So, you bid Stayman. Now what?

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Stayman is likely the single most commonly used convention in Bridge. Most players if asked for the responses to Stayman will quickly respond "2 Diamonds, 2 Hearts and 2 Spades". However, if asked if there are any other responses or what the continuations are, they will often go silent. Allow me to present a few options I find interesting and helpful.

From Wikipedia – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stayman convention - the convention is named for Sam Stayman, who wrote the first published description in 1945, but its inventors were two other players: the British expert Jack Marx in 1939, who published it only in 1946, and Stayman's regular partner George Rapée in 1944

Here are a few new conventions, then a few considerations of what you might lose or need to change to use them.

Conventions:

- Stayman Super-Accepts
- Advanced Stayman in Distress (Doubt)
- Shape Asking Relay System
- Quest
- Delayed Texas
 - Showing all Hands with Both Majors

Considerations/Corollaries:

- Four Suit Transfers
 - Simple-Accept vs Super-Accept
 - Minor Suit Transfer and 3 Major Rebid

Stayman Super-Accepts

When Stayman was originally designed, it included a *Two No Trump* response to show a maximum opening. This fell out of favor likely due to the rise of Garbage Stayman. Many will use "Super-Accepts" over *Jacoby Transfers* even though those can be on ZERO points, so perhaps over Stayman this could work.

If you will open 1 No Trump with a five card Major and responder bids Stayman, Opener can use a rebid of 3 ♥ or 3 ♠ to show a maximum No Trump opener with a five card Major. Responder is well placed to set the contract.

Likewise, a rebid of $3 \spadesuit$ shows $4 \heartsuit$ and $4 \spadesuit$ with a maximum. After which Responder can signoff in $3 \heartsuit$ or $3 \spadesuit$, or transfer into a Major at the 4 level.

We have two rebids we haven't defined yet – 2NT and $3 \clubsuit$. I have seen three ways to define these.

- 1) Not used. Easy to remember.
- 2) $2NT > 5 \spadesuit$ and a 4 card Major $3 \clubsuit > 5 \clubsuit$ and a 4 card Major

There are Relays and Transfers to "Right Side" the contract. More complex. Good over three-point range NT.

- 3) 2NT > Maximum without a four card Major Responder can use one of the later gadgets to ask about Minors.
 - 3 ♣ > Maximum with a four card Major Responder can ask which Major. Fairly easy. Good over four- or five-point range NT.

Hand 1, Hand 2, Hand 3

Advanced Stayman in Distress (ASID)

Some suggest that you should not use Stayman with 4333 or 3433 distribution as game in a Major could be risky with two balanced hands opposite one another – especially matching 4333 hands. Never and Always are limiting guidance. Use judgement.

New gadget to the rescue! First came Stayman in Doubt.

After Partner opens 1NT, and after the Stayman ask, rebids $2 \heartsuit$ or $2 \spadesuit$. Responder then can bid $3 \diamondsuit$ to say "Cool! I have four of those as well, but I am 4333 distribution."

After 3 ♦ by Responder, Opener can rebid:

3 ♥/♠ 4333 minimum points 3NT 4333 maximum points

4♥/♠ Extra Shape.

An improvement, but of limited use. Let's expand it. Start by changing Responder's description to be any four-card support. Now expand Opener's rebids to show where the doubleton is located. After $1NT - 2 \clubsuit - 2 \blacktriangledown - 3 \spadesuit$: $3 \blacktriangledown = 3433$, minimum $3 \spadesuit = \text{doubleton} \spadesuit$ $3 \spadesuit = 4333$, minimum 3NT = 3433, non-minimum $4 \spadesuit = \text{doubleton} \spadesuit$ $4 \spadesuit = \text{doubleton} \spadesuit$

This allows Responder to still avoid 4333 opposite 4333 mirrored hands while giving an extra shape asking bid for investigating Slam. Any bid other than a Game level signoff shows Slam interest.

