

The Stayman Convention

The Stayman Convention is another widely used Convention; it is so widely used and there are no other Conventional bids that use 2♣ after a 1NT Opening. That being the case the Stayman bid is neither Alert-able or Announce-able. This bid, like the Jacoby Transfer, is an effort to reveal a Magic-8 fit. The **T**ransfer bid **T**ells Partner to bid something. Conversely, Stayman asks a question: "*Partner, Do you have a 4-Card Major*".

In the following bidding sequence (Pass 1NT Pass 2♣; Pass ?) The Partner of the NT Opener, by bidding 2♣, asks the Stayman question "*Partner, Do you have a 4-Card Major*"

The Opener has 3 answers to choose from. Yes No and Yes

2♦ → says No. We do not have a 4-4 fit

2♥ → says Yes, I have 4 or more ♥'s and I may have 4♠'s

2♠ → says Yes, I have 4 or more ♠'s but I don't have 4♥'s

Like the Transfer bid the opener bids the suit that is likely to be the contract suit, keeping the strong hand hidden. Stayman and Transfer bids accomplish that same purpose.

If the Opener's response reveals a Magic-8 (or better) fit the Responder (the Stayman bidder) confirms the fit by bidding the appropriate level of the suit

8-9 HCP → bid 3 of the suit

10+ HCP → bid 4 of the suit

If Opener does not bid your suit: you show the possible misfit by bidding a level of NT.

8-9 HCP → bid 2NT

10+ HCP → bid 3NT

You may have noticed that the < 8 HCP option is missing from the choice. This is because the Stayman bidder can't pass if he gets the 2♦ (says No) response. 2♦ is an artificial bid – artificial bids cannot be passed. So Mr Stayman has to bid and, if you recall the Responder, which Mr Stayman is, has to have 8+ HCP to bid 2NT. Thus to make a Stayman bid, asking for a 4-Card Major the Responder must have at least 8 HCP just in case there is no fit.

There is little tricky element here. If you have 4♠'s and Opener rebids 2♥ saying he has 4♥'s he may also have 4♠'s but once you respond with NT he knows your suit was ♠'s. Your rejection of his ♥'s told him that, there is no need for you to bid the ♠'s.