

# Stayman Convention (Intro)

## Simple Stayman.

If you and your partner have an 8 card fit in a major suit, it is nearly always better to play in a suit contract than in NT. The Stayman Convention (invented before 1930 by Samuel Stayman) is a method of finding a 4-4 major suit fit following an opening bid of 1NT.

When partner opens 1NT, a 2♣ response is artificial. It asks partner “have you got a 4 card major suit?” The replies are:

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 2♦ | No I haven't  |
| 2♥ | Yes, I have a 4 card ♥ suit (or 4 cards in both major suits) <sup>1</sup> |
| 2♠ | Yes, I have a 4 card ♠ suit.  |

Responder's use of this artificial 2♣ bid promises at least an invitational strength hand (8+)<sup>2</sup> **and at least one 4 card major suit.**

Responder continues by raising the suit if a fit has been found, or by bidding NT if a fit has not been found - these bids at an appropriate level, game or invitation.

When Responder rebids NT (indicating a fit has not been found), Opener knows responder has the 4 cards in the unbid major. Holding BOTH major suits, Opener knows there is a fit in the unbid major (since by using the Stayman convention, responder has promised a 4 card major). Opener should choose a contract with the so far unbid major suit as trumps.

## Examples of hands held by Responder when Partner opens 1NT (15-17):

|       |     |                         |
|-------|-----|-------------------------|
| ♠QT75 | 1NT | 2♣                      |
| ♥KT85 | 2♦  | 2NT (invite game in NT) |
| ♦K6   |     |                         |
| ♣632  |     |                         |

|       |     |                       |
|-------|-----|-----------------------|
| ♠QT75 | 1NT | 2♣                    |
| ♥KT85 | 2♥  | 3♥ (invite game in ♥) |
| ♦K6   |     |                       |
| ♣632  |     |                       |

|       |     |                              |
|-------|-----|------------------------------|
| ♠QT75 | 1NT | 2♣                           |
| ♥K5   | 2♥  | 2NT (invite game in NT or ♠) |
| ♦KT86 |     | (opener has not denied ♠)    |
| ♣632  |     |                              |

|       |     |                  |
|-------|-----|------------------|
| ♠AT75 | 1NT | 2♣               |
| ♥KT85 | 2♦  | 3NT (game in NT) |
| ♦K6   |     |                  |
| ♣632  |     |                  |

|       |     |                |
|-------|-----|----------------|
| ♠AT75 | 1NT | 2♣             |
| ♥KT85 | 2♥  | 4♥ (game in ♥) |
| ♦K6   |     |                |
| ♣632  |     |                |

|       |     |                          |
|-------|-----|--------------------------|
| ♠AT75 | 1NT | 2♣                       |
| ♥KT   | 2♥  | 3NT (game in NT or ♠)    |
| ♦KT86 |     | opener has not denied ♠) |
| ♣632  |     |                          |

Responder has a weak hand (short in clubs) and can pass any reply to the artificial 2♣ bid.

|        |           |      |
|--------|-----------|------|
| ♠T975  | 1NT       | 2♣!  |
| ♥T875  | 2anything | PASS |
| ♦T9846 |           |      |
| ♣-     |           |      |

1. Holding both majors, which to bid first? Traditionally ♥, or the better one, but it actually doesn't matter. You will find the 8 card fit whichever major you bid first.

2. Responder can bid 2♣ Stayman on a weaker hand if prepared to pass any reply from the Opener.