

LESSON 1

The Stayman Convention



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

The Stayman Convention

This lesson reviews the structure for opening notrump bids and covers the most important convention that the students need to master, *Stayman*. The students are likely to come from different backgrounds and it will be important to handle the topic carefully.

The challenge facing the teacher is that most of the participants will be familiar with some form of opening notrump structure and most will have some knowledge of the Stayman convention. Some may already use transfers and other conventional responses to notrump opening bids.

Bidding

Even if the students are familiar with Stayman, a review of the basics is worthwhile, especially when they add other conventions like the Jacoby transfer.

Here are the topics covered:

Opening Notrump Bids

This section is important if most of the students currently use a 16 to 18 point range for 1NT and 22 to 24 points for 2NT. It moves the students into using 15 to 17 points for 1NT and 20 or 21 points for 2NT. It also covers such topics as opening 1NT with a small doubleton, a five-card major or an unbalanced hand. Most students will find the material interesting. There's usually a lot of controversy about the types of hands that should be opened 1NT.

The Stayman Convention

This section is an overview of Stayman, covering opener's rebids. Opener's rebid when holding both majors offers a good review for more experienced players.

Using Stayman with a Game-Going Hand

This section covers the basic use of Stayman to get to game when responder has 10 or more points. Students might need clarification on why responder goes to game with 10 points opposite a 15 to 17 point notrump. For the more experienced students, be sure to cover the situation where responder has spades and opener has both majors. If they don't follow this, they don't have a firm grasp of Stayman. Players familiar with the Jacoby transfer also may have some confusion regarding hands with both a four-card and a five-card or longer major.

Stayman with an Invitational Hand

This section covers the use of Stayman with an invitational-strength hand of 8 or 9 points. The basic idea needs to be covered for the students. It includes the standard method for handling invitational hands with a five-card or longer major suit when using Stayman. These hands are handled differently if the partnership uses the Jacoby transfer, which will be covered in the next lesson. The more experienced players should be shown how such hands are handled when you don't play transfers; they should be made aware of the meaning of standard sequences.

Stayman with a Weak Hand

The students should be made aware that Stayman isn't used with a weak hand unless responder is short in clubs.

Stayman over 2NT

This brief section covers the use of Stayman over 2NT. It will be important to make the students aware of this possibility. For those who already play weak two-bids, it should be pointed out that Stayman can be used after the auction starts 2♣–2♦–2NT. Be careful if you do skip this section. One of the sample deals includes a Stayman sequence following a 2NT opening. You'll have to deal with the issue when the deal is played.

Stayman over 3NT

This brief section points out that most of the time Stayman isn't used after an opening bid of 3NT. More experienced players may need some clarification on this issue.

Handling Interference

If time is short, this section can be skipped, although it is suggested that you at least go through the summary. This section shows the use of the cuebid to replace Stayman in competitive auctions, which is an important concept. If the students are experienced and curious, they can be referred to the additional material on the lebensohl convention in the Appendix of the student text.

Stayman as a Minor-Suit Slam Try

This section can be skipped if time is running short or if the students already appear to be overwhelmed with the material. For the more experienced students, however, this section is quite important. Many players do not know how to handle minor-suit slam tries using standard methods. The methods explained here are those used on the ACBL Standard American Yellow Card.

Play & Defense

The deals are suitable for illustrating the basic principles, but can also be used to challenge more experienced players. There are examples of:

- Unblocking.
- Hold-up play.
- Avoiding the dangerous opponent.
- Third hand high (or not so high).
- Loser on a loser.

The first deal presents the defender with an opportunity to unblock partner's suit. Declarer will be able to make several overtricks if this play is overlooked.

The second deal provides an opportunity for some advanced discussion on the hold-up play, especially from the defenders' point of view.

The third deal introduces an application of the loser on a loser concept. This is likely to be of interest to the more experienced players. It's a theme that has many variations — some of which will be encountered in upcoming lessons.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Most of the participants will know something about bridge. It's important to keep them feeling secure, since many of the concepts that they think they understand will be brought into question. For example, the transition from a 16 to 18 range to 15 to 17 might be traumatic for some students who take comfort in following the "rules." You can put the class at ease by saying something like this:

"I have a quarter in my pocket. If I ask you a question which you didn't volunteer to answer, I owe it to you. So, don't be afraid to look at me."

This may seem unnecessary and even trivial. Try it with your class, however, and you almost can feel them relax. Now you can continue with something like this:

"In this course, the spotlight will be on conventional bids. You may have come across some of them already, such as the Stayman convention and the Blackwood convention. There are hundreds of different conventions, each of which may have several variations. If you and your partner want to use a particular convention, it's a good idea to make sure that you both have the same understanding of how it works.

"We'll be covering some of the commonly used conventions in this course. By the time you are finished, you'll be comfortable using these conventions and defending against them. You'll be able to choose which ones you want to adopt and which ones you'd rather forget.

"The topic of conventions includes many gray areas. It overlaps with the concept of bidding styles. Choosing whether an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠ promises a four-card suit or a five-card suit can be a matter of style. We often think of conventional bids as only those which are artificial and carry some hidden meaning. We'll take the wider view that any agreement you have with partner is a form of convention — whether it's the range of your 1NT opening or the use of transfer bids. When you play in a competitive club or tournament game, you have to display all such agreements on a convention card. So don't be surprised if we review some areas with which you already feel familiar. You may be surprised by some of the hidden assumptions in what most players consider 'standard' bids. There are many meanings that can be assigned to any bidding sequence, and the important thing is that you and your partner have the same interpretation.

"So let's get started on this fascinating topic of conventions. During the first couple of lessons, we will look at opening notrump bids and responses. I'm sure you'll come across some new ideas which will improve your enjoyment of this game."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Opening Notrump Bids

Remember that students who have taken the first course in the ACBL Bridge Series (*Bidding in the 21st Century*) are using a 15 to 17 HCP range for an opening 1NT bid. Other students may be using 16 to 18 total points and counting length to determine the value of their hands.

Introduction

“One of the first things you learn to do in bridge is open the bidding ‘1NT’ when you have a balanced hand that falls within the appropriate point-count range. There’s still room for debate on exactly which hands qualify for an opening notrump bid, so let’s review the notrump structure to make sure you’re all on the same wavelength.”

Instructions

“The cards are sorted into suits. Give each player one suit.”

Although it takes little time for the students to do this, your class gets off to a smoother start if you have the cards in boards sorted into suits in order, ace down to the two.

“You’re going to construct a hand in front of the South player. As I read out the cards in each suit, the player holding the suit puts those cards in front of South as though South were the dummy. When I ask you to put out a low card, choose any card in the suit that isn’t an honor. Don’t forget ... neat straight lines with the high cards closest to the edge of the table.”

Say the last sentence in a light manner but, in order for them to get the most out of the lesson, the table has to be clear of extra cards, books, notes and unused coffee cups.

	SOUTH
“In spades: the queen and two low cards.	♠ Q x x
“In hearts: the ace, the jack and two low cards.	♥ A J x x
“In diamonds: the king, the queen and a low card.	♦ K Q x
“In clubs: the king, the jack and a low card.	♣ K J x

“I’ll repeat that to make sure you all have the same hand. In spades: the queen and two little ones. In hearts, the ace, the jack and two small ones. In diamonds: the king, the queen and a small one. In clubs: the king, the jack and a small one.”

Since this is the first hand that the students have constructed, check to make sure that each table has the correct hand set up dummy style in front of South.

“Put the remaining cards in each suit face down in front of you, so they won’t distract you. Also, make sure that the suits are in straight rows with the highest card at the edge of the table, just like a typical dummy.

“Suppose you are sitting in the South position and that is the hand that you’ve been dealt. If you have the opportunity to open the bidding, what would you bid? Discuss the hand with the others at your table.”

Most of the players will agree with a 1NT opening.

“This is a textbook example. With a balanced hand — no voids, no singletons and no more than one doubleton — the priority is to open 1NT if it falls within the point-count range your partnership uses. This is a balanced hand with 16 high-card points, perfect for a 1NT opening bid.

“Change the South hand.

	SOUTH
“In spades: take away the queen.	♠ x x
	♥ A J x x
	♦ K Q x
“In clubs: add the queen.”	♣ K Q J x

Repeat the hand as follows:

“In spades, you have two low cards; in hearts, you have four cards headed by the ace-jack; in diamonds, you have three cards headed by the king-queen; in clubs, you have four cards headed by the king-queen-jack.

“You are the dealer, and it’s your call. Talk among yourselves.”

Give them a moment for discussion. There may be some players who don’t want to open 1NT because of the low doubleton in spades. If that’s the case, you can say something like:

“The style today is to open 1NT when you have a balanced hand, even if it contains a ‘worthless’ doubleton. There’s a good reason for this. Suppose you open the bidding in a suit, 1♣ for example, and your partner responds 1♠. What are you going to rebid? If you don’t rebid notrump, you won’t be describing a balanced hand. The hand is too strong for a 1NT rebid, however, and not strong enough for a jump to 2NT. You’re stuck. You’ll have to make an underbid, an overbid or some other misdescriptive bid. It’s easier to open 1NT and avoid any rebid problems.

“Change the South hand.

	SOUTH
	♠ x x
“In hearts: add the queen.	♥ A Q J x x
	♦ K Q x
“In clubs: take away the queen.”	♣ K J x

If you think it’s necessary, repeat the entire hand as before.

“Do you still open 1NT? Take a moment to talk it over with the others at your table.”

You are likely to get more discussion on this hand.

“Did you reach a consensus? Isn’t it interesting how much more there is to discuss just by exchanging queens? My recommendation is to open this hand 1NT, despite the five-card suit and the worthless doubleton.

“**Is it a balanced hand?** (Yes.) **How many points is it worth?** (16.) There are 16 high-card points. That puts the hand in the range for a 1NT opening. The reason for opening 1NT rather than 1♥ on this hand is the same as before. When opening 1NT, we count high card points only. This hand has a five-card suit and the extra length is a bonus, but not a consideration.

“**If you open 1♥ and partner responds 1♠, what will you rebid?** 1NT is too little; 2NT is too much; 2♥ would show an unbalanced hand with a six-card heart suit.”