Hand 4, Hand 5, Hand 6

Shape Asking Relays after Stayman (SARS)

Partner responds 2 ♦ to your Stayman bid after opening 1NT.

You are still interested in Slam holding:

♠ AJ108

V K83

♦ KQJ4

♣ Q8

Especially if Opener holds 4+ Diamonds.

Rebidding 3NT gives up.

Rebidding 4NT Quantitative will have Opener pass with a minimum and Slam may still be in the cards.

Jumping to 4♠ will tell you about Aces, but...

A second response of $2 \checkmark / \spadesuit$ is to play.

Rebidding 2NT is invitational.

Rebid 3 ♣ as a Shape Ask!

Opener shows Minor Suit shape:

 $3 \blacklozenge = 5$ card Minor (either \clubsuit 's or \blacklozenge 's), not 4-card other Minor. $3 \blacktriangledown = 4$ -card \clubsuit 's but not \blacklozenge 's, so 3334 $3 \spadesuit = 4$ -card \spadesuit 's but not \clubsuit 's, so 3343 3NT = 4-card \clubsuit 's and 4-card \blacklozenge 's, so 2344 or 3244. $4 \clubsuit = 5$ card \clubsuit 's and 4-card \spadesuit 's, so 2254

After 1NT - 2
$$\clubsuit$$
 - 2 \checkmark - 3 \spadesuit - 3 \blacklozenge , 3 \checkmark asks: 3 \spadesuit = 5 card \clubsuit 's

3NT = 5 card \blacklozenge 's

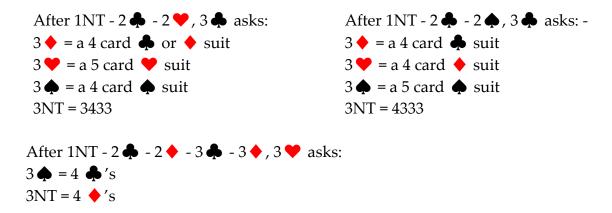
This allows Opener to show all possible Minor suit holdings below 3NT (except the 4-5 and 5-4 holdings if you open 2245 hands 1NT). Since 3 is looking for Slam going past 3NT with the perfect hand, this shouldn't hurt.

There are continuations to sign-off in 3NT, Ask for Key-cards at the 4 level, or make Quantitative asks showing 4-4fit, 4-5 fit, or No fit.

Hand 7, Hand 8

That works well! Let's see if it can be expanded.

What if Opener shows a 4-card Major, but it the wrong one? Or maybe you are playing Super-Accepts and were hoping for a 5-card Major.



If you open 1NT with 4252 shape, there is no room to clarify whether the Minor is 4 or 5-cards. Again many options for continuations.

Hand 9, Hand 10, Hand 11

Quest Transfers

How should one handle 5-4 or 6-4 in the Majors after Partner opens 1 No Trump?

You could ignore the 4-card Major and transfer to the longer Major. That seems unilateral and will often miss a better fit.

It is better to get Partner to cooperate! Start by bidding Stayman.

If Partner shows a Major Pass or Raise as appropriate.

If Partner rebids 2 ♦ denying a 4-card Major you need ways to show the 5-4 or 6-4 length/shape in the Majors.

With a Weak hand that has no interest in game bid 2 of the longer Major – To Play!

With a hand worth forcing to game, Smolen could be bid at the 3 level.

But what about an invitational hand?!?

Decide if it is more *Pass* or more *Force*?

Better – transfer into the longer Major at the 3-level.

$$1N-2 \clubsuit -2 \diamondsuit -3 \diamondsuit > 5+ \heartsuit$$
 and $4 \diamondsuit 1N-2 \clubsuit -2 \diamondsuit -3 \heartsuit > 5+ \diamondsuit$ and $4 \heartsuit$

Quest Transfer showing the Major suit shape, right siding the contract, and Invitational Plus.

Opener MUST either accept the Transfer or Super-Accept.

