<u>Puppet Stayman</u>

   Modern bidding recommendations suggest that a balanced 15-17 HCP hand with a 5-3 or 3-5 distribution in the Majors be opened 1NT rather than in the 5-card major. In these cases if the responder does not have a 4-card major, which would permit a 2♣ Stayman bid, but has 3 cards in the openers 5 card suit, an 8-card (5-3) fit could be missed if Partner Opens 1N. This suggests that the use of a different form of the Stayman bid, '*Puppet Stayman*'. The fact that this approach makes sure you never miss the 8-card fit makes it superior to traditional Stayman. The HCP requirements for responder to bid 2♣ (Stayman) doesn't change; it is the question associated with 2♣ and the rebids by both opener and responder that change. Transfer bids are still made with 5-1 and 5-2 Major Card holdings. Puppet Stayman has traditionally been a choice response over 2NT Openings but it can also be applied to 1NT Openings. Over 1NT there are two forms: Invitational and Game Force. The invocation of Puppet is not alert-able but certain responses are alert-able with the explanation:
"*Partner may or may not have a 4-Card Major*"

Invitational (8-9 HCP)

Opener	Responder	Puppet Meaning
1 N	2♣^(see below note)	Do you have **a 5-card Major** suit. Still promises at least 8+ HCP but now query only requires 1 or both 3+card Major. The difference: traditional Stayman asks for 4-card Major and requires responder to have at least one 4-card Major.
2N	P	2N Denies 4 or 5-Card Major. Responder Passes. Best Contract achieved.

Or

Opener	Responder	Puppet Meaning
1 N	2♣^(see below note)	Do you have **a 5-card Major** suit. Still promises at least 8+ HCP but now query only requires 1 or both 3+card Major.
2♥/2♠		Opener bids a 5-card Major in same manner as traditional Stayman showed 4-Cards
	2N/3♥/3♠	As with Traditional Responder denies (2N) or confirms fit and Invitational only Points
P/3N/4♥/4♠		Opener with 17 HCP can choose Game

Or

Opener	Responder	Puppet Meaning
1 N	2♣^(see below note)	Do you have **a 5-card Major** suit. Still promises at least 8+ HCP but now query only requires 1 or both 3+card Major.
2♦		Denies a 5-card; but shows a 4-card major suit and sets up the following from responder. There are three different holdings the Responder can have
2♠/2N	2♥	Shows a 4+card ♠ suit and fewer than 4 ♥'s note ♥'s implies ♠'s
	P	2♠ confirms ♠ fit 2N indicates no fit. Best Contract has been achieved. With 17 HCP could choose 3N/4♥
Or	2♠	Shows a 4+card ♥ suit and possibly 4 ♠'s note ♠'s implies ♥'s

2N/3♥	3♠/P	3♥ confirms ♥ fit, Responder Passes. 2N indicates ♥ no fit, implies ♠ fit, if Responder was 4-4 in Majors. Responder can let Opener play 2N or convert and play 3♠ from weak side.
P	2N **alert-able**	Denies a 4+card Major suit Best Contract has been achieved. With 17 HCP could choose 3N

Game Forcing (10+ HCP)

Opener	Responder	Puppet Meaning
1NT	3N	Shows no 4-card Major suit and game values, or….
	4N	Shows 15+ HCP; This response is slam invitational (6NT) and is accepted
1N	3♣	Asks if NT opener has _a 5-card Major_ suit. Still promises at least one 3+card major. Jump to 3♣ indicates 10+ Game-Force
3♦		Denies a 5-card; but shows a 4-card major suit and sets up the following from responder
4♠/3N	3♥ P	Shows a 4+card ♠ suit and fewer than 4 ♥'s 4♠ confirms ♠ fit 3N indicates no fit. Jump to Game shows Best Contract has been achieved.
Or 3N/4♥	3♠	Shows a 4+card ♥ suit and fewer than 4 ♠'s 3N indicates no fit. 4♥ confirms ♥ fit. Best Contract has been achieved.

Note: with 8+ HCP and at least one 4-card major the traditional Stayman treatment is implied: the 2♣ still asks if NT opener has _a 5-card Major_ suit. Still promising at least 8+ HCP additional bids are necessary to reveal the presence of openers 4-card major. This different treatment doesn't increase the level that would be achieved using the tradition approach. It does however allow a partnership to find a fit and possibly game in a major when the NT opener holds a 5 card major and the responder has only 3 cards in the same suit – a contract easily missed using standard methods.