

What is your agreement?

Provided by Neil H. Timm

Your partner opens 2NT=20-21HCP with a balanced hand and responder has 12+HCP, what do you bid and what do you know. As responder you know that the opening bidder has between 6-9 control points where an A=2 and a K=1. Some example hands follow.

♠ KQ7	♠ KQ9	♠ KQ10	♠ AK75
♥ AQ42	♥ AKJ3	♥ AKJ53	♥ AJ1073
♦ J4	♦ 105	♦ A96	♦ A10
♣ AKJ9	♣ AKQ	♣ K7	♣ A10

A common, simple approach, which does not require 12+points, is to allow the opening bidder to show his hand via an artificial 3-level bid and natural 4-level bids:

3♣	Stayman
3♦/3♥	Jacoby Transfers (announced)
3♠*	Artificial relay to 3NT
3NT	Artificial and forcing to 4NT
4♣/4♦/4♥/4♠	Natural showing a long broken suit (too strong for Texas)
4NT	Gerber/1430 Expert Gerber (or 3014)
5NT	Invitational to 6NT

For more on this approach, go to <https://csbnews.org/conventions-minor-suit-stayman-over-2nt-opening-bid/>

With 12+HCP, many employ 3♠* as Minor Suit Stayman (MSS) and not a relay to 3NT. The only requirement for MSS is the fact that the responder holds 5-4/5-5 distributions in the minor suits and has slam interest.

There are many methods for responding to the bid of 2NT as reviewed in my February, 2017 lesson available on the web site www.bridgewebs.com/Ocala. What is your agreement with slam interest? The following may work for you.

After 3♠*-3NT: 4♠ spades shortness and 5-4 in the minors

Then 4NT by the opener denies slam interest, 5m are to play. 4♠, 4NT/4♠ is 1430 asks for clubs and diamonds, respectively, the next steps.

After 3♠*-3NT: 4♥ heart shortness and 5-4 in the minors

Then 4♠ by the opener denies slam interest, 5m are to play. Over 4♥, 4♠/4NT is 1430 asks for clubs and diamonds, respectively, the next steps

After 3♠*-3NT 4♣/4♦ is minorwood (some may use crosswood)
4♠/4NT is 1430 kickback for hearts/4NT for spades

When one opens 2NT, many pairs play Puppet Stayman. What is the drawback of the convention? If you are 5-4 in Hearts and Spades you will not be able to find your 5-3 heart fit. See for example the article by Larry Cohen: <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/puppet-stayman-over-2nt>.

What is one to do? Replace Puppet Stayman with Muppet Stayman (Modified Puppet Stayman), which fixes the problem.

See Timm (2021, p. 142) on the web site <https://www.bridgewebs.com/Ocala>.
Responding to 2NT which is more difficult than responding to a strong 1NT=15-17 bid.