

## THE 'STAYMAN' CONVENTION

Used by a responder after a 1NT or 2NT opening bid, to ask if opener has a 4 card major.

### AFTER 1NT OPENING BID

2♣ means: Have you got a 4 card major partner?

Responses to 2♣ (Stayman) :

2♦ - No I don't have a 4 card major.

2♥ - I have 4 hearts and may have 4 spades.

2♠ - I have 4 spades but I don't have 4 hearts.

Typically Stayman is used on hands of 11+ points when responder has a four card major and game might be possible if there is a major suit fit.

Stayman can also be used on any hand of **zero to 28 points** when it would be useful to find out if partner has a 4 card major. There is only one condition: *we must be prepared for any reply from partner.*

The following hands are suitable for bidding Stayman after 1NT. They have 11+ points and at least one four card major.

♠ Q J 9 3
♥ A K 7 5
♦ K 5
♣ J 7 5

If opener rebids a major, we bid game in the major. If opener rebids 2♦ we bid 3NT.

♠ Q 9 3
♥ A K 7 5
♦ K 5
♣ 9 7 5 3

If opener rebids 2♥ we raise to 3♥, invitational. If opener rebids 2♦ or 2♠, we bid 2NT showing 11-12 points.

♠ K Q 8 2
♥ Q 7 5
♦ 6 3
♣ A K 6 2

If opener rebids 2♠ we bid 4♠. If opener rebids 2♦ or 2♥, bid 3NT.

## ‘Weak Stayman’

♠ K 7 5 3 2
♥ Q J 8 4
♦ 8 3
♣ 6 5

This hand is also suitable for Stayman although it has less than 11 points. If opener rebids 2♥ or 2♠ we can pass. If opener rebids 2♦ we can still sign off in 2♠ because we have five.

♠ K 8 6 2
♥ 7
♦ K 9 7 3
♣ J 10 6 2

We should not use Stayman with this hand because we can't cope with a 2♥ response from opener. We can't bid 2♠ as it would promise five spades and we can't bid 2NT as it would promise 11-12 points!

**WHEN BIDDING STAYMAN, ALWAYS THINK:  
‘What will I do if partner responds 2♦ or 2♥ or 2♠?’**

## Stayman for clubs

If NOT playing Transfers, Stayman can be used to show a weak hand with 6 or more clubs. Responder starts with 2♣ and bids 3♣ over any reply to the Stayman. This is the only way to sign off in a part score in clubs if not playing Transfers.

## Should Opener Bid Again After Stayman?

When responder makes a second bid after Stayman, opener should work out what he knows about responder's hand and decide if another bid is required. Look at this bidding sequence. Why did responder bid Stayman and then bid 2NT after the 2♥ bid? He must have four spades and 11-12 points (and less than four hearts).

1NT	2♣
2♥	2NT
?	

♠ K Q J 3
♥ A 7 5 2
♦ A 8 2
♣ 9 4

We are the opener in the above auction and this is our hand. We opened 1NT and we replied 2♥ to the Stayman bid. We worked out that partner's next bid of 2NT showed four spades and 11-12 points so with 14 points and four spades, we bid 4♠.

## AFTER 2NT OPENING BID

3♣ is Stayman. Same principles apply as Stayman after 1NT but opener has 20-22 points.

## AFTER A 1NT OVERCALL

2♣ is Stayman. Same principles apply as Stayman after 1NT opening, but 1NT overcall is 16-18 points so adjust the responses by 4 points.