

## How to use Stayman

There are many ways that Stayman is played, and although teachers give examples, there are no rules, or rules that are incomplete.

The one we hear most is, you need 11 points to bid Stayman responding to a Weak NT 12-14.

Now this is just **WRONG**.

The rule is, and please read it carefully,

**We need 11+ points to bid Stayman when responding to a Weak NT, if you hold ONE 4 card major in a BALANCED hand.**

And why is this? Because if we get a response we don't want, WE NEED to have a REBID, and in this case that will be 2NT.

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So we are going to give you a set of rules, they may not be to every ones taste, after all, many experts disagree about many aspects of bridge, but we promise you that if you follow these rules, you will be able to bid far more hands than the other experts.

Rule 1. Before using Stayman, make sure we have a rebid if the response is unsatisfactory.

There are only 3 responses, as you are well aware,

2D or 2H or 2S.

Examples, In each case partner has opened 1NT 12-14.

Kxxx

Ax

Qxxx

xxx

9 points.

We should PASS, not use Stayman as we have no satisfactory rebid over a 2D or 2H reply.

However if we held 2 more points, eg

Kxxx

Ax

Qxxx

Qxx

We can bid 2NT over either of those responses, and can invite 3S, over 2S.

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Rule 2. The opener of 1NT, must not hold 2 doubletons.

## How to use Stayman

We are not going to give examples, This is a NO NO, and disaster can befall you if you ignore this rule.

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Rule 3. The opener of 1NT, must be prepared to correct a bid of a major to the other major, if holding a doubleton in the first major.

Examples,  
Kxxxx  
Kxxxx  
x  
xx

When we hold this hand we KNOW there is an 8 card Major fit, maybe a 9 card fit, we just don't know which one.

If the opener holds

Axx  
Ax  
KQxx  
Jxxx

The bidding should go like this;

1NT-2C, 2D-2H, 2S pass.

The 2S bid should say, I only have a doubleton Heart, and as I know the Stayman bidder has both Majors, I am correcting to 2S.

### **Question, How do they KNOW that responder has both majors?**

This is really important, and we can find the answer by looking at Rule 4.

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Rule 4. After a Stayman response, a bid of 3C, or sometimes 3D, by the Responder is WEAK, and opener must pass.

Example.

x  
Kxxx  
xx  
KQxxxx

We use Stayman, and over 2H we pass, but over 2D or 2S, we bid 3C, WEAK.

Or.

x

## How to use Stayman

Kxxx  
KQxxxx  
xx

Over 2H we pass, but over 2D we pass, and over 2S we bid 3D.  
So going back to Rule 3, when we DON'T revert to a minor, we DON'T have only one Major.

However we do have to be alert when we open with both Majors.

### Example

Kxxx  
Kxxx  
Ax  
Axx And we open 1NT.

If we hear 2C, we bid 2H, and now Responder bids 3C or 3D, we KNOW they have the other Major, (See Rules 5 and 6.) and we must bid 3S!

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Rule 5. After a Stayman response of 2H, a rebid by the Responder in a minor is Weak, but opener must correct to Spades if they held both Majors.

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Rule 6. We must NOT use Stayman without at least one 4 card Major.

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So a brief summary, it is NOT necessary to have 11 points to bid Stayman, but you must know these rules.

Please note, some hands are hard to bid no matter what system you use, and sometimes you just have to take your medicine.

This hand came up last week, and up till now I have no answer, but just hope that other people get to the same spot.

QJ109  
4  
KJ9  
KQ1053

And partner opened 1NT opposite my 12 excellent points.  
We bid Stayman, hoping for a major response,  
over 2H we would bid 3NT, over 2S we would bid 4S,  
but over 2D, the actual response we got, we had no real answer.

In fact we bid 3NT, hoping that Opener had a stopper in Hearts, but this time it was not to be.

## How to use Stayman

The person on lead held

76532  
A865  
A72  
8

And chose to lead a Heart.

My partners hand, the 1NT opener,

AK4  
972  
10653  
AJ6

And on a Spade lead we would have made 3NT. 2 light was a 28% board, as many led a Spade.

As you can see, there is no game on, not even 2NT, 4C is the best place to get a plus score.