After 1NT - 2
$$\spadesuit$$
 - 2 \blacklozenge - 3 \blacklozenge after 1NT - 2 \spadesuit - 2 \blacklozenge - 3 \blacktriangledown 3 \blacktriangledown = normal accept

where a normal accept is any minimal hand with two or three card support.

And with a maximum we have the Super-Accepts:

$$3 \spadesuit = \text{three} \quad \checkmark' s + \spadesuit A$$

$$3NT = \text{natural, non-minimum, normally}$$

$$3 \spadesuit -2 \checkmark \text{ in the majors}$$

$$4 \clubsuit = \text{three} \quad \checkmark' s + \spadesuit A$$

$$4 \spadesuit = \text{three} \quad \checkmark' s + \spadesuit A$$

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$$4 \spadesuit = \text{three} \quad \spadesuit' s + \spadesuit A$$

Responder can now Pass 3 \checkmark / \spadesuit with only Invitational values.

Raise to $4 \checkmark / \spadesuit$ with Game Forcing values and no interest in Slam without a Super-Accept.

Cue bid on the way to Game if Slam still in the cards.

Bid Roman Keycard Blackwood (RKB) or Exclusion Keycard Blackwood (EKB).

Hand 12, Hand 13, Hand 14

Delayed Texas Transfers

Can be played as an extension of Quest Transfers.

With 6-4 in the Majors and either Invitational or Slam values use Quest Transfers.

If not playing Quest Transfers you can look for Slam after using Delayed Texas Transfer to set the trump suit.

Hand 15

Considerations/Corollaries: Four Suit Transfers

One of the common agreements that these conventions conflict with is the use of $3 \clubsuit / \diamondsuit$ rebids by Responder to show a Game Force with a 5-card Minor with an unfitted 4-card Major.

It is a better use of the bids to use a Transfer to the Minor and a $3 \checkmark / \spadesuit$ rebid to show the 5-card Minor and 4-card Major Game Force which, of course, conflicts with using the $3 \checkmark / \spadesuit$ rebids after the Minor Transfer to show Shortness.

There are several other Stayman variations that have been presented over the years. Web searches or the Wikipedia article can help you find more options.

As always consider all Conventions and Arrangements as they fit into your Style, Structure, and System.

If it fits, and you like it – use it.

If it doesn't fit, or you don't like – don't use it.

If it doesn't fit, but you really like it – what would it take to allow it to fit? Change is how we get stronger.

Useful Links

Much of what I play comes from Terrence Quested.

He was at the Pattaya Bridge Club.

https://www.pattayabridge.com/NTbiddingindex.htm

His complete book on Responding to a Strong No Trump.

"1NT Openings, Stayman and Transfers ...

...when playing a strong NT"

https://bridge-tips.co.il/wp-

content/uploads/2021/10/1NT opening complete bidding system.pdf

His Complete Bidding System.

https://bridge-tips.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Book-2.pdf

And he claimed:

By the same Author: -

- 1NT Openings, Stayman and Transfers ... when playing a weak NT.

But I have never found this book.

If you do find it please share!

Alternative take on extending Stayman from **Peter Hollands**:

