

Notrump Responses: Stayman, Smolen, Baze

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1 After a 1NT opening bid almost everyone plays that 2♣ is the Stayman Convention.

1.1 The primary purpose is to find a 4-4 major-suit fit. Responder usually has at least one four-card major and at least invitational values.

1.2 Opener's rebid is limited to three choices:

1.2.1 A five-card major suit is always bid at the two level.

1.2.2 With one or more four-card major suits, bid the lower one at the two level.

1.2.3 With no four- or five-card major suit, bid 2♦. 2NT is undefined.

1.3 Responder's continuations:

1.3.1 If opener rebids 2♦:

1.3.1.1 With 5-4 in the majors, bid the five-card suit at the two-level (invitational) or three-level (game going). If you are playing Smolen, bid the four-card suit, not the five-card suit. These bids do NOT set trump.

1.3.1.2 Bid 2NT (invitational) or 3NT (game-going).

1.3.1.3 With slammish values: 4♣ is Gerber; 4NT is quantitative; bidding a minor at any level is forcing.

1.3.2 If opener rebids a major suit (2♥ or 2♠):

1.3.2.1 With at least four cards in the suit rebid by opener:

1.3.2.1.1 Raise to three (invitational) or four (game-going).

1.3.2.1.2 With slammish values bid three of the other major (Baze).

1.3.2.1.2.1 This bid confirms the trump suit specified by opener.

1.3.2.1.2.2 4♣ is no longer Gerber; 4NT is not quantitative.

1.3.2.2 Without four cards, bid 2NT (invitational) or 3NT (game-going). With slammish values: 4♣ is Gerber; 4NT is quantitative; bidding a minor at any level is forcing.

2 Versions of “Garbage Stayman” used with a hand that would ordinarily pass:

2.1 With a singleton or void in clubs and at least three cards in the other three suits, you can bid 2♣ and pass whatever partner rebids.

2.2 You can also choose one of the following:

2.2.1 With 5-4 in the majors, you can bid 2♣ and then bid your five-card major if opener bids 2♦. Opener should almost always pass. This is by agreement.

2.2.2 With 4-4 in the majors, you can bid 2♣ and then bid 2♥ if opener rebids 2♦. Opener should pass or correct to 2♠. This agreement is called “crawling Stayman.”

2.2.3 Some use the same form with a three-suiter without diamonds. Opener bids the best of the three suits in his hand.

3 The Invitational Hand with 5-4 in the Majors:

3.1 After a 2♦ rebid, two of a major could show five pieces and invitational values.

3.2 This agreement is inconsistent with 2.2 above.

Next week: Jacoby Transfers