There may be some players who were adding 1 point for a five-card suit when opening 1NT. Point out that it’s a matter of judgment, not a rule. A five-card suit is often worth an additional trick, so some players will give it additional value in a notrump contract as well as a suit contract.

If there are players who strongly disagree with opening 1NT on this hand, let them know that there are experts who would agree with them. It’s a matter of style.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the jack.
“In hearts: take away the queen.

SOUTH

♠ J x x
♥ A J x x
♦ K Q x
♣ K J x

“You’re the dealer. This is a balanced hand with 15 high-card points. If the partnership agrees to a range of 16 to 18 points for an opening 1NT bid, this hand would be too weak to open 1NT. Instead, you would open one-of-a-suit (1♣), intending to rebid notrump at the cheapest available level. The more competitive style these days is to use a range of 15 to 17 HCP for a 1NT opening bid. That’s the style we are using in these lessons.

“Reasons for choosing a range of 15 to 17 rather than 16 to 18:

- Most players are more comfortable responding to an opening bid of 1NT rather than one-of-a-suit, since they have an accurate description of both opener’s strength and distribution.
- Hands of 15 to 17 points occur more frequently than hands in the 16 to 18 point range, so you can open 1NT more often.
- Competitive players are more aggressive in opening hands with fewer than 13 points. Using a range of 15 to 17 points for your 1NT opening, you open balanced hands of 12 to 14 points — rather than 13 to 15 points — with one-of-a-suit, planning to rebid in notrump at the cheapest available level. Opening 12-point hands gets you into the auction more frequently, and we’ll be discussing that topic in future lessons.

- Another factor that affects the range for opening 1NT is that many players use weak two-bids — another subject we’ll be addressing in upcoming lessons. All strong hands of 22 or more points are opened with an artificial 2♣ bid. This allows you to use a range of 20 or 21 high-card points for an opening bid of 2NT. With a balanced hand of 22 to 24 points, start with 2♣ and then rebid 2NT. With 25 to 27 points, open 3NT. You’ll revisit this topic in a later lesson, but let’s quickly look at a couple of examples of the impact of using a range of 15 to 17 HCP for an opening 1NT bid.”

It’s important that the students who came into the class using 16 to 18 total points accept that many players do open 1NT with 15 to 17 HCP, so they will be comfortable using this range during the remainder of the lessons.

“Let’s assume for these lessons that we’re going to open the bidding 1NT with this type of hand, a balanced hand with 15 to 17 HCP.

“Change the South hand.

	SOUTH
	♠ J x x
“In hearts: take away the jack.	♥ A x x
	♦ K Q x
“In clubs: add a low card.	♣ K J x x

“**What’s this hand worth?** (14 points.) **How do you handle it?** (Open 1♣, intending to rebid 1NT.) With a balanced hand of 12 to 14 points, open one-of-a-suit planning to rebid notrump at the cheapest level.

“Change the South hand.

	SOUTH
	♠ J x
“In spades: take away a low card.	♥ A x x
	♦ K Q x
“In clubs: add the ace.	♣ A K J x x

“**What’s the value of this hand?** (18 points.) There are 18 high-card points.

“**This hand is too strong for 1NT, so how do you plan to handle it?** (Open 1♣ intending to jump to 2NT on the rebid.) Playing a range of 15 to 17 HCP for an opening 1NT bid means that you use a range of 18 or 19 high-card points for hands that are too strong to open 1NT but not strong enough to open 2NT. Open one-of-a-suit, intending to jump in notrump after partner’s response — unless you find a fit.

“One important point. The jump rebid of 2NT is not forcing. Using the suggested style, the jump rebid of 2NT shows only 18 or 19 points. Suppose you open 1♣ and partner responds 1♠. You now jump to 2NT. With 6 points for the 1♠ response, partner can pass, leaving you to play partscore in notrump.

You might even be too high if partner has a minimum response.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away a low card and add the queen.	SOUTH
	♠ J x
	♥ A Q x
	♦ K Q x
	♣ A K J x x

“You’re the dealer.

“**What would you bid with this hand?** (2NT.) This hand is worth 20 high-card points. Playing a range of 15 to 17 points for 1NT, you usually use 20 or 21 points for an opening bid of 2NT. So you would open this hand 2NT. Don’t worry about the lack of strength in the spade suit. At one time, you were expected to have stoppers in all four suits before opening 2NT. A stopper is a high card that is likely to prevent the opponents from taking all of the tricks in a suit. That ‘requirement’ has long since fallen by the wayside. With a balanced hand that falls in the range for an opening bid of 2NT, don’t worry about holding a small doubleton or a five-card major. Make the descriptive bid.

“Change the South hand.

“In clubs: take away the ace and add a low card.	SOUTH
	♠ J x
	♥ A Q x
	♦ K Q x
	♣ K J x x x

“**What would you bid with this hand?** (1NT.) A balanced hand worth 16 HCP. Opening 1NT is almost automatic. Whenever you have a balanced hand that falls in the appropriate range, open 1NT. That doesn’t mean that there isn’t a little room for judgment.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away a low card. “In diamonds: add a low card.	SOUTH
	♠ J x
	♥ A Q
	♦ K Q x x
	♣ K J x x x

“What’s the opening bid with this hand? Take a moment to discuss it with the other players at your table.

“What’s wrong with this hand for an opening bid of 1NT? (Not balanced — two doubletons.) Although the general guideline is to open 1NT only with a balanced hand, don’t be too rigid. If you open this hand 1♣, you’ll have a difficult time finding a suitable rebid if partner responds 1♥ or 1♠. 1NT is too little and 2NT is too much. A rebid of 2♦ is also awkward. As we’ll discuss a little later in this series, this is a reverse, since it forces partner to give preference to clubs at the three level. If partner has a minimum response, you may get too high. There’s nothing wrong with opening 1♣ with this hand — or 1♦ for that matter — but a 1NT opening avoids rebid problems. You could always say you had one of your clubs mixed in with your spades. They say partners are more understanding about your eyesight than your judgment.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add a low card.	SOUTH
	♠ J x x
	♥ A Q
	♦ K Q x x
“In clubs: take away a low card.	♣ K J x x

“This is back to a more normal opening bid of 1NT. Now turn all of the cards in this hand face down in front of South. We’ll focus on responder in a moment.”

Summary

“A quick review:

- With a balanced hand and 12 to 14 points, open one-of-a-suit intending to rebid notrump at the cheapest available level.
- With 15 to 17 HCP, open 1NT.
- With 18 or 19 HCP, open one-of-a-suit intending to jump to 2NT at the next opportunity.
- With 20 or 21 HCP, open 2NT.

“Don’t worry if the hand has a small doubleton or a five-card major. If it’s balanced and falls within the appropriate pointcount range, make a descriptive notrump bid.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise One — Opening Notrump Bids

You are the dealer. What is your call on the following hands?

1) ♠ K 10 8
♥ A Q 9
♦ K J 7 3
♣ Q J 7

2) ♠ A J 10
♥ K 9 8 7 4
♦ Q 5
♣ A J 6

3) ♠ K Q 10
♥ J 4
♦ A K J 4
♣ A Q 10 5

4) ♠ Q 10 6
♥ A 10 3
♦ A Q J 8 5
♣ K Q

5) ♠ Q 7 5
♥ K 9 4 3
♦ A 7
♣ K Q 6 2

6) ♠ K 3
♥ K 10 4
♦ A J
♣ K J 10 9 6 5

Exercise One Answer — Opening Notrump Bids

- 1) 1NT. Balanced hand, 16 HCPs.
- 2) 1NT. Balanced hand, 15 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit.
- 3) 2NT. Balanced hand, 20 HCPs.
- 4) 1♦. 18 HCPs makes this hand too strong for 1NT.
- 5) 1♣. 14 HCPs; too weak for 1NT.
- 6) 1NT (or 1♣). 15 HCPs plus 2 for the six-card suit; not quite balanced but no suitable rebid after 1♣ opening.

The Stayman Convention

Students taking this course are likely to be using Stayman already. This first section is a quick review. The more challenging aspects of Stayman start with the section “Using Stayman with a Game-Going Hand.”

Introduction

“We’ll look at probably the most important of all of the conventional bids, the Stayman convention. It’s one that comes up very often, so you need to be thoroughly familiar with it. Even casual partners will usually assume that you play Stayman.”

Instructions

“Take the (remaining) cards in each suit and construct the following hand in front of the North player. Put the cards dummy style, so that everyone can see the hand.”

	NORTH
“In spades: the ace, the ten and two low cards.	♠ A 10 x x
“In hearts: the king, the ten and two low cards.	♥ K 10 x x
“In diamonds: the ace and two low cards.	♦ A x x
“In clubs: two low cards.”	♣ x x

Check that all tables have the correct hand laid out as a dummy in front of the North player.

“Imagine you are the North player with that hand, and I’m your partner as South. I open 1NT, and you have to respond with that hand.

“**Do you want to be in game?** (Yes.) You have 11 high-card points, and I have a minimum of 15 HCP. The partnership has 26 combined points, enough for game. Even with 10 points, you want to get to game when I have 15 or more. Competitive players push for game with 25 or more points.

“**Having decided you belong in game, which is the best game? 3NT, 4♥ or 4♠?** (Hard to say.) Although responder is generally the captain and can place the contract when partner opens the bidding 1NT, there are times when responder needs more information from opener before making the decision.

“**What would you like to know before placing the contract?** (Whether opener has four hearts or four spades.) The partnership wants to look for an eight-card major-suit fit. If there is one, the best contract is usually game in the major suit, 4♥ or 4♠. If there isn’t a major-suit fit, the best game contract is usually 3NT. Rarely do you want to play at the game level in a minor suit.

“This is where the Stayman convention comes into play. It was invented by George Rapée, a member of the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame, but Rapée’s partner, Sam Stayman, was the first to write about it in an article in The

Bridge World magazine. The convention ended up with Stayman's name.

