

Major Suit Auctions after No Trump Opening Bid

Major Topics for this Course:

Stayman

Major Suit Transfers

System Overview

- Notrump auctions are different from other one-level opening bids because opener's range and hand type are so well defined. Responder has a clear idea where the partnership is headed from opener's initial action. Typically, the unbalanced hand should be trying to describe their shape and strength to the balanced hand so the balanced hand can evaluate their secondary values and determine how well the hands are fitting together. Think of the way a hand fits into a glove.
- Responder must remember that their strength limits their ability to describe their shape. With a game forcing hand or a slam try they are free to complete their description so that partner can choose the strain. With invitational hands they may Stayman or transfer but then must bid 2NT or raise to invite. They may have a much wider variety of hand types but they are not free to describe them unless they have adequate values to force the auction.

REMEMBER – STRENGTH TRUMPS SHAPE

Stayman

We are using Stayman to find a four-four major suit fit. If you have only one major and are precisely game going, you may use 3♣ Puppet Stayman.

Stayman is used where we are looking for partner's input into the auction.

- Game invitational hands with one or two four card majors
- Hands with both majors (one being only four cards long)
- Hands with a four card major and a longer minor.

Game Invitational Hands

We have less room to describe our hands when we are invitational so we must lump our hands into one of three buckets:

When partner responds 2♦

1NT	2♣	
2♦	2♥	I like this auction to be mildly invitational with five hearts and four spades.

Stayman

1NT	2♣	
2♦	2NT	8-9 invite. This includes a variety of distributions depending on your 2♠ bid. It may include some fairly distributional hands with major-minors since you don't have enough strength to describe your complete distribution.

When partner responds a Major

1NT	2♣	
2♥	3♥	Invitational with four hearts

Stayman (cntd)

1NT	2♣	
2♥	2♠	Promises only four spades and invitational values. Opener may bid 2NT, 3NT, 3S, or 4S. Theoretically they can pass with a very minimum and four spades.

1NT	2♣	
2♥	2NT	Invitational without four spades or hearts

Stayman (cntd)

Game Forcing Hands

1NT	2♣	
2♥	3NT	This auction shows four spades with game-going values. Opener may pass or correct to four spades.

Major - Minor

1NT	2♣	
2♥/♠	3♣/♦	This auction shows four of the other major and five or more of the minor bid. This is a forcing auction.

Opener's continuation after responder's rebid:

Once responder has rebid after using Stayman they will have described whether they have a weak, invitational or game forcing hand. Opener's first priority is to set the trump fit if they have one.

Stayman (cntd)

1NT	2♣	
2♥	3♣	3♣ shows four spades and five or more clubs and is game forcing.
3♠		Opener shows four spades with this bid. This now sets the trump suit.

1NT	2♣	
2♥	3♣	3♣ shows four spades and five or more clubs and is game forcing.
3♦		This says to responder "I really like your clubs; I am making a control bid in case you are interested in slam." 3♥ would say the same thing but deny the ace of diamonds.

1NT	2♣	
2♥	3♣	3♣ shows four spades and five or more clubs and is game forcing.
3NT		Says to responder "I don't really have much of a fit anywhere for you."

Stayman (cntd)

Responder's Continuation:

Now that opener has identified any potential fit, responder needs to describe the value of their hand. They should make a limiting bid if they are only interested in game or cuebid if they have slam interest.

1NT	2♣	
2♥	3♣	
3♦	3NT	This bid lets opener know that responder has only game aspirations. Opener can now determine whether notrump or five of the minor is the best contract. Remember, responder is describing an unbalanced hand here. Opener must make sure you are well heeled in the other suits if you want to play notrump.

1NT	2♣	
2♥	3♣	
3♦	3♠	This bid is a control bid. It doesn't offer spades as a contract since opener has denied four. This bid shows slam interest in clubs. Opener should cooperate with a well-fitting hand or sign off in notrump without a good fit.

Stayman (cntd)

Both Majors

Smolen is a conventional rebid by responder at the three level after opener bids 2♦ in response to Stayman. It shows **four** of the major bid and **five** of the unbid major with game forcing values. This allows the notrump opener to play the 5-3 fit if one exists.

1NT	2♣	
2♦	3♥	Shows five spades and four hearts.

Stayman then Texas.

You may play a delayed Texas transfer after a 2♦ response to Stayman. This would show six of the major transferred to and four of the other major with game going or better values. Opener must accept the transfer. Responder may then bid 4NT as RKC with a slam going hand.

Stayman (cntd)

Slam Tries after a Major Fit is Established Bids after Stayman (BAS)

Unbalanced Hands

3 of the other Major after Stayman shows shortness somewhere. The next step asks for the shortness and we respond Low, Middle, High (LMH)

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♥	3♠	Shows unspecified shortness with slam interest
3NT		Asks for stiff
	4♣/♦	Shows the short ♣/♦
	4♥	Shows a short spade
	4♠	Shows a short spade with a bigger hand.

