

If your partner opens the bidding with 1NT, and you hold a hand with 5-4 in the major suits, you must use the Stayman convention to convey this information to partner.. (To show 5-5 in the majors, you use transfer bids but that is another story.) To use Stayman, you must have at least invitational values, a minimum of 8 points.

Notes for Week No. 1

Suppose that you have 5-4 in the majors and partner responds with a bid of 2-diamonds over your 2-club bid.

- With invitational values, you bid your 5-card major at the two-level. Partner will place the contract, depending on his strength and holding in your suit.
- With game going values, you bid your 5-card major at the three-level. Partner will raise to game holding three or more cards in your suit or otherwise bid 3NT.

What would you bid with each of the following hands after partner opens 1NT?

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
♠ K J 6 3	A J 10 9 6	K Q 6 2	Q J 10 8 4	Q J 9 7 4
♥ K Q 8 4 3	Q J 7 2	J 10 9 8 7	A Q 10 5	J 8 6 5
♦ K 5	8 5	10	A 3	7 3
♣ 7 5	J 10	K 7 4	8 4	10 7

- (a) Bid 2♣ and over partner's 2♦ response you will bid 3♥, forcing to game. Partner will bid either 4♥ or 3NT.
- (b) Bid 2♣ and over partner's 2♦ response you will bid 2♠. The final contract will depend on partner's strength and spade holding.
- (c) Bid 2♣ and over partner's 2♦ response you will bid 2♥. The final contract will depend on partner's strength and heart holding.
- (d) Bid 2♣ and over partner's 2♦ response you will bid 3♠, forcing to game. Partner will bid either 4♠ or 3NT.
- (e) You cannot afford to use Stayman for fear of getting too high. Your best course is to bid 2♥, a transfer to spades, and then pass.

After you open the bidding with 1NT, partner bids 2♣ and then bids 2♥ over your 2♦ response. What would you bid with each of the following hands?

(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
♠ K 5	Q 9 8	A Q 6	K Q 5
♥ A 8 3	A K 5	A 8	Q 5
♦ A 9 6 2	K Q 6 3	Q 9 4 2	K Q 7 3
♣ K J 10 2	K 7 4	K 9 7 3	A J 4 2

- (f) Pass. You have a minimum hand with 3-card heart support.
- (g) Bid 4♥. You have a maximum hand and an 8-card heart fit.
- (h) Bid 2NT. You have a minimum hand and only 2-card support for hearts. If your partner holds 10 points or more, she will raise to game.
- (i) Bid 3NT. You have a maximum hand and no support for hearts.

Notes for Week No. 2

Showing 5-4 in the Majors over a 2NT Opener

After a 2NT opener, you have to show your 5-4 shape at the three-level. There is no opportunity to make an invitational bid following a two-diamond response by the no-trump opener. Therefore you can use Stayman only when you hold 6 or more points. Your bid is forcing to game. With a weaker hand, the best you can do is transfer into your 5-card suit.

What would you bid with each of the following hands after partner opens 2NT?

(j)	(k)	(l)
♠ Q 8 7 3	K J 10 9 6	Q 9 6 2
♥ K Q 8 4 3	Q J 7 2	J 10 9 8 7
♦ J 5	8 5	9
♣ 7 5	J 10	10 7 4

- (j) Bid 3♣ and over partner's 3♦ response you will bid 3♥, forcing to game. Partner will bid either 4♥ or 3NT
- (k) Bid 3♣ and over partner's 3♦ response you will bid 3♠, forcing to game. Partner will bid either 4♠ or 3NT.
- (l) You cannot afford to use Stayman for fear of getting too high. Your best course is to bid 3♦, a transfer to hearts, and then pass.

Notes for Week No. 3

A Weak Freak, the Exception to the Rule

As a rule, the Stayman convention should not be used with less than 8 points. However, if you hold a weak distributional hand with a singleton or void in clubs it is safe to use Stayman and pass whatever your partner bids. Note that the singleton or void must be in clubs. It won't work in any other suit.

Here are two possible examples. Passing a bid of 1NT would result in a terrible contract. It is unlikely that there is an entry to dummy to take a finesse.

(m)	(n)
♠ 9 8 4 2	8 6 5 4
♥ 10 8 7 6	9 8 4 3 2
♦ J 8 7 5	Q 7 5 2
♣ 3	-

If you bid 2♣, your partner must bid either 2♦ or 2♥ or 2♠. You must pass regardless of whichever one he bids. There is a reasonable chance that you will find a 4-4 fit and you will have the opportunity to ruff clubs in dummy.

The same principle applies over an opening bid of 2NT.

Notes for Week No. 4**Bidding a Slam after Stayman with 5-4 in the Majors**

With 16 HCP plus a singleton, east should be thinking about slam once the eight-card fit in spades has been uncovered. Without seeing partner's hand, east knows that it is possible to take a finesse in hearts or diamonds if necessary. Blackwood reveals that west holds three aces and east bids the slam.

♠ Q 7 3		♠ A K 9 8 6	West	North	East	South
♥ A 9 2		♥ K Q 10 7	1NT	P	2♣	P
♦ A 10 6 3		♦ K J 5	2♦	P	3♠	P
♣ A Q 6		♣ 5	4♠	P	4NT	
			5♠	P	6♠	P
			P	P		