"The basic idea is quite simple. A response of 2♣ to an opening bid of 1NT is assigned a special meaning for the partnership. Instead of being a natural bid showing clubs, it's used as a conventional (artificial), forcing bid to ask if opener has a four-card major suit. With a four-card or longer major suit, opener bids the suit. With no four-card major suit, opener makes the conventional response of 2♦. Let's see how it would work on the combined hands. Turn the South hand face up.

NORTH ♠ A 10 x x ♥ K 10 x x ♦ A x x ♣ x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: left;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: left;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	3NT	2♦		Pass	SOUTH ♠ J x x ♥ A Q ♦ K Q x x ♣ K J x x
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
3NT	2♦									
	Pass									

"What does South open the bidding? (1NT.) What does North respond? (2♣.) North uses the Stayman convention to ask about South's major suits.

"What does South rebid? (2♦.) The 2♦ rebid is conventional. It has nothing to do with diamonds. It merely says that South doesn't have a four-card major suit.

"What does North rebid? (3NT.) Since there is no major-suit fit, North puts the partnership in game in notrump. With 11 points, North wants to make sure that the partnership gets to game. The process is like raising directly to 3NT but with a little excursion along the way to check for a major-suit fit.

"Change the South hand.

"In spades: add the king.

"In clubs: take away the king.

NORTH ♠ A 10 x x ♥ K 10 x x ♦ A x x ♣ x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: left;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: left;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	4♠	2♠		Pass	SOUTH ♠ K J x x ♥ A Q ♦ K Q x x ♣ J x x
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
4♠	2♠									
	Pass									

"South would still open 1NT and North would still respond 2♣, the Stayman convention.

"What does South rebid? (2♠.) South shows a four-card major by bidding 2♠.

"What does North rebid? (4♠.) Having found an eight-card major-suit fit and knowing the partnership belongs at the game level, North would jump directly to 4♠, ending the auction.

"4♠ is a better contract than 3NT. In notrump, the defenders might take enough club tricks to defeat the contract before declarer ever gets the lead. In 4♠, you have only two club losers, and you may avoid a spade loser by

guessing which defender has the ♠Q. You should take at least 10 tricks. That's the value of the Stayman convention. It helps you avoid 3NT when you have an eight-card major-suit fit.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ A 10 x x</p> <p>♥ K 10 x x</p> <p>♦ A x x</p> <p>♣ x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	4♠	2♠		Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ K J x x x</p> <p>♥ A Q</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ J x x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
4♠	2♠									
	Pass									

“**How does the auction go?** (1NT–2♣–2♠–4♠.) North–South would still get to 4♠. South's 2♠ response shows a four-card *or longer* spade suit.

“Let's change the South hand again.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In hearts: add two low cards.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ A 10 x x</p> <p>♥ K 10 x x</p> <p>♦ A x x</p> <p>♣ x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	4♥	2♥		Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ K J x x</p> <p>♥ A Q x x</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ J x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
4♥	2♥									
	Pass									

“**How does the auction go?** (1NT–2♣–2♥–4♥.) With two four-card majors, the guideline is to show the hearts first. You bid the suits ‘up the line’ in a manner similar to responding to an opening bid of one-of-a-suit when you have a choice of four-card suits to bid. In fact, it doesn't make any real difference which major you bid first in this situation — some partnerships prefer to bid the stronger major first — but we'll use the guideline of bidding the suits up the line.”

Summary

“When the opening bid is 1NT, a response of 2♣ asks opener to bid a four-card or longer major suit. With no four-card or longer major suit, opener rebids 2♦. Otherwise, opener bids the major suit at the two level. With both major suits, opener bids 2♥, bidding the suits up the line.”

➡ “Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Two — Responding to Stayman

You open 1NT, and partner responds 2♣. What would you rebid with each of the following hands?

1) ♠ K J 6
♥ K Q 9
♦ J 8
♣ K Q J 7 3

2) ♠ K 10 8 6 3
♥ A 9 8
♦ K 10 5
♣ A J

3) ♠ A K J 7
♥ 10 8 6 4
♦ K 4
♣ K J 9

Exercise Two Answer — Responding to Stayman

- 1) 2♦. No four-card or longer major suit.
- 2) 2♠. Shows four-card or longer major suit.
- 3) 2♥. Bid four-card suits 'up the line.

Using Stayman with a Game-Going Hand

Introduction

“Let’s turn back to responder and see how responder uses the Stayman convention to reach the appropriate game contract.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ A 10 x</p> <p>♥ K 10 x x</p> <p>♦ A x x x</p> <p>♣ x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	4♥	2♥		Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ K J x x</p> <p>♥ A Q x x</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ J x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
4♥	2♥									
	Pass									

“**When South opens the bidding 1NT, does North still use the Stayman convention?** (Yes.) North can use the Stayman convention holding only one four-card major suit.

“**How does the auction go on these two hands?** (1NT–2♣–2♥–4♥.) The Stayman convention would uncover the major-suit fit and the partnership would reach the best contract.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add a low card.

“In hearts: take away two low cards.

“In clubs: add a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ A 10 x x</p> <p>♥ K 10</p> <p>♦ A x x x</p> <p>♣ x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	3NT	2♥	Pass	4♠	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ K J x x</p> <p>♥ A Q x x</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ J x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
3NT	2♥									
Pass	4♠									

“**Do you still use the Stayman convention in response to a 1NT opening bid by South?** (Yes.) How would the auction proceed? This one’s a little trickier, so discuss it among yourselves for a moment.

“South opens 1NT.

“**What does North respond?** (2♣.) **What does South rebid?** (2♥.) South uses the guideline of bidding suits up the line and shows the heart suit first.

“What does North rebid? (3NT.)”

Some of the students may want to bid 2♠ with the North hand at this point, to show the spade suit.

“It might seem reasonable for North to show the spades, but as you’ll see in a moment, that’s not a forcing bid and South could pass. Instead, North assumes that there is no major-suit fit and jumps to game in notrump.

“Now what happens? (South bids 4♠.) This is the key to understanding the Stayman convention. North’s 2♣ bid showed interest in a major suit.

“Since the jump to 3NT showed that North wasn’t interested in hearts, what suit must North be interested in? (Spades.) So, South should now put the partnership in the ‘known’ eight-card fit by bidding 4♠.”

It’s important that the students follow this logic. If they get it, they understand the Stayman convention. If they don’t, you may need to review the ideas to this point.

“To clarify this last point, change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the king and the jack.

“In clubs: add the ace and a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ A 10 x x</p> <p>♥ K 10</p> <p>♦ A x x x</p> <p>♣ x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	3NT	2♥		Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ x x</p> <p>♥ A Q x x</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ A J x x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
3NT	2♥									
	Pass									

“How does the auction proceed? (1NT–2♣–2♥–3NT.) South opens 1NT and North uses the Stayman convention to inquire about majors. South shows a four-card heart suit by bidding 2♥. With no interest in hearts, North jumps to game in notrump.

“What does South bid now? (Pass.) South leaves the partnership in its best contract of 3NT. Of course, South — and the defenders — will expect to see four spades when the dummy is put down. Otherwise, North wouldn’t have bothered with the Stayman convention.

“In summary, responder uses the Stayman convention with a game-going hand of 10 or more points and a hand containing at least one four-card major suit.”

Note to teacher: If you are using this class as a review and your students already play Jacoby Transfer, please adjust accordingly.

“With a game-going hand and five or more cards in the major suit, responder doesn’t use the Stayman convention.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add a low card.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH ♠ A 10 x x x ♥ K 10 ♦ A x x x ♣ x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3 ♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3NT</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	3 ♠	1NT	Pass	3NT	SOUTH ♠ x x ♥ A Q x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH	SOUTH							
3 ♠	1NT							
Pass	3NT							

“When South opens 1NT, North doesn’t need to know if partner has four or more spades. If opener has only three spades, there will be an eight-card fit. In the next lesson, you’ll be looking at another way for North to show a game-going hand with a five-card major suit. The standard way, however, is for North to jump to 3 ♠ with this hand. That’s a forcing bid, asking opener to choose between 3NT and 4 ♠.

“**Which contract will South choose?** (3NT.) With a doubleton spade, opener rebids 3NT. With three-card or longer support, opener would take the partnership to game in the major suit.”

Unless the class is quite experienced, you can avoid the issue of what South does with a fit and a maximum hand. The bid of a new suit by South would be a cuebid, showing interest in slam. For now, assume the only choice is between 3NT and four of the major suit.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add a low card.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH ♠ A 10 x x x x ♥ K 10 ♦ A x x x ♣ x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4 ♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	4 ♠	1NT	Pass	Pass	SOUTH ♠ x x ♥ A Q x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH	SOUTH							
4 ♠	1NT							
Pass	Pass							

“With a six-card or longer major suit, North doesn’t need to ask for any further information from opener.

“**Using standard methods, what does North respond to South’s 1NT opening bid?** (4 ♠.) North goes directly to game in the major suit, since there must be at least an eight-card fit. In the next lesson, you’ll look at another way to get to game in the major suit.”

There are players who want to bid 3 ♠ with a hand like this, “leaving the choice to partner.” On this hand, South would choose 3NT and that is an inferior contract to 4 ♠. 3NT could go down, while 4 ♠ is likely to make with an overtrick if the defenders’ spades divide 3–2.

“You still use the Stayman convention when you have a four-card major suit, even when you have a five-card or longer major suit as well.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In hearts: add two low cards.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

NORTH ♠ A 10 x x x ♥ K 10 x x ♦ A x x ♣ x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	4♥	2♥		Pass	SOUTH ♠ x x ♥ A Q x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
4♥	2♥									
	Pass									

“After South opens 1NT, how does the auction continue? (1NT–2♣–2♥–4♥.) North uses the Stayman convention to uncover the fit in hearts. North can put the partnership in game and forget the spades. If North had jumped to 3♠ directly over 1NT, North wouldn’t know whether to bid 4♥ over partner’s 3NT rebid. South might not have four hearts, and the partnership would belong in 3NT.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the jack.

“In hearts: take away a low card.

