

Advanced Continuations Over Partner's 1NT Opener

- Garbage Stayman
 1. At any time you are playing regular Stayman, responder can use garbage Stayman to try to get the partnership to a better two level contract by passing opener's response. These hands are always short in clubs. These hands also should have at least 4 diamonds. 4-4-5-0 and 4-4-4-1 are the ideal shapes.

♠ T952
♥ J643
♦ T9743
♣

The above hand is textbook for Garbage Stayman. Responder bids 2♣, and passes opener's response of 2♦, 2♥, 2♠. This hand could ruff 3 clubs in a suit contract, but is an underdog to take any tricks in 1NT.

Two notes on Garbage Stayman:

1. Opener should be careful competing to the three level in a major (especially if the opponents bid 3♣), because partner might have this "garbage" hand.
2. If the opponents have a Garbage Stayman auction, consider competing to 3♣ if it is viable. If you can't compete and defend a Garbage Stayman auction that dies at the two level, you want to lead trumps 99% of the time.

- Creeping Stayman
 1. "Creeping" Stayman is almost the same as garbage Stayman, but does not require diamond tolerance. The play is to bid Stayman, and if partner disappoints with 2♦, responder bids 2♥

♠ J8754
♥ T9853
♦ 9
♣ 72

- Partner opens 1NT (15-17). You want to play this hand in 2 of a major, but which suit should you transfer to? The best solution is to bid 2♣, Stayman.
 1. If partner bids 2 of a major, great! You can pass that and expect partner to make it.
 2. If partner bids 2♦, you now bid 2♥. **This is not invitational.** Playing creeping Stayman, 2♥ shows a bad hand with at least 5-4 in both majors.

Partner will not have a four card major, but should have at least 3 cards in one major if your NT openings are not too offshape. If partner has 3 hearts, he or she will pass. If partner has 3 spades, partner will correct to 2♠ and you can pass that.

3. Again, if you are on defense, these auctions scream for a trump lead.
4. If the disparity between the two major suits is significant, just transfer to the better suit

♠ QT863
♥ 5432
♦ 98
♣ J3

With this hand, I'd just transfer to 2♠ and forget about the heart fit. If partner bids 2♦, 2♥ probably will not be a good spot at all with such low spots.

Smolen

- In standard, game forcing hands with 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors will try twice to find an 8 card fit after partner opens 1NT.
 1. The first try will be Stayman. If partner bids 2 of a major, the fit is found.
 2. If partner bids 2♦, responder will now jump to 3♥/3♠ in the 5 card major to suggest that suit if opener has 3 card support. Opener would bid 4 with 3 card support and 3NT with 2 card support.
- Mike Smolen had a better idea on how to handle these hands. Because there is value in the 1NT opener playing the hand, his simple convention is to jump to 3 in **the four card major** so that 1NT opener always plays the hand.

♠ K85	♠ AQ743
♥ QT	♥ A853
♦ AQ72	♦ 5
♣ KJ97	♣ 852

Smolen Auction (West plays 4♠): 1NT – 2♣; 2♦ – 3♥; 3♠ – 4♠

Standard Auction: (East plays 4♠) 1NT -2♣; 2♦ - 3♠; 4♠

It looks better for West to receive the opening lead, as any suit other than spades might generate an early extra trick.

4 Way Transfers – Playing Transfers to Both Minors as Well

- The first rule of transferring or getting partner to sign off in a minor is that you need a six card suit to do it. No exceptions!
 1. ♠872 ♥94 ♦T63 ♣QJ974
 - Take your lumps in 1NT rather than forcing partner to play 3♣. It is OK to transfer to 2 of a major with really bad hands, but really bad hands that have to play on the three level require 6 trumps.
- The second rule is that you want to use minor suit transfers to show 3 types of hands
 1. Bad hands with 6 card suits that want to play in 3♣ or 3♦
 2. Hands that have a 6 card minor and are interested in slam.
 3. Wildly distributional hands that you plan to play 5 of a minor

♠ 9 ♥T73 ♦J ♣QJT98643

Rather than bid 5C yourself, it is probably better to bid 2S, and raise partner's 3♣ to 5♣ so opener plays the hand. This is a recurring theme!

- The third rule is that you try really hard not to transfer to a minor with a four card major. You certainly would never do it with invitational or better values; bid Stayman and try to play in the major as a first priority.
- If you have a six card minor and 3NT is where you want to be, just bid it.
 - ♠ K8 ♥962 ♦T5 ♣AKT873 -- don't transfer to clubs and then bid 3NT. This is way too friendly to let opening leader know you have a running club suit. If you bid a direct 3NT on this hand and your flat 10-11 counts, they will always be guessing which hand you have.
- MIT Novice Game Standard for the minors is to use 2♠
 - Opener always bids 3♣
 - Responder passes with clubs, and bids 3♦ with diamonds and a weak hand
 - Again, with diamonds, the wrong hand is playing it.
- A slight improvement on that structure is to use 2♠ as a transfer to clubs, and 3♣ as a transfer to 3♦
 - This way opener plays it under both circumstances. The natural 3♣ bid is very rare and is worth giving up for this purpose

Most experts play 4 way transfers as follows:

2♣: stayman

2♦: transfer to hearts

2♥: transfer to spades

2♠: transfer to clubs (2NT says "I like clubs" – **preacceptance**; 3♣ says "I don't like clubs")

***2NT: transfer to diamonds** (3♣ says "I like diamonds"; 3♦ says "I don't like diamonds")

* The hands with 8-9 balanced that would normally bid 2NT in standard now have to bid Stayman first followed by 2NT to make a balanced invite. These players should tell you before the opening lead is made that 1NT-2C; 2H-2NT does not promise 4 spades by responder.

- The preacceptance is used when opener has a good holding in the minor.
 - Two card holdings are usually bad except maybe with the Ax or Kx
 - Three card holding are worth a pre-accept unless xxx
 - Three card holding with an honor and all four card holding are good.
 - HCP don't matter; only the holding in the suit itself is evaluated
- Sometimes responder has a hand that should make 3NT with a fit in a minor, but otherwise should play 3 of a minor due to no outside entries.

♠ 92

♥ J7

♦ KQ9742

♣ 853

♠ KT63

♥ AK5 3

♦ 65

♣ AQJ

♠ AK63

♥ T965

♦ AT6

♣ A2

Hand 1 has 17 HCP and extra shape, but the lack of the diamond ace makes 3NT a bad bet; the defenders take the diamond ace on the second round and then dummy is dead.

Hand 2 has only 15 HCP, but the diamond ace is gold. 3NT is a 90% + contract when the diamonds run.