 ♠ (denies 4 hearts)
 - 2 ♦ no 4 card major
- Can be used more creatively with weaker hands (see book for examples). Basic principles are:
 - Are all 3 possible responses OK?
 - Will I find a better contract than 1NT?

HAND 1

West

♠ K 7 6
♥ 10 8 6 3
♦ 8 7 5 2
♣ 10 8

pass

pass

North

♠ Q 10 5
♥ A J 9 7
♦ K 4
♣ K J 7 3

South

♠ 9 3
♥ K 5 4 2
♦ A Q 3
♣ A Q 5 4

1 NT

2 H

pass

East

♠ A J 8 4 2
♥ Q
♦ J 10 9 6
♣ 9 6 2

pass

pass

pass

2 C

4 H

HAND 2

West

♠ K Q J 3
♥ A 2
♦ K 7 4
♣ J 9 5 3

2 C

4 S

North

♠ 6 4 2
♥ K 8 6
♦ J 10 8 6 5 3
♣ 2

pass

pass

East

♠ A 10 8 5
♥ 9 7 5
♦ A 2
♣ K Q 8 7

South

♠ 9 7
♥ Q J 10 4 3
♦ Q 9
♣ A 10 6 4

pass

pass

pass

1 NT

2 S

pass

HAND 3

West

♠ J 9
♥ J 10 9 8 7 2
♦ A 5 3
♣ 9 3

pass

pass

pass

North

♠ K 6 4 3
♥ K Q
♦ J 9 6 2
♣ K 6 4

2 C

2 NT

pass

East

♠ Q 10 7 2
♥ 5 3
♦ K 7 4
♣ Q J 10 8

pass

pass

pass

South

♠ A 8 5
♥ A 6 4
♦ Q 10 8
♣ A 7 5 2

1 NT

2 D

3 NT

HAND 4

West

♠ K Q
♥ A J 7 3
♦ Q 10 3
♣ Q 9 5 2

1 NT

2 H

3 NT

North

♠ A 8 3
♥ 9 8 5
♦ A 9 6 5 2
♣ 7 6

pass

pass

pass

East

♠ J 10 7 6
♥ 4 2
♦ K 7
♣ A K 8 4 3

2 C

2 NT

pass

South

♠ 9 5 4 2
♥ K Q 10 6
♦ J 8 4
♣ J 10

pass

pass

pass

HAND 5

West

♠ 8 7
♥ K Q 10 3
♦ 7 6 2
♣ K Q J 7

2 C

2 NT

North

♠ K J 10 5 2
♥ 9 4
♦ K J 5 4
♣ 6 5

pass

pass

East

♠ A 6 4
♥ J 7 2
♦ A 9 8 3
♣ A 8 3

1 NT

2 D

pass

South

♠ Q 9 3
♥ A 8 6 5
♦ Q 10
♣ 10 9 4 2

pass

pass

pass

HAND 6

West

♠ A 6 5
♥ J 10 9 8
♦ K 10 2
♣ K 7 6

pass

pass

pass

North

♠ K 10 3 2
♥ Q 4
♦ J 7 5 3
♣ A J 10

2 C

2 NT

pass

East

♠ 9 8
♥ A 3 2
♦ 8 6 4
♣ 9 5 4 3 2

pass

pass

pass

South

♠ Q J 7 4
♥ K 7 6 5
♦ A Q 9
♣ Q 8

1 NT

2 H

4 S

Homework

- Revise Pgs 44-52 Bidding