NORTH ♠ A 10 x x x ♥ K 10 x x ♦ A x x ♣ x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	3♠	2♦	Pass	4♠	SOUTH ♠ J x x ♥ A Q x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
3♠	2♦									
Pass	4♠									

“How does the auction go? (1NT–2♣–2♦–3♠–4♠.) North uses the Stayman convention and South shows no four-card or longer major. North now jumps to 3♠, asking South to choose between 3NT and 4♠. This is similar to the direct jump to three of a major over 1NT. With three-card support, South puts the partnership in game in the eight-card fit. With only two spades, South would rebid 3NT.”

Summary

“When partner opens 1NT, you want to be sure to get the partnership to game when you have 10 or more points. Use the Stayman convention whenever you have a hand with at least one four-card major suit. If you find a fit, play game in the major suit. If you don’t, play game in 3NT.”

Stayman with an Invitational Hand

Introduction

“Stayman isn’t reserved only for game-going hands when partner opens 1NT. It can be used also with hands of invitational-strength.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the ace.

“In clubs: add the queen.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ 10 x x x</p> <p>♥ K 10 x x</p> <p>♦ A x x</p> <p>♣ Q x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">2NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">3NT</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	2NT	2♦	Pass	3NT	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ J x x</p> <p>♥ A Q x</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ A J x x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
2NT	2♦									
Pass	3NT									

“**What’s the North hand worth?** (9 high-card points.)

“**Do you want to be in game or partscore when South opens the bidding 1NT?** (Can’t tell.) With 8 or 9 points, responder wants to make an invitational bid, asking whether opener is at the top or bottom of the range for 1NT. If opener has a maximum — 17 points, playing a range of 15 to 17 — the partnership belongs in game. If opener has a minimum — 15 points — the partnership should rest in partscore. If opener’s in the middle — 16 points — it’ll be a matter of judgment. Opener might value those 10’s and 9’s more closely. You may occasionally get to a 24-point game, but 3NT isn’t so easy to defend. At least some of the time you’ll make those borderline contracts — with the help of a favorable lead or a lucky lie of the cards.

“North wants to invite game but is also interested in looking for a major-suit fit. North can do both by starting with the Stayman convention.

“**Suppose North responds 2♣. What does South rebid?** (2♦.) **After hearing the 2♦ rebid, what does North bid next?** (2NT.) With enough to invite game but not enough to commit to game, North makes the invitational rebid of 2NT. This is exactly like raising 1NT to 2NT except that North has checked for a major-suit fit along the way.

“**What does South rebid?** (3NT.) With a maximum, South accepts the invitation by bidding 3NT. That’s a reasonable contract looking at the combined hands.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the jack.

“In hearts: add a low card.

NORTH ♠ 10 x x x ♥ K 10 x x ♦ A x x ♣ Q x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> NORTH 2♣ 3♥ Pass </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> SOUTH 1NT 2♥ 4♥ </td> </tr> </table>	NORTH 2♣ 3♥ Pass	SOUTH 1NT 2♥ 4♥	SOUTH ♠ x x ♥ A Q x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH 2♣ 3♥ Pass	SOUTH 1NT 2♥ 4♥			

“**How would the auction go?** (1NT–2♣–2♥–3♥–4♥.) North starts with the Stayman convention and South shows the heart suit. North now makes an invitational raise to 3♥. South has 16 points, so the hand is borderline. Most players would probably accept the invitation with this hand — game contracts are usually more exciting to play than partscores. 4♥ is a good contract, but it’s not ironclad. If the suits break badly, South might be happy to stop in partscore. Give the hand to a roomful of bridge players and some would get to game and some wouldn’t.”

A student might raise the issue of whether North should go directly to game after finding the heart fit. North could revalue the hand using dummy points and add 1 for the doubleton club. No problem. It’s a matter of judgment. Many players would not want to count too much for the doubleton ♣Q. It also pays to be a little more conservative when partner could have as few as 15 points. Nonetheless, many players would jump to game after finding the heart fit. There’s no right or wrong answer.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away two low cards.

“In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH ♠ 10 x x x ♥ K 10 ♦ A x x ♣ Q x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> NORTH 2♣ 2NT </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> SOUTH 1NT 2♥ 3NT/Pass </td> </tr> </table>	NORTH 2♣ 2NT	SOUTH 1NT 2♥ 3NT/Pass	SOUTH ♠ x x ♥ A Q x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH 2♣ 2NT	SOUTH 1NT 2♥ 3NT/Pass			

“**How would the auction go?** (1NT–2♣–2♥–2NT–3NT/Pass.) Once again, North would use the Stayman convention to look for a spade fit. When South shows the heart suit, North bids 2NT, invitational. With 16 points, South can accept the invitation or reject it. It’s a borderline call. 3NT could make — if the clubs lie favorably or the defenders can’t take all of their spade winners — but even 2NT might go down on a bad day.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the ace and the jack.

“In hearts: take away the ace and the queen.

NORTH ♠ 10 x x x ♥ K 10 ♦ A x x ♣ Q x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> NORTH 2♣ 3♠ </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> SOUTH 1NT 2♠ Pass </td> </tr> </table>	NORTH 2♣ 3♠	SOUTH 1NT 2♠ Pass	SOUTH ♠ A J x x ♥ x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH 2♣ 3♠	SOUTH 1NT 2♠ Pass			

“How would the auction go? (1NT–2♣–2♠–3♠–Pass.) Using Stayman, the partnership finds the spade fit. When North invites game by raising to 3♠, South rejects the invitation holding a minimum hand. 4♠ could make on a lucky day, but 3♠ is about the right level.”

Summary

“Responder can use the Stayman convention with a hand of invitational strength and interest in finding a major suit. If a fit is found, responder raises to the three level to invite game. If no fit is found, responder bids 2NT to show a hand of invitational strength.

“Using standard methods, responder also uses the Stayman convention to show an invitational-strength hand with a five-card or longer major suit. Responder starts with 2♣ and then bids the major suit at the cheapest available level if no fit has been found. Opener can pass or accept the invitation by bidding game in notrump or the major suit.”

Stayman with a Weak Hand

Introduction

“So far, you’ve seen that Stayman can be used when responder has a game-going hand or a hand of invitational strength. What if responder has a weak hand but is interested in a major suit?”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the ace.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the ace and a low card, add the queen.

“In hearts: add the ace.”

NORTH ♠ 10 x x x ♥ K 10 x ♦ x x ♣ Q x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	Pass	1NT	SOUTH ♠ Q J x ♥ A x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A J x x
NORTH	SOUTH					
Pass	1NT					

If you skipped the previous section, you will need to adjust the North–South hands to reach this layout.

“South opens 1NT and North has a four-card spade suit, but only 5 points.

“**Can North use Stayman to check for a four-card major?** (No.) With a weak hand, North usually can’t afford to go looking for a major suit. If there is no fit, the partnership may get too high.

“**On this hand, if North were to bid 2♣, what would South rebid?** (2♦.)

“**What can North bid after hearing the 2♦ rebid from opener?** (Nothing.)

“**What’s wrong with rebidding 2NT?** (Invitational.) North can’t afford to make an invitational bid. South would bid 3NT with a maximum, getting the partnership much too high.

“**What about passing 2♦?** (No.) Opener’s 2♦ rebid says nothing about diamonds. Opener could have as few as two, and the partnership would be playing in a poor fit.

“**What should North bid?** (Pass.) North must hope that 1NT is the best contract. There’s not enough room to go venturing beyond the one level when North holds a weak hand.

“Of course, there are always exceptions. Never say never.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: add two low cards.

“In clubs: take away the queen and two low cards.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ 10 x x x</p> <p>♥ K 10 x x</p> <p>♦ x x x x</p> <p>♣ x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>NORTH</p> <p>2 ♣</p> <p>Pass</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>SOUTH</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>2 ♦</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>NORTH</p> <p>2 ♣</p> <p>Pass</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>2 ♦</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ Q J x</p> <p>♥ A x x</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ A J x x</p>
<p>NORTH</p> <p>2 ♣</p> <p>Pass</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>2 ♦</p>			

“**Can you afford to bid Stayman with this North hand?** (Yes.) Although you have a weak hand, there’s nothing much that can go wrong if you respond 2 ♣.

“**If partner shows a major suit by bidding 2 ♥ or 2 ♠, what do you bid?** (Pass.) You’ve found a major-suit fit that should be a better spot than 1NT.

“**What if opener rebids 2 ♦ ?** (Pass.) 2 ♦ may not be a great contract, since partner could have only two of them. Still, it may be a better spot than 1NT, especially if partner has three or more diamonds.”

Summary

“Don’t use Stayman with a weak hand unless you are short in clubs and are prepared to pass anything that opener rebids.”

➡ “Let’s practice what we just learned about the Stayman Convention by doing Exercises 3, 4 and 5.”

Exercise Three — Responding to 1NT

Partner opens 1NT. What would you respond with each of the following hands? What do you plan to do next?

1) ♠ Q 10 8 5
♥ A 8 6 3
♦ 8 3
♣ A J 6

2) ♠ 8 3
♥ Q J 8 3
♦ A 10 5
♣ J 8 6 5

3) ♠ Q 8 7 3
♥ 9 7 6 3
♦ J 7 5 4 3
♣ —

4) ♠ A 10 6 2
♥ K J 10 8 3
♦ Q 4 3
♣ 5

5) ♠ 6
♥ A 9 3
♦ A K J 8 6 3
♣ K 8 4

6) ♠ 9 3
♥ K Q
♦ 10 7 2
♣ A Q 8 7 5 2

Exercise Three Answer — Responding to 1NT

- 1) 2♣ (Stayman). If opener rebids 2♥ or 2♠, raise to game; if opener rebids 2♦, bid 3NT.
- 2) 2♣ (Stayman). If opener rebids 2♥, raise to 3♥; if opener rebids 2♦ or 2♠, bid 2NT.
- 3) 2♣ (Stayman). Pass if opener rebids 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠.
- 4) 2♣ (Stayman). If opener rebids 2♥ or 2♠, raise to game; if opener rebids 2♦, jump to 3♥ (forcing).
- 5) 2♣ (Stayman). If opener rebids 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠, bid 3♦ (slam try in diamonds).
- 6) 3NT. No interest in a major suit but enough for game; 3NT should be easier than 5♣.

