

Stayman and Jacoby Transfers

When Partner opens the bidding 1NT (balanced hand, 15-17 HCPs), 2NT (20-21 HCPs), or 2♣-2♦-2NT (22-24 HCPs), Responder is now the captain and guides the auction to the best conclusion.

Stayman and Jacoby Transfers are two useful conventions. Even though they are among the first conventions newer players learn, they are sometimes misused.

Stayman Convention

Consider this auction:

W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	?

South holds:

♠ QJ52
♥ K987
♦ J7
♣ 876

The correct bid is P, not 2♣. It looks like a Stayman hand, but with 7 HCPs, it is one point shy of inviting. If N rebids 2♦ denying a four-card major, S will be forced to invite with 2NT, and the auction could end too high.

♠ 9852
♥ QJ7
♦ KQ7
♣ 876

This hand has 8 HCPs and looks like a Stayman hand. But the 4-3-3-3 shape precludes any ruffing value. Best to invite with 2NT rather than using Stayman.

♠ KJ52
♥ K87
♦ A543
♣ 87

11 HCPs- belong in game, and it is Responder's job to get there.

1NT- P – 2♣ – P

If opener bids 2♦, Responder bids 3NT.

If opener bids 2♥, Responder bids 3NT. Opener may go to 4♠ if 4-4 in majors.

If opener bids 2♠, Responder bids 4♠.

♠ QT5

♥ AT87

♦ Q543

♣ 87

8 HCPs- where do you belong? Not sure, depends on Opener, so invite.

1NT – P – 2♣ – P

If Opener bids 2♦, Responder bids 2NT. Opener passes or bids 3NT with 17 HCPs.

If Opener bids 2♥, Responder bids 3♥. Opener passes or bids 4♥ with 17 HCPs.

If Opener bids 2♠, Responder bids 2NT. Opener passes or bids 3NT with 17 HCPs.

♠ AJ73

♥ KQ987

♦ 7

♣ 876

10 HCPs. Partnership belongs in game. But where? Stayman or Transfer?

Start with Stayman.

1NT – P – 2♣ – P

If Opener bids 2♥ or 2♠, Responder bids 4♥ or 4♠.

If Opener bids 2♦, Responder now bids 3♥ (shows 5, forcing to game). Opener bids 4♥ if she has 3 hearts or 3NT with only 2 hearts.

Advanced partnerships use Smolen. Responder bids 3S to show 5 hearts so that the 1NT Opener can play the hand.

Garbage Stayman- this is a way to use Stayman to find a better contract, but with less than invitational values.

♠ J743

♥ Q987

♦ 87654

♣

1NT – P – 2♣ – P

If Opener bids 2♦, Responder will pass.

If Opener bids 2♥ or 2♠, Responder will pass.

Responder might bid this way with 4-3 in majors. Responder should not bid garbage Stayman with fewer than 4 diamonds.

♠ J743

♥ Q9874

♦ 876

♣ 54

Use Garbage Stayman or Jacoby Transfer?

1NT – P – 2♣ – P

If Opener bids 2♥ or 2♠, Responder will pass.

If Opener bids 2♦, Responder bids 2♥ showing weak hand with 5-4 in majors. This is a signoff bid and Opener must pass.

♠ K743

♥ Q9874

♦ K76

♣ 54

8 HCPs, Invitational hand. Start with Stayman

1NT – P – 2♣ – P

If Opener bids 2♥ or 2♠, Responder will invite with 3♥ or 3♠.

If Opener bids 2♦, Responder will invite with 2NT. Note: 2♥ is Garbage Stayman and is a signoff bid.

What if Opener opens 2NT, or 2C-2D-2NT? 3C is Stayman. Should have 4+ HCPs. Can't invite- you are going to game.

Ace Asking after Stayman

1NT – P – 2♣ – P

2♥/♠

4C is Gerber

4NT is Quantitative, not Blackwood.

