



Bridge on Sundays

Stayman

Probably the first convention anyone learns and certainly the most used. Unfortunately among many players its function is often misunderstood.

The Stayman convention is used over partner's opening bid of 1 No Trump and can be used over partner's opening of 2NT. It can also be used whenever a re-bid of 2NT from a *conventional* opening shows a high value no trump opening. It can be used anytime you can control the bidding and needs no major suit.

The Stayman convention is a response of 2♣ over partner's 1NT. Provided the responses are standard, you announce the bid as *Stayman*. If you play a different convention (e.g. Ritter) or the responses are non-standard, it must be alerted not announced. A response of 3♣ over 2NT must be alerted. You do not alert responses to standard Stayman.

How can Stayman be used?

- To ask opener for a 4 card major suit. With a hand that is not very distributional, you need around 11+ pts over a weak NT opening so that you could play at 2NT.
- With a 4-4-4-1 hand with a singleton in the club suit and any number of points. If partner responds in any of the three suits, pass with a weak hand, but raise or bid 2NT/3NT with a stronger hand.
- With a weak hand holding 5-4 in the major suits. If opener responds 2♦, then re-bid in your 5 card major (as a weakness take-out). If you are strong, you can use transfers instead, showing the 4 card suit later.
- To show a 6 card minor. After opener has responded, re-bid the minor at the 3 level. By partnership agreement! Effectively a minor suit weakness take-out.

Responses to a Stayman 2♣ bid

- With no 4 card major, bid 2♦
- With a ♥ suit, bid 2♥ or, with a ♠ suit, bid 2♠
- With both majors, bid 2♥. If necessary, bid the ♠ suit later

After opener has responded, you either support the major or bid NT or the long minor

Similar bids over 2NT but there is no weakness take-out in a minor