Exercise Four — Responder's Rebid

Partner opens 1NT, you respond 2♣ and opener rebids 2♥. What's your next bid with each of the following hands?

1) ♠ A 8 6 4
♥ K 10 8 3
♦ J 3
♣ 10 8 2

2) ♠ A J 9 5
♥ 7 3
♦ K Q 8 4
♣ J 6 2

3) ♠ K Q 9 7 3
♥ A Q 7 2
♦ 8 5
♣ 7 3

4) ♠ K Q 6 2
♥ 8 3
♦ A 7
♣ A Q J 8 5

5) ♠ J 9 7 6
♥ 10 8 6 2
♦ K 8 6 3
♣ 4

6) ♠ Q J 8 7 3
♥ K 4
♦ 9 8 2
♣ Q 7 6

Exercise Four Answer — Responder's Rebid

- 1) 3♥. With 8 HCPs plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton diamond, make an invitational raise.
- 2) 3NT. With 11 HCPs, there's enough for game, and no major suit fit has been found so far.
- 3) 4♥. Having found a fit and with enough for game, there's no need to introduce a new suit.
- 4) 3♣. Having failed to find a spade fit, look for a possible slam in clubs (3♣ is forcing).
- 5) Pass. 2♥ should be a better contract than 1NT; there's not enough strength to invite game.
- 6) 2♠. This shows an invitational hand with five or more spades.

Exercise Five — Opener's Second Rebid

As West, you open 1NT with the following hand:

♠ A Q 4 3
 ♥ K Q 6 2
 ♦ A Q 3
 ♣ 7 4

What's your next bid in the following auctions with North–South passing?

1) **West** East
 1NT 2♣
 2♥ 3♥
 ?

2) **West** East
 1NT 2♣
 2♥ 2NT
 ?

3) **West** East
 1NT 2♣
 2♥ 2♠
 ?

4) **West** East
 1NT 2♣
 2♥ 3♣
 ?

Exercise Five Answer — Opener's Second Rebid

- 1) 4♥. With 17 HCPs, you have enough to accept partner's invitation.
- 2) 4♠. Partner must have spades to use Stayman and not raise hearts; partner is also showing an invitational-strength hand; accept the invitation and play in the eight-card fit.
- 3) 4♠. Partner is showing an invitational hand with five or more spades; accept with a maximum.
- 4) 3NT. Partner's 3♣ bid is forcing, showing a good club suit; 3NT shows no interest in clubs.

Stayman over 2NT

Introduction

“Stayman can be applied in situations other than after a 1NT opening bid. Another common use of the convention is after an opening bid of 2NT.”

Instructions

“Change both the North and the South hands.

“In spades: take away a low card and add the king.	NORTH
“In diamonds: take away a low card.	♠ K 10 x x
“In clubs: add the king.	♥ K 10 x x
	♦ x x x
	♣ K x

“In spades: add the ace.	SOUTH
“In hearts: add the jack.	♠ A Q J x
“In diamonds: take away the king	♥ A J x x
“In clubs: take away two low cards and add the queen.	♦ Q x
	♣ A Q J

“**What would South open the bidding with?** (2NT.) With a balanced hand and 21 high-card points, open 2NT. The range for 2NT is 20 or 21 HCP.

“**What does North respond?** (3♣.) North knows the partnership belongs in game but not in slam. With interest in finding a major-suit fit, North uses the Stayman convention over a 2NT opening bid. The only difference is that it’s now 3♣, rather than 2♣. If the partnership agrees to use the Stayman convention, it’s generally assumed that it applies over a 2NT opening as well as a 1NT opening — but it never hurts to make sure by checking with your partner before you start to play.

“Over a strong artificial 2♣ opening, the Stayman convention is also used after the auction begins 2♣–2♦–2NT.

“**How would the auction proceed?** (2NT–3♣–3♥–4♥.) The Stayman convention uncovers the heart fit and the partnership reaches a good contract. Notice that 4♥ is a much better spot than 3NT, which might be defeated if the opponents lead diamonds.

“North doesn’t need this much to use Stayman after a 2NT opening.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away the king and the ten.

“In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH ♠ K 10 x x ♥ x x ♦ x x x ♣ K x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> NORTH 3 ♣ 3NT Pass </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> SOUTH 2NT 3 ♥ 4 ♠ </td> </tr> </table>	NORTH 3 ♣ 3NT Pass	SOUTH 2NT 3 ♥ 4 ♠	SOUTH ♠ A Q J x ♥ A J x x ♦ Q x ♣ A Q J
NORTH 3 ♣ 3NT Pass	SOUTH 2NT 3 ♥ 4 ♠			

“**How would the bidding go?** (2NT–3♣–3♥–3NT–4♠.) The 6 points in the North hand are more than enough to get the partnership to game once South opens 2NT. North needs only one four-card major suit to use Stayman. With both majors, South responds ‘up the line’ and bids 3♥. This isn’t the suit that North was interested in, so North puts the partnership in 3NT. South must now recognize that North was interested in spades. South puts the partnership in its eight-card fit.”

Summary

“If the partnership uses Stayman in response to a 1NT opening bid, it is usually assumed that it is used also in response to an opening 2NT bid. A response of 3♣ is Stayman when partner opens 2NT.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 6 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Six — Responding to 2NT

Partner opens the bidding 2NT (20 or 21). What do you respond with each of the following hands? What's your plan?

1) ♠ 9 5 4
♥ J 10
♦ J 8 7 6 3
♣ 10 4 3

2) ♠ K J 8 5
♥ 7 3
♦ Q J 6 4
♣ 9 7 2

3) ♠ J 7 3
♥ A Q 7 6 2
♦ 8 5
♣ 9 4 2

4) ♠ A 10 7 4 2
♥ Q 5 4 3
♦ J 7
♣ 5 4

5) ♠ Q 8
♥ 8 7 6
♦ Q 7 4
♣ K J 10 5 4

6) ♠ A J 8
♥ Q 10 3
♦ K Q 7 5
♣ 8 6 2

Exercise Six Answer — Responding to 2NT

- 1) Pass. With only 2 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit, game is unlikely when opener has 20 or 21 points.
- 2) 3♣ (Stayman). With 7 HCPs, there's enough combined strength for game; look for an eight-card spade fit; if opener rebids 3♦ or 3♥, put the partnership in 3NT.
- 3) 3♥. This response is forcing, asking opener to choose between 3NT and 4♥. Playing Jacoby transfers, the bidding would be different.
- 4) 3♣ (Stayman). If opener rebids 3♥ or 3♠, you can raise to game in the major suit; if opener rebids 3♦, bid 3♠ to show the five-card spade suit and to ask opener to choose between 3NT and 4♠.
- 5) 3NT. With no interest in a major, put the partnership in game in notrump; 3♣ would be Stayman.
- 6) 4NT. Enough to invite slam; with a minimum (20), opener can pass; with a maximum (21), opener can bid slam.

Stayman over 3NT

Introduction

“If Stayman is used over an opening bid of 2NT, what happens after an opening bid of 3NT? Let’s look at the situation before coming to a conclusion.”

Instructions

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add the ace.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ K 10 x x</p> <p>♥ x x</p> <p>♦ x x x</p> <p>♣ K x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top; padding-right: 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; padding-right: 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">3NT</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	Pass	3NT	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A Q J</p> <p>♥ A J x x</p> <p>♦ A Q x</p> <p>♣ A Q J</p>
NORTH	SOUTH					
Pass	3NT					

“**What is South’s opening bid?** (3NT/2♣.) With 25 points, South can open 3NT if the partnership uses this to show a range of 25 to 27 HCP. If the partnership uses a strong artificial 2♣ opening, South would start with 2♣, intending to rebid 3NT.

“**Can North use the Stayman convention after South’s 3NT bid?** (Yes.) Although most partnerships would treat 4♣ by North as the Stayman convention, some partnerships would not. They might use it as the Gerber convention — which will be discussed in the next course — or assign it some other meaning. It’s best not to assume that you can use the Stayman convention over an opening 3NT bid unless it has been specifically discussed by the partnership. Instead, make some move toward slam if you are interested or pass and hope that partner can make 3NT.”

If the students want to know what to do with this particular North hand, a raise to 4NT would be quantitative, inviting opener to slam with a maximum. With “only” 25 points, South would decline and that would be where the partnership would stop. It’s probably best not to get into this discussion unless someone asks.

Summary

“Unless you’ve discussed it with partner, don’t assume that you can use the Stayman convention over an opening 3NT bid.”

Handling Interference

Introduction

“In competitive games, you don’t always have the auction to yourselves, even when partner opens 1NT. Before moving on to the practice deals, it’s a good idea to know how to handle the auction when the opponents interfere.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts; add the king and the jack.

“In clubs: take away two low cards.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the ace and add two low cards.

“In hearts: take away the jack.

“In diamonds: take away the ace.

“In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K 10 x x					♠ Q J x x
♥ K J x x				1NT	♥ A x x
♦ x x x	2♦	3♦	Pass	3♠	♦ Q x
♣ K x	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass	♣ A Q J x
	Pass				

“What is South’s opening bid? (1NT.)

“What do you plan to bid with the North hand? (Use Stayman to look for a major-suit fit.) Before North bids 2♣, however, West bids 2♦. Now what? Discuss your options with the others at your table for a moment.

“Is there any consensus? (Likely not.) If you jump to 3NT, you might miss a major-suit fit. You can’t bid 2♥ or 2♠. That would tend to show a five-card suit and partner might pass, since you didn’t jump. If you bid 3♥ or 3♠, you show a five-card suit. Double is a reasonable choice. It’s for penalty. The danger is that you might not get a large enough penalty to compensate for your game. The 2♦ overcall has opened up one other option. A bid of 3♦, the opponent’s suit, can’t logically be an attempt to play in diamonds. With good diamonds, you’d simply double West for penalty. Instead, 3♦ is referred to as a cuebid of the opponent’s suit, and it is used to replace Stayman.

“Let’s see how that works.

“South starts with 1NT, West overcalls 2♦ and North makes a cuebid of 3♦. What does South bid? (3♠.) Since the cuebid replaces Stayman,

South bids a four-card or longer major suit. South shows the spade suit.