Puppet Stayman- this is an advanced convention where Responder can check to see if 1NT Opener has a 5 card major. It is complicated and not suggested for newer players.

Jacoby Transfers

After Opener's 1NT, Jacoby Transfers are artificial bids by Responder.

2♦ tells opener to bid 2♥.

2♥ tells opener to bid 2♠.

The only requirement is that Responder has a 5 card major, no points required.

♠ KJ4
♥ QJ987
♦ K76
♣ 54

10 HCPs. Partnership belongs in game.

1NT – P – 2♦ – P
2♥ – P – 3NT – P

Opener passes with 2 hearts, bids 4♥ with 3 or more hearts. Responder should not rebid a major with only 5 cards.

♠ K74
♥ QT987
♦ K76
♣ 54

8 HCPs. Responder wants to invite to game and starts with Jacoby.

1NT – P – 2♦ – P
2♥ – P – 2NT – P
?

If Opener has 3 or more hearts, she bids 3♥ with 15 HCPs, 4♥ with 17 HCPs
If Opener has 2 hearts, she passes with 15 HCPs and bids 3NT with 17 HCPs.

♠ 974
♥ QT987
♦ K76
♣ 54

With fewer than 8 HCPs, Responder should transfer and pass.

1NT – P – 2♦ – P
2♥ – P – P

♠ AQ974
♥ QT987
♦ K76
♣ 54

11 HCPs- partnership belongs in game. Transfer to spades and raise in hearts.

1NT – P – 2♥ – P
2♠ – P – 3♥ – P
?

3♥ is forcing to game. Opener should bid 4♥ or 4♠ depending on which suit has a fit.

♠ AQ974
♥ QT987
♦ T76
♣ 54

8 HCPs- Responder should invite.

1NT – P – 2♦ – P
2♥ – P – 2♠ – P
?

With 3 hearts, Opener bids 3♥ with 15 HCPs, and 4♥ with 17 HCPs

With 3 spades, Opener bids 3♠ with 15 HCPs and 4♠ with 17 HCPs

On rare occasion where Opener is 2-2 in the majors, she bids 2NT with 15 HCPs and 3NT with 17 HCPs.

♠ QT987
♥ QT987
♦ T
♣ 7654

Responder wants to find a safe place to play. She could choose one of the majors, transfer and pass. Or, she could use Garbage Stayman.

1NT – P – 2♣ – P

If Opener bids 2♥ or 2♠, Responder passes

If Opener bids 2♦ denying a four card major, Responder bids 2♥. This looks like Responder has 5 hearts and 4 spades. While 2♥ is normally a sign-off, Opener can pass or correct (play 2♠ with a 4-3 fit).

Six card Major

♠ QT9873
♥ QT
♦ T
♣ 7654

1NT – P – 2♥ – P
2♠ – P – P – P

♠ AQT987
♥ QT
♦ T
♣ 7654

1NT – P – 2♥ – P
2♠ – P – 3♠ – P

Responder guarantees 6 spades. With 15 HCPs, Opener passes. With 17 HCPs, Opener bids 4♠.

♠ AQT987
♥ KQT
♦ T
♣ 765

11 HCPs. Partnership belongs in game or higher. Responder uses Texas Transfer or Jacoby Transfer.

1NT – P – 4♥ – P
4♠ – P – P – P

1NT – P – 2♥ – P
2♠ – P – 4♠ – P (Note: this sequence shows slam interest if playing Texas Transfers)
After 2NT or 2♣-2♦-2NT, Jacoby and Texas Transfers are on.

Ace Asking

After a Jacoby Transfer, 4♣ is Gerber and 4NT is Quantitative.
After a Texas Transfer, 4NT is Blackwood

Super Accept

Some players play that a 3♥ or 3♠ response to a Jacoby transfer shows 4 card support and 17 HCPs. This is a partnership agreement. Sometimes it helps reach game. Sometimes the contract is too high.

4 Suit Transfers

This is an advanced convention that is much more complicated than standard Jacoby transfers. It is not recommended for newer players.