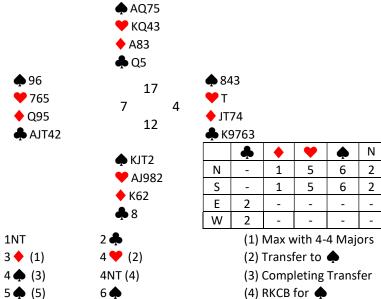
https://youtu.be/qgwjbkz2sbY

Summary of direct responses to an	Summary of direct responses to
Opening of 1NT	Stayman
2♣ = Stayman	2 ♦ = no 4-card, or 5-card, Major
2 ♦ = transfer to ♥'s	$2 \checkmark = 4 \text{ or } 5 \checkmark$, may have $4 \spadesuit$
2♥ = transfer to ♠'s	$2 \spadesuit = 4 \text{ or } 5 \spadesuit$, denies $4 \heartsuit$
$2 \spadesuit$ = transfer to \clubsuit 's	2NT = Maximum without a 4-card Major
2NT = transfer to ♦'s	3 ♣ = Maximum with a 4-card Major
$3 \clubsuit$ = ambiguous ($\spadesuit/\clubsuit/\spadesuit$) splinter	3 ♦ = 4-4 Majors, Maximum
3 ♦ = Broken Suit Transfer to ♥'s	3 ♥ = 5 ♥, Maximum
3♥ = Broken Suit Transfer to ♠'s	$3 \spadesuit = 5 \spadesuit$, Maximum
3♠ = ♥ splinter	
3NT to play, normally no 4-card major	
4♣ = Gerber	
4 ♦ = Texas transfer to ♥'s	
4♥ = Texas transfer to ♠'s	
$4 \spadesuit$ = quantitative, (15-16)	
4NT = quantitative, (17)	

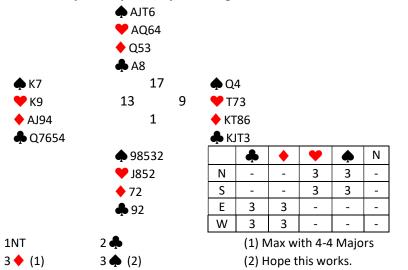
Summary of Stayman Sequences

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1NT - 2 ♣ - 2 ♦:
Pass = weak, 4441 or similar
2 ♥ = weak, 45+ to play
2 \spadesuit = weak, 54+ to play
2NT = invitational, does not guarantee a 4-card major
3 ♣ = minor suit shape ask (SARS)
3 \blacklozenge = Quest transfer
3 ♥ = Quest transfer
3 \spadesuit = game force; 4-4 in the majors, weak minors
3NT = to play, contains one or two 4 card majors
4 ♣ = Gerber
4 \blacklozenge = \text{transfer to } \checkmark \text{'s (Extended Texas)}
4 \forall = transfer to \spadesuit's (Extended Texas)
4 \spadesuit = quantitative (15-16), contains one or two 4 card majors
4NT = quantitative (17), contains one or two 4 card majors
                                                        1NT - 2 ♣ - 2 ♠:
 1NT - 2 ♣ - 2 ♥:
 Pass = weak, to play
                                                        Pass = weak, to play
 2 \spadesuit = invitational to 3NT or 4 \spadesuit,
     contains 4 \( \infty' \) 's
 2NT = invitational, does not contain a
                                                        2NT = invitational, may or may not
                                                            contain 4 \forall's
     4-card major
 3 \clubsuit = minor suit shape ask (SARS)
                                                        3 ♣ = minor suit shape ask (SARS)
 3 \spadesuit = shape ask, maybe a slam try
                                                        3 \spadesuit = shape ask, maybe a slam try
                                                            (ASID)
     (ASID)
                                                        3 ♥ = ambiguous splinter
 3 \heartsuit = invitational, 4 \heartsuit's
 3 ♠ = ambiguous splinter
                                                        3 \spadesuit = invitational, 4 \spadesuit 's
 3NT = to play
                                                        3NT = to play
 4 \clubsuit = RKCB \text{ for } \checkmark \text{s}
                                                        4 \clubsuit = RKCB \text{ for } \spadesuit's
 4 \blacklozenge = \text{slam interest}
                                                        4 \blacklozenge = \text{slam interest}
 4 ♥ = to play
                                                        4 \heartsuit = quantitative (15-16),
                                                            contains 4 's
 4 \spadesuit = quantitative (15-16),
                                                        4 \spadesuit = \text{to play}
     contains 4 \( \phi's \)
 4NT = quantitative (17),
                                                        4NT = quantitative (17),
     contains 4 \( \Phi' \) 's
                                                            contains 4 \(\psi'\)s
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Hand 1 - Stayman Super-Accept - Slam