“**What does North bid?** (4♠.) Having found a major-suit fit, North raises to game. The partnership reaches its best contract despite the interference of the opponents.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the queen.

“In diamonds: add the king.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH				1NT	2♦	3♦	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass		SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH															
			1NT															
2♦	3♦	Pass	3NT															
Pass	Pass	Pass																
♠ K 10 x x				♠ J x x														
♥ K J x x				♥ A x x														
♦ x x x				♦ K Q x														
♣ K x				♣ A Q J x														

“**South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♦. What does North bid?** (3♦.) North cuebids the opponent’s suit in place of Stayman.

“**What would South bid?** (3NT.) With no major suit to bid, South bids 3NT.

“**What will North do?** (Pass.) By using the cuebid to replace Stayman, the partnership can deal with the overcall when North has a game-going hand and interest in a major suit.

“There are other types of hands that North might hold after the interference.

“Let’s look at a couple of examples.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In hearts: add a low card.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH				1NT	2♦	2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass				SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH															
			1NT															
2♦	2♥	Pass	Pass															
Pass																		
♠ 10 x x				♠ J x x														
♥ K J x x x				♥ A x x														
♦ x x x				♦ K Q x														
♣ K x				♣ A Q J x														

“Suppose the auction starts the same way.

“**South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♦. What does North bid?** (2♥.)

“**Is this forcing?** (No.) North could jump to 3♥ with a game-going hand.

“**Does North show a weak hand?** (No.) With a very weak hand, North would pass and defend 2♦. So North is showing some strength. Most partnerships play the 2♥ bid in this situation as mildly invitational. Unfortunately, the overcall has taken away some of your side’s bidding room. It’s difficult to be too exact. Experienced partnerships can use other conventions to try to compensate after the interference. You can read about the lebensohl convention in the Appendix of the student text. Unless you are an experienced

partnership, however, you'll probably have more to lose than to gain by using complicated bidding sequences.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add the king and the queen.

“In hearts: take away the jack and a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K Q 10 x x				1NT	♠ J x x
♥ K x x	2♦	3♠	Pass	4♠	♥ A x x
♦ x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♦ K Q x
♣ K x					♣ A Q J x

“**What would you bid if South opened 1NT and West overcalled 2♦?** (3♠.) You can still jump to 3♠ to show a game-going hand with a five-card spade suit. South can choose between 3NT and 4♠.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In diamonds: add a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ Q 10 x x				1NT	♠ J x x
♥ K x x	2♠	Double	Pass	Pass	♥ A x x
♦ x x x x	Pass				♦ K Q x
♣ K x					♣ A Q J x

“**Suppose South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♠. What does North do?** (Double.) Don't forget to use the penalty double if the opponents come into your auction and you have a good defensive hand. Opposite partner's 1NT bid, you can probably extract a large penalty from 2♠. If you bid 2NT, you're losing an opportunity for a good score.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add the ace.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ Q 10 x x				1NT	♠ J x x
♥ K x	2♥	3♥	Pass	3NT	♥ A x x
♦ A x x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♦ K Q x
♣ K x					♣ A Q J x

“**South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♥. What do you bid as North?** (3♥.) With interest in finding a spade fit, cuebid the opponent's suit as the Stayman convention.

“**What will South rebid?** (3NT.) With no four-card major, South bids 3NT.

“**What does North bid now?** (Pass.) That should end the auction. North looked for a major-suit fit, didn’t find one and settled for game in notrump.

“It’s also possible that the opponents will interfere after Stayman has been used. In this situation, opener shows a four-card major if it is convenient to do so, but has the option of passing or doubling the opponent’s contract.

“**Suppose South opens 1NT and West passes. What does North respond?** (2♣.) North is interested in looking for a spade fit and uses the Stayman convention.

“**Before South can reply, East pops in with an overcall of 2♥. What does South do?** (Pass.) With no four-card major to show, South simply passes, leaving the next decision to North.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the ace.

“In hearts: take away the ace.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ Q 10 x x	Pass	2♣	2♥	1NT	♠ A J x x
♥ K x	Pass	4♠	Pass	2♠	♥ x x
♦ A x x x x	Pass			Pass	♦ K Q x
♣ K x	Pass				♣ A Q J x

“Suppose the auction begins the same way.

“**South opens 1NT, North bids 2♣ and East comes in with 2♥. What does South rebid?** (2♠.) South can show the spade suit, and the partnership is on its way.

“**What if East had bid 2♠ instead of 2♥?** (Double.) South can double, showing an interest in defending for penalty.”

Summary

“The opponents’ interference won’t usually prevent you from using the Stayman convention to effectively find your fits. The opponents’ interference makes two new calls available, the cuebid of their suit and the penalty double. These can usually compensate for the bidding room that has been taken away. There’ll be exceptions, of course, but if the partnership is on the same wavelength, you shouldn’t go far astray.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 7 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Seven – Handling Interference

Partner opens 1NT, and the opponent on your right overcalls 2♦. What do you bid with each of the following hands?

1) ♠ 10 2
♥ J 6 3
♦ 6 5 3
♣ Q 9 8 4 3

2) ♠ K Q 8 7 5
♥ 8 4
♦ Q 9 3 2
♣ 7 5

3) ♠ 3
♥ A Q J 6 5
♦ K 10 8 5
♣ J 8 2

4) ♠ Q 10 8 6 5 2
♥ A 10 3
♦ 7 6
♣ K 2

5) ♠ Q J 9 6
♥ A 10 8 5
♦ 6 3
♣ A 7 4

6) ♠ 8 7 3
♥ A 4
♦ K J 9 2
♣ 10 9 7 6

Exercise Seven Answer – Handling Interference

- 1) Pass. Nothing to say.
- 2) 2♠. This shows a mildly invitational hand with a five-card suit; with less, you would pass.
- 3) 3♥. A jump in a new suit is forcing.
- 4) 4♠. With 9 HCPs plus 2 for the six-card suit, there's enough for game.
- 5) 3♦. The cuebid takes the place of the Stayman convention.
- 6) Double. Looks like your opponent has walked into trouble.

Stayman as a Minor-Suit Slam Try

This section will be of more interest to the intermediate to experienced players. You may not want to cover this in class.

The methods discussed in this section are those used on the ACBL Standard American Yellow Card. There are other ways to handle minor suits, especially if four-suit transfers are used. Be careful to emphasize that this is only one approach — not the final word on the subject.

Introduction

“While Stayman is used when responder is interested in finding a major-suit fit, it can be put to other uses as well. Finding minor-suit fits after an opening bid of 1NT is often difficult, so let’s see one way in which it can be done.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the queen and a low card.

“In hearts: add the ten.

“In diamonds: add the jack.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the ace and a low card and add the queen.

“In hearts: add the ace.

“In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

NORTH	<table> <tbody> <tr> <td>NORTH</td> <td>SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>1NT Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	3NT	1NT Pass	SOUTH
NORTH	SOUTH					
3NT	1NT Pass					
♠ 10 x		♠ Q J x				
♥ K 10 x		♥ A x x				
♦ A J x x x x		♦ K Q x				
♣ K x		♣ A J x x				

“South opens the bidding 1NT.

“**What do you bid with the North hand?** (3NT.) The North hand is worth 13 points — 11 high-card points plus 2 points for the six-card suit. That’s more than enough for a game contract, but not enough to consider slam. Even if opener has 17 points, the combined total is only 30 points. With no interest in a major suit, a contract of 3NT is usually easier to make than 5♣ or 5♦.

“In duplicate bridge, it’s especially important to play in notrump rather than the minor suit because of the scoring. The score for taking nine tricks in a notrump contract is the same as that for taking 11 tricks in a minor suit. If you take 10 or 11 tricks in the notrump contract, you will get a better score even if you can make an overtrick in the minor suit contract.

“Make the North hand a little stronger.

“In spades: take away a low card and add the king.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ K 10</p> <p>♥ K 10 x</p> <p>♦ A J x x x x</p> <p>♣ K x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>NORTH</p> <p>2♣</p> <p>3♦</p> <p>(4NT)</p> <p>(6♦)</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>SOUTH</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>2♦</p> <p>(4♦)</p> <p>(5♥)</p> <p>(Pass)</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>NORTH</p> <p>2♣</p> <p>3♦</p> <p>(4NT)</p> <p>(6♦)</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>2♦</p> <p>(4♦)</p> <p>(5♥)</p> <p>(Pass)</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ Q J x</p> <p>♥ A x x</p> <p>♦ K Q x</p> <p>♣ A J x x</p>
<p>NORTH</p> <p>2♣</p> <p>3♦</p> <p>(4NT)</p> <p>(6♦)</p>	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>2♦</p> <p>(4♦)</p> <p>(5♥)</p> <p>(Pass)</p>			

“Now the North hand is worth 16 total points. There’s the possibility of a slam contract if opener has a fit with your diamonds and a maximum-strength hand. The partnership needs about 33 combined points for slam. If you jump straight to 3NT, you will be giving up on slam. If you jump to 6♦, you may be too high if partner has a minimum 1NT bid.

“There are different methods for handling strong hands with a minor suit when partner opens 1NT. Some partnerships use a jump to 3♣ or 3♦ to show slam interest. Others use transfer bids, which we’ll be talking more about in the next lesson. The approach we’ll suggest here is only one of the common methods. It’s usually best to discuss this with partner, rather than assuming you both come from the same background. This particular method integrates well with other conventions we will discuss in the next lesson.

“To show a hand with a five-card or longer minor suit and interest in slam, start with 2♣. This sounds a little unusual, but follow along. You’ll see how it works.

“Partner will assume that this is the standard Stayman convention and respond accordingly.

“**With the actual South hand, opener will rebid 2♦, showing no major suit. Now what?** (3♦.) When you bid 3♦, partner may be taken aback. If you’re on the same wavelength, however, this is a forcing bid, showing diamonds. With a fit and the upper range for the 1NT opening, partner can show support. Otherwise, partner can bid 3NT, showing no interest in slam.

“Let’s see what might happen on these combined hands.

“**How would the auction start?** (1NT–2♣–2♦–3♦.)