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♠	3♥	Shows a shortness somewhere with slam interest
3♠		Asks for shortness
	3NT	Shows a short club
	4♣	Shows a short diamond
	4♦	Shows a short heart
	4♥	Shows a short heart with better hand

Stayman (cntd)

Balanced Hands

4♣ invites slam when we have a fit. That leaves partner 4♦ (and 4♥ if spades are trump) to show 'some' interest.

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♠	4♣	Fit showing quantitative
4♦/♥		Control bid showing interest. 4NT after this is RKC

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♥	4♣	Fit showing quantitative
4♦		Control showing interest. **Note that you may not have a control in diamonds for this bid. It is the only way to cooperative below game. Rodwell and Meckstroth call this 'Last Train' 4NT after this is still RKC.

Stayman (cntd)

4♦ is Roman Key Card

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♥	4♦	Roman Key Card

Slam Tries Where No Fit is Established

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♦	4NT	Quantitative

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♥	4NT	Quantitative, shows 4♠ (else why bother with Stayman). 5♠ by opener should be to play here

Stayman (cntd)

1NT	2♣	Stayman
2♠	4NT	Quantitative shows 4♥ (else why bother with Stayman).

Stayman Slam Tries Summary:

- 3 of the other Major shows a stiff somewhere with slam interest
- 4♣ shows a fit with a balanced hand. Quantitative. Opener may cuebid with interest.
- 4♦ is RKC for the bid major
- 4 of the other major is quantitative showing 4 of the unbid major. It is weaker than bidding 4NT.
- 4NT is the stronger quantitative bid. It also shows 4 of the other major.

Major Suit Transfers

Transfers are used to show one and two suited hands with five-card or longer in at least one Major. $2\spadesuit$ is a transfer to hearts showing a weak, invitational or forcing hand with 5 or more hearts. $2\heartsuit$ is a transfer to spades showing a weak, invitational or forcing hand with 5 or more spades.

Responder will clarify their shape and strength with their next rebid. Opener may jump in the major with four trumps and a good playing hand.

One Suit

- Pass with a weak hand.
- Rebid 2NT with invitational values and only five of the major.
- Raise partner to three of the major with an invitational hand and a six-card suit.
- Bid 3NT with five only of the major and game going values.
- Bid 4 of the major with a six-card suit and **mild slam** interest. This shows a balanced hand
- Splinter with a six-card suit and slam interest
- Bid 4NT with five only of the major and slam invitational values

Major Suit Transfers (cntd)

Two Suits

- Bid a new suit with four or more in the second suit and a game forcing hand. Notice that you are constrained by your values here.

Rebids By Opener after a Transfer then a New Suit.

A new suit after a transfer promises game forcing values.

Opener has three choices after this:

- Bid Notrump with no fit for either of partner's suits
- Preference the major by bidding it – remember this is forcing there is no need to jump.
- Cuebid to show a fit for the second bid suit.

Major Suit Transfers (cntd)

1NT	2♦	
2♥	3♣	Shows 5+ hearts and 4+ clubs with game forcing values
3♥		Shows 3 hearts – sets the trump suit.
3NT		Denies a fit for either of responder's suits.
Any other		Shows a good fit for responder's minor.

Once opener has clarified where the fit is, responder needs to define the value of their hand. Bid 3NT with game only interest. You may cuebid with slam interest.

1NT	2♦	
2♥	3♣	
3♦	3NT	3♦ shows a good fit for clubs. 3NT lets opener know that responder has only game aspirations. Opener can now determine the best contract.

Major Suit Transfers (cntd)

1NT	2♦	
2♥	3♣	
3♦	3♥/♠	These are cue bids for clubs. Responder has slam interest.

Jacoby then 4NT is a Quantitative raise in Notrump. It is the same as 1NT – 4NT except that you are showing five of the major.

Jacoby then 5NT shows five of the major and is forcing to a slam (offers a choice of where to play) and invites a grand slam.

Major Suit Transfers (cntd)

Texas Transfers

4♦ is a transfer for opener to bid 4♥ and 4♥ transfers opener to 4♠.

- Texas then pass for game only
- Texas then 4NT for RKC
- Texas then a new suit is Exclusion Blackwood.

Both Majors

Smolen is a conventional rebid by responder of a major at the three level after opener bids 2♦ in response to Stayman. It shows **four** of the major bid and **five** of the unbid major with game forcing values. This allows the notrump opener to play the 5-3 fit if one exists.

Major Suit Transfers (cntd)

1NT	2♣	
2♦	3♥	Shows five spades and four hearts.

Transfers to one major then another

1NT	2♦	
2♥	2♠	Shows five hearts and five spades with an invitational (to game) hand. Opener should choose the contract they wish to play.

1NT	2♥	
2♠	3♥	Shows at least five spades and five hearts and a game forcing hand.

Major Suit Transfers (cntd)

Opener should now set the trump suit.

- 3♠ would set spades.
- 3NT shows no interest in either major
- A cuebid sets hearts and shows a good notrump opener.
- 4♥ sets hearts with no slam interest

As with the other auctions we have discussed today, once opener determines the strain, responder describes the value of their hand. Bid game only with no slam interest and cue bid with slam interest.