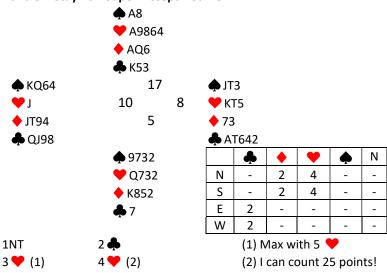


Hand 2 – Stayman Super-Accept - Garbage

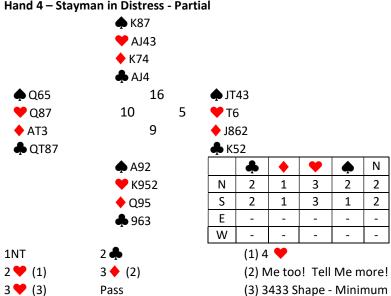


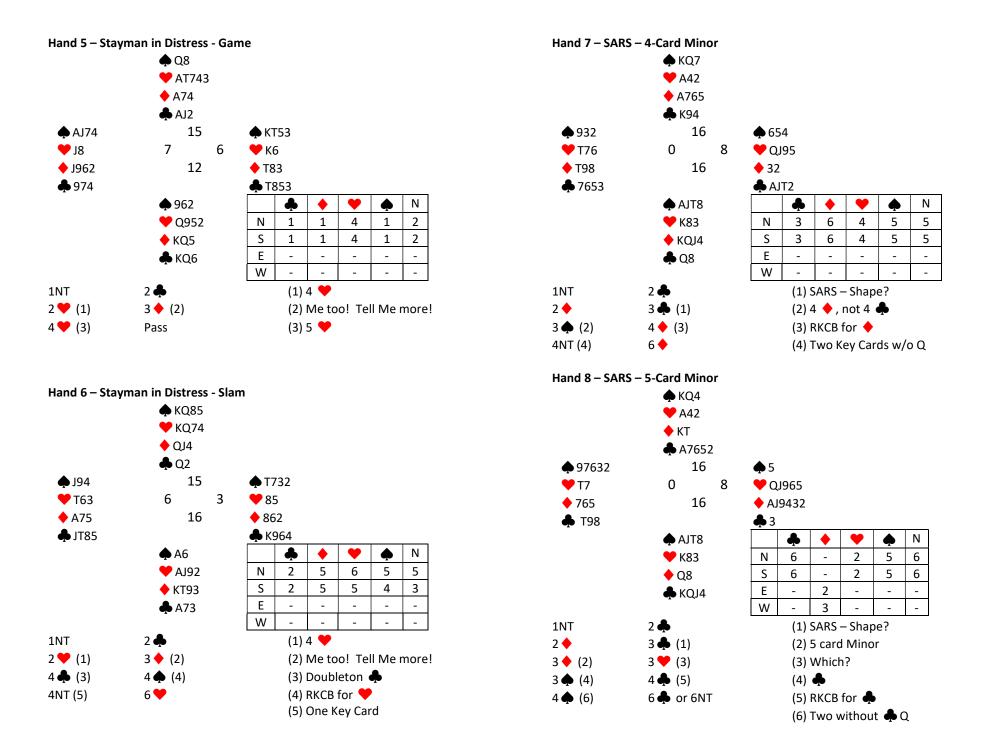
(5) Two with \spadesuit Q

Hand 3 – Stayman Super-Accept - Game

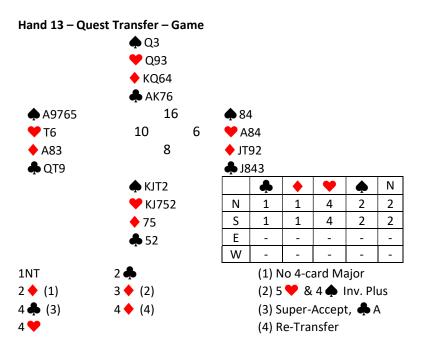


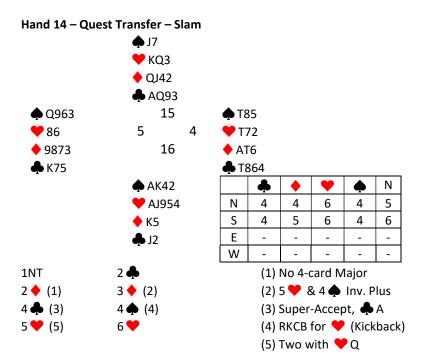
Hand 4 – Stayman in Distress - Partial





Hand 9 – SARS Both Majors - Slam Hand 11 - SARS Major-Minor **♠** AQ75 ♠ K972 **♥** KQ43 **A**42 **♦** A83 ♦ AT65 ♣ Q5 📤 A9 **•** 96 17 **\$43 ♠** QT64 15 **5**3 7 4 **♥**T 4 4 **765 9** J975 **QT86** 12 17 **Q95 ♦** JT74 972 **83** AJT42 **\$** K9763 **♣** J6 **Q7532** Ν Ν ♠ KJT2 * AJ8 • 1 5 6 2 **Y** K3 6 3 6 5 **AJ982** Ν -Ν 4 S 1 5 6 2 S 4 6 3 6 5 **♦** K62 ♦ KQJ4 Ε 2 Ε _ _ ♣8 ♣ KT84 W W 2 2 1NT 2 🚓 (1) 4 1NT (1) 4 2 (1) 2 💙 (1) 3 🛖 (2) (2) Shape Ask 3 🛖 (2) (2) Shape Ask 3 (3) 4 🔷 (4) (3) 4 ♦ , only 4 ♠ 4 💙 (4) (3) 4 **Y** and 4 **\(\Phi \)** 3 💙 (3) 4 (5) 4NT (6) (4) Transfer to • 4 (5) 6 🔷 (4) RKCB for \blacklozenge 5 🗭 (7) (5) 0 or 3 – surely 3 6 🏚 (5) Acceptance Notice that a Super-Accept (6) RKCB for • Hand 12 - Quest Transfer - Partial was more comfortable. (7) Two with \spadesuit Q ♠ A73 983 Hand 10 - SARS Both Majors - Game ♦ KQ6 **♠** AQ75 AQJ7 **♥** KQ43 16 **Q965 4** J8 **Q83** 8 9 **9** Q6 ♣ Q5 **Y** AT4 7 ◆ AT83 **♦** J942 **•** 96 15 **\$43** ♣ K843 ♣ T96 9 4 **765 ♥** T 12 **♦** JT74 ♠ KT42 Ν **♦** A95 3 1 2 **♥** KJ752 Ν 1 **\$** K9763 1 AJT42 1 3 1 2 4 **♦** 75 1 Ν ♠ KJT2 Ε **\$** 52 **AJ982** Ν _ 4 5 1 W 4 5 1 **♦** K62 2 1NT (1) No 4-card Major Ε 3 1 ♣8 3 (2) W 3 1 2 (1) (2) 5 **\(\phi\)** & 4 \(\phi\) Inv. Plus (1) 4 💙 3 💙 (3) Pass (4) (3) Minimum 2 🛖 1NT (4) No Extras 2 💙 (1) 3 🛖 (2) (2) Shape Ask 4 💙 (4) 3 (3) (3) 4 **v** and 4 **a** 4 🏟 (4) Transfer to •





Hand 15 – Extended Texas **♠** T7 **Y** K73 **♦** AK83 ♣ KQ53 **♠** Q63 15 **4** J8 **786** 4 9 **Q**95 **♦** J742 **♦** Q96 12 **♣** J98 ♣ AT764 ♠ AK9542 **Y** AJ42 Ν 3 4 5 5 4 S 2 4 5 5 4 **♦** T5 Ε _ _ **4** 2 W 2 🛖 1NT (1) No 4-card Major (2) Extended Texas 2 (1) 4 💙 (2)

4 🌲