“**Does opener like diamonds?** (Yes.)

“**Does opener have a maximum?** (Yes.) Opener can show this in one of two ways. Opener could simply raise to 4♦ or opener could bid a new suit, 3♥. The 3♥ bid would be a cuebid, not a natural bid. There are many forms of cuebids. For now, let’s take the simple approach and assume South shows support by raising to 4♦. Having found a fit, North could simply jump to 6♦ and hope for the best, or North could use another convention that we’ll be discussing in the future, the Blackwood convention. A bid of 4NT would

ask how many aces South holds. When South shows two by responding 5♥, North can bid the slam knowing the defenders have only one ace.

“Looking at the combined hands, 6♦ is an excellent contract. The focus here is on how to show an interest in slam when you have a minor suit and are using the Stayman convention. Once you know that, at least you’ll have a chance of reaching a slam contract when it’s there for the taking.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add the jack.

“In diamonds: take away the king.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ K 10</p> <p>♥ K 10 x</p> <p>♦ A J x x x x</p> <p>♣ K x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2♣</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3NT</td> </tr> </table>	NORTH	SOUTH	2♣	1NT	3♦	2♥	Pass	3NT	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ Q J x</p> <p>♥ A J x x</p> <p>♦ Q x</p> <p>♣ A J x x</p>
NORTH	SOUTH									
2♣	1NT									
3♦	2♥									
Pass	3NT									

“**How would the auction go?** (1NT–2♣–2♥–3♦–3NT–Pass.) South starts with 1NT and North bids 2♣. South rebids 2♥, showing the major suit. North now bids 3♦, showing a five-card or longer diamond suit and interest in slam. With a minimum 1NT opening and poor support for diamonds, South bids 3NT. Having suggested a slam contract but getting no cooperation from partner, North rests in game. 6♦ isn’t a good contract, especially if North–South don’t have the ♦10.”

Summary

“With a five-card or longer minor suit and interest in reaching the slam level, responder can start with 2♣. Opener will make a rebid assuming that this is the standard Stayman convention. Responder now bids the minor suit. This is a forcing bid and opener can show interest in getting to slam by raising or bidding a new suit. With a minimum-strength opening and no good fit for responder’s minor, opener rebids 3NT.

“Be sure to check with partner before using this type of sequence. Some partnerships assign a completely different set of meanings to such bids. You don’t want to stop in partscore when you thought you were headed for slam!”

SAMPLE DEALS

On each of the sample deals, start by having the students bid and play with no additional instructions from you. Tell them they have approximately 10 minutes to complete the bidding and play (7 to 8 minutes if they are experienced players). If they aren't finished at the end of the allotted time, they should stop their play, so that everyone can discuss the deal at the same time. When they have finished playing, have them put out all four hands dummy style. If they are finished ahead of time, they can quietly discuss the hands among themselves.

Start by reviewing the bidding. Don't worry if the students didn't reach the expected contract. Tell them to assume that the auction goes as suggested, so that everyone is now looking at the deal from the same perspective during the discussion of the play.

The students should be familiar with the standard concepts for choosing the opening lead. If necessary, you can quickly review leading top of a sequence or fourth highest against notrump contracts and top of touching honors or fourth highest in an unbid suit against suit contracts. On most deals, the opening lead should not be an issue.

When discussing the play, keep to the main theme. If a student wants to discuss a particular variation, tell them that you will go over it with them later. Don't hold up the entire class.

The students should be familiar with counting winners in notrump contracts and counting losers in suit contracts. They should be familiar also with the basic methods for developing tricks — promotion, length, and finessing — and eliminating losers — ruffing and discarding. You'll have to judge how much time is needed to review these points based on the level of the class. Try to keep the focus on the particular points of interest in the deal, as suggested in the comments on the deals. Students having particular difficulty following the play or defense can be referred to other books in the *ACBL Bridge Series* that cover these topics.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 1

Guidelines for Teachers: The deals in this lesson focus on the Stayman convention. They also illustrate the basic principles of play and defense, but can be used also to challenge more experienced players. There are examples of: unblocking, the hold-up play, avoiding the dangerous opponent, third hand high (or not so high) and loser on a loser.

Bid and Play — Deal 1: Responding to Stayman

Guidelines for Teachers: This first deal illustrates the process of using the Stayman convention when responder holds two four-card major suits. The defender is presented with an opportunity to unblock partner's suit. Declarer will be able to make several overtricks if this play is overlooked.

Introduction

“Let's bid a deal that demonstrates the use of the Stayman convention when responder holds both four-card major suits.”

Instructions

“North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North	♠ Q 10 7 3										
Vul: None	♥ A K 7 2										
	♦ K 9										
	♣ A 8 4										
♠ 8 4		♠ A 6 2									
♥ Q 10 9 5	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		N		W		E		S		♥ J 6 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♦ 10 6 5 3 2		♦ 8 4									
♣ K 6		♣ Q J 10 9 5									
	♠ K J 9 5										
	♥ 8 4										
	♦ A Q J 7										
	♣ 7 3 2										

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

“After North opens 1NT, South uses Stayman to look for a major-suit fit. With both four-card majors, North rebids 2♥, bidding up the line. South isn’t interested in hearts and puts the partnership in 3NT, holding enough strength for a game-level contract. North draws the inference that South wouldn’t use Stayman without interest in a major; since it isn’t hearts, it must be spades. North puts the partnership in its eight-card fit.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards with 4♠ by North as the contract.

Suggested Opening Lead

“East is on lead. With the knowledge that South’s 2♣ response was an artificial bid, East selects the ♣Q, top of a sequence.”

Suggested Play

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“North can see one loser in spades, two in hearts and two in clubs. The heart losers can be ruffed in dummy or discarded on South’s extra diamond winners after drawing trumps. North can afford to win the ♣A and lead spades, planning to drive out the ♠A and then draw the rest of the trumps. Following this line of play, North should lose at most one spade trick and two club tricks.

“Playing duplicate bridge, North may want to try for an overtrick after the opening club lead by discarding a club loser on one of dummy’s extra diamond winners, before letting the defenders in with the ♠A. On the actual deal, East ruffs the third round of diamonds as North discards a club. North still makes the contract, since there will be only one club loser left to go with the spade loser.

“If North–South were to reach 3NT, rather than 4♠, East would lead a club to defeat the contract. After the ♣A is driven out, North doesn’t have enough tricks and will have to promote extra winners in spades. East–West take four club tricks, along with the ♠A.”

Suggested Defense

“Although East–West can’t defeat a contract of 4♠, they must be careful not to let declarer make an overtrick. When East leads the ♣Q, West should play the ♣K on this trick to avoid blocking the suit. Otherwise, if declarer wins the first trick with the ♣A and drives out East’s ♠A, the defenders can take only one club trick with West’s ♣K. West doesn’t have a club left to return, and declarer can discard a club loser on dummy’s diamonds after drawing the remaining trumps.”

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Looking for a Major Suit Fit

Guidelines for Teachers: This second deal demonstrates the proper bids when Stayman uncovers the fact that there is no major-suit fit. There is an opportunity for some advanced discussion on the hold-up play, especially from the defenders' point of view.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal that demonstrates what happens when Stayman does not uncover a four-card major suit.”

Instructions

“East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 2 — Dealer East)

Dealer: East	♠ Q 10 9 5		
Vul: N-S	♥ 10 7 6 5		
	♦ A Q 6		
	♣ 8 4		
♠ J 7 6 3		N W E S	♠ A K 2
♥ K 8 4 2			♥ A Q 3
♦ 10 5			♦ K 8 4
♣ A 6 3			♣ K J 10 5
	♠ 8 4		
	♥ J 9		
	♦ J 9 7 3 2		
	♣ Q 9 7 2		

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

“With 20 high-card points, East opens the bidding 2NT using a partnership range for this bid of 20 or 21 points. After South passes, West uses the Stayman convention to look for an eight-card major-suit fit. With no four-card major, East makes the artificial rebid of 3♦. Holding 10 high-

card points, West knows the partnership has enough combined strength for a game contract, but not enough for a slam. Since there's no major-suit fit, West signs off in 3NT."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 3NT by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

"South is on lead and starts with the $\spadesuit 3$, fourth from the longest and strongest suit. South should not be deterred by East's $3\spadesuit$ bid, since that was an artificial response."

Suggested Play

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East can count seven sure tricks — two spades, three hearts and two clubs. East also will take a trick with the $\spadesuit K$ once South has led the suit. The ninth trick could come from the spade suit, if the $\heartsuit Q$ is doubleton. There also might be an extra trick from the heart suit if the missing hearts divide 3–3. The club suit offers a sure method for developing a ninth trick. Declarer can take a club finesse. If it wins, declarer has an extra trick and may make an overtrick. Even if the finesse loses, declarer has an extra trick, because the $\clubsuit 10$ will be established as a winner once the $\clubsuit Q$ is driven out.

"With all of these options, how should declarer play? Establishing an extra trick from the club suit is the surest way of making the contract. Declarer must be careful, however. The defenders have attacked diamonds. If declarer loses a trick to the $\clubsuit Q$, the defenders may be able to take enough diamond tricks to defeat the contract. To prevent this, declarer should use the hold-up play.

"Suppose North wins the first trick with the $\spadesuit A$ and returns the $\spadesuit Q$. Declarer plays low, letting North win the trick. When North leads another diamond, declarer wins with the $\spadesuit K$. Since declarer is planning to develop an extra trick in clubs, either a low spade or a low heart may be discarded from dummy. The advantage of holding up is that South now becomes the dangerous opponent, while North becomes a non-dangerous opponent. If declarer loses a trick to South, South may be able to take enough diamond winners to defeat the contract. That makes South dangerous. If declarer loses a trick to North, North is likely to have no diamonds left to lead. If North does have a diamond left to lead, the defenders' diamonds must originally have been divided 4–4, so they can't take enough tricks to defeat the contract. That makes North non-dangerous.

"Declarer now wants to tackle the club suit in a way that avoids losing a trick to the dangerous opponent. This can be done by playing the $\clubsuit K$ and then leading the $\clubsuit J$, planning to finesse against the $\clubsuit Q$ in the South hand. On the actual

deal, South holds the ♣Q and the finesse succeeds, giving declarer a ninth trick. If the finesse were to lose to the ♣Q in the North hand, declarer still would be safe. The ♣10 would be established as the ninth trick and North is the non-dangerous opponent — the defenders cannot take enough tricks to defeat the contract before declarer regains the lead.

“The danger on this deal can be seen if declarer plays a club to dummy’s ♣A and then plays a club to the ♣J, taking a finesse against the ♣Q in the North hand. When the finesse loses to the ♣Q in the South hand — the dangerous hand — South takes enough diamond tricks to defeat the contract.”

Suggested Defense

“South gets the defense off to a good start by leading the ♦3. Assuming North plays third hand high and wins the first trick with the ♦A, North should then return the ♦Q — high card from the short side — to avoid blocking the suit. Once East’s ♦K is driven out, South’s remaining diamonds are established as winners. If declarer lets South gain the lead with the ♣Q, the defenders can defeat the contract.

“If the defense starts this way, but declarer holds up with the ♦K and avoids giving South a trick with the ♣Q (as discussed above), it would appear that the defenders have no chance to defeat the contract. There is a way, however, for the defenders to give declarer a much tougher challenge. Although it is usual to play third hand high when partner leads a low card against declarer’s notrump contract, there are exceptions. Suppose North chooses to play the ♦Q rather than the ♦A on the first trick. Now it’s difficult for declarer to hold up winning the ♦K. Declarer will be under the illusion that South holds the ♦A and will think that this is the only opportunity to win a trick with the ♦K. Assuming declarer does win the first trick with the ♦K, now both defenders become dangerous. If declarer loses a trick in another suit to either opponent, the defenders can take enough diamond tricks to defeat the contract. Declarer will have to guess which defender holds the ♣Q.

“North won’t lose a trick by playing the ♦Q rather than the ♦A on the first trick. If South holds the ♦K, the ♦Q will win the trick, and North can play the ♦A and continue with the suit. If declarer wins with the ♦K, North will get the ♦A later and can continue leading the suit upon regaining the lead. The play of the ♦Q might cause some confusion for South, however. If declarer wins with the ♦K and then loses a trick to South’s ♣Q, South may think that declarer, not North, holds the ♦A. South may not lead the suit again. That’s the trouble with a play like this. You might fool declarer, but you might also fool partner. Both defenders will really need to be on their toes to defeat this contract.”

Bid and Play — Deal 3: Stayman with a Weak Hand

Guidelines for Teachers: This third deal is interesting. Responder's hand is too weak to use traditional Stayman, but can use 2♣ to negotiate a good final contract. This deal introduces an application of the loser on a loser concept, which is likely to be of interest to the more experienced players. It's a theme that has many variations – some of which will be encountered in upcoming lessons.

Introduction

“Let's play a deal that demonstrates how to use the 2♣ response to an opening 1NT to find the best possible spot, even when responder is too weak to use Stayman. Let's see what happens.”

Instructions

“South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

Dealer: South		♠ J 9 4 3			
Vul: E-W		♥ K 9 6 2			
		♦ J 8 5 3 2			
		♣ —			
♠ K 8	N	♠ Q 10 6 2	W	♥ A 7 3	E
♥ 8 5 4	W	♦ 7 4	S	♦ 7 4	E
♦ A 10 9	E	♣ A 10 7 5	S	♣ A 10 7 5	E
♣ Q J 9 6 2	S	♠ A 7 5	S	♥ Q J 10	E
		♥ Q J 10		♦ K Q 6	
		♦ K Q 6		♣ K 8 4 3	
		♣ K 8 4 3			

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♦

“South has 15 high-card points and a balanced hand. This is ideal for a 1NT opening bid using a range of 15 to 17 points. With only 5 high-card points, North does not have the usual strength required for the Stayman convention. With shortage in clubs, however, it is relatively safe to respond 2♣. North can pass any response by South. When South rebids 2♦, showing no four-card major, North passes and leaves the partnership in a partscore contract that is likely to be better than 1NT.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♦ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

“West would probably start with the ♣Q, top of a broken sequence.”

Suggested Play

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“It’s sometimes difficult to plan the play from declarer’s perspective, when the long trumps are in the dummy. It’s often easier to view the hand as though it were being played by dummy. Dummy’s hand has three spade losers, one heart loser and one diamond loser (if the diamonds divide 3–2). That appears fine, since declarer can afford to lose five tricks.

“Declarer should be careful not to run out of trumps before all of the work is done. If declarer ruffs the first club lead with a trump in dummy and then starts to draw trumps, West may win the ♦A and lead another club. If declarer ruffs this trick, declarer can’t afford to draw the remaining trumps and then give up a heart trick. The defenders will take a club winner. Declarer may be able to make the contract by playing hearts before drawing the last trump. When the hearts luckily divide 3–3, declarer can come to enough tricks. There’s an easier way to keep control, however.

“On the lead of the ♣Q, declarer should discard a spade loser from dummy. East will win this trick with the ♣A, but now declarer is in command. South’s ♣K is a winner and can be used to discard another spade loser from dummy. The defenders can’t force declarer to use dummy’s trumps right away. On regaining the lead, South can drive out the ♦A, draw trumps and then drive out the ♥A. South should finish with an overtrick, losing one spade — having discarded two spade losers on the clubs — one heart, one diamond and one club.

“The play of discarding a spade loser from dummy while losing the first trick to East’s ♣A is referred to as a loser on a loser. This type of play arises in many situations, and by exchanging one loser for another, declarer can often gain a trick. In this deal, for example, declarer develops the ♣K into a winner while preserving dummy’s trumps.”

Suggested Defense

“With the favorable lie of the cards for declarer — diamonds dividing 3–2 and hearts dividing 3–3 — the defenders will have a difficult time holding declarer to fewer than eight tricks. Holding declarer to eight tricks is a reasonable result, however, since South might take nine tricks.

“If South declares 1NT, the defenders have a chance to defeat the contract. They can establish four club winners by giving South a trick with the ♣K. They must restrict declarer to two hearts, two diamond winners and the ♠A. They can do this, for example, if West holds up the ♦A for two rounds, and East holds up the ♥A for two rounds. Now South can never get to the dummy. The defenders eventually get a spade winner (maybe two) to go along with four club tricks and two aces.”

Bid and Play — Deal 4: Using Stayman with Interference

Guidelines for Teachers: On this fourth deal, an overcall takes away responder's chance to bid 2♣ Stayman. This deal illustrates how to get the information without the traditional bid. On the play, timing is important. If declarer draws trumps and plays all of the clubs before trying to set up a diamond, there could be trouble.

Introduction

“Let's play a deal that shows us how to use Stayman when the opponents overcall. Let's see what happens.”

Instructions

“West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)

Dealer: West	♠ K Q J 7 5 2				
Vul: Both	♥ 7 3				
	♦ A Q 6				
	♣ 9 4				
♠ A 8 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 6 3
N					
W E					
S					
♥ A Q 8 5		♥ K 10 6 4			
♦ K 8 2		♦ J 7 5 3			
♣ K 10 5		♣ A Q 8			
	♠ 10 9				
	♥ J 9 2				
	♦ 10 9 4				
	♣ J 7 6 3 2				

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1NT	2♠	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

“After West's 1NT opening bid, North overcalls 2♠ with a good six-card suit. When North has a good suit, it's unlikely that East–West will double the overcall for penalty. Even if 2♠ is doubled and defeated, the penalty is likely to be less than the value of East–West's potential contract.

“With 10 high-card points, East has the strength to take the partnership to the game level and would like to investigate whether there is an eight-card heart fit. 2♣ is no longer available as the Stayman convention after the overcall. In this situation, a cuebid of the opponent’s suit replaces Stayman. It’s forcing and commits the partnership to game. Holding a four-card or longer major suit, opener shows it in response to the cuebid. Opener has the other major suit and shows it by bidding 4♥. Without a four-card heart suit, opener would rebid 3NT with some strength in spades or bid a four-card minor. East–West find their heart fit despite North’s interference.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 4♥ with West as declarer.

Suggested Opening Lead

“North is on lead and starts with the ♠K, top of a sequence.”

Suggested Play

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“West’s 4♥ contract is a little precarious. West needs the defenders’ hearts to divide 3–2 to avoid a heart loser. In addition, there are two spade losers and three diamond losers. One spade loser can be ruffed in dummy, so declarer wants to restrict the diamond losers to two.

“After winning the ♠A and drawing trumps, declarer tackles the diamond suit by leading toward one of the honors. Declarer might start by leading a low diamond from dummy toward the ♦K, hoping South holds the ♦A. When the ♦K loses to North’s ♦A, declarer still has a chance. Later, declarer can lead a low diamond toward dummy’s ♦J, hoping that North holds the ♦Q. The second finesse works.

“On this layout, it doesn’t matter whether declarer leads toward the ♦K or toward the ♦J first. As a matter of good technique, however, leading toward the ♦J first is better. The 2♠ overcall makes it more likely that North holds the ♦A. At the same time, it’s unlikely North holds a lot of diamonds. Exchange North’s ♦Q and ♦6 for two low clubs in the South hand to see why it might be a good idea to lead a low diamond from the West hand first. Also, if the ♦J does lose to South’s ♦Q, declarer still has the option of “guessing” that North started with the doubleton ♦A. Try exchanging North’s ♦Q for a low club in the South hand. Declarer still might make the contract. If North hesitates when a low diamond is led toward the ♦J, declarer could infer that North holds the ♦A. On the next round of diamonds, declarer might play a low diamond from both hands rather than lead a diamond toward the ♦K.”

Suggested Defense

“The defenders can’t defeat 4♥ if declarer plays correctly. They may get a chance, however, if declarer slips slightly. Suppose declarer wins the ♠A, draws trumps and then takes all of the club winners, before leading a diamond to the ♦K. North can win this with the ♦A, take a spade winner and play another high spade, forcing declarer to ruff in the dummy. With no club entries left, declarer will have to lead a diamond from dummy, away from the ♦J. South will win this trick, and North will have the ♦10 left to defeat the contract.”

