

The Beginner's Page - 10

Stayman when you have both majors

I started on the Stayman convention last week, let's have a few more examples. First of all, let's consider the situation when responder has two 4 card majors: -

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| Hand 6 | Hand 7 | Partner has again opened 1NT. Hand 6 is worth a game invitation and Hand 7 is worth game. But in NT or is there a 4-4 major suit fit? So we know now to bid 2♣, Stayman. |
| ♠ KJ92 | ♠ KJ92 | It's easy then. If partner responds 2♥ or 2♠ we invite with 3 of the major with hand 6 and bid 4 of the major with Hand 7. |
| ♥ Q1095 | ♥ A1095 | If partner responds 2♦ then we bid an invitational 2NT with hand 6 and bid 3NT with Hand 7. |
| ♦ J87 | ♦ Q76 | |
| ♣ Q9 | ♣ J9 | |

So, both majors is simple. But what if opener has both majors and partner bids Stayman?

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| Hand 8 | Hand 9 | You open 1NT with both of these hands and partner bids 2♣. With both majors you always respond 2♥, regardless of which suit is 'better'. So you bid 2♥ and partner bids 2NT, invitational. What do you do now? Hand 8 is minimal and you do not want to be in game, so pass? No! Partner's 2♣ Stayman bid promises a 4 card major, he did not like ♥'s and so he must have 4 ♠'s, so bid 3♠. With Hand 9 the same logic applies, since you want to accept the game invitation, bid 4♠ (not 3NT). |
| ♠ AQ92 | ♠ AQ92 | |
| ♥ Q1095 | ♥ A1095 | |
| ♦ KJ7 | ♦ KJ7 | |
| ♣ K9 | ♣ K9 | |

Let's consider these same hands 8 & 9 some more. we opened 1NT, partner bid Stayman, we bid 2♥ but this time partner jumps to 3NT. What do you do? Partner has said that we have sufficient values for game, so pass? No! If partner simply wanted to play in 3NT he would not have bid Stayman. Since he started with 2♣ and then bid 3NT over our 2♥ response he has game going values with a 4 card ♠ suit. We must convert to 4♠ with both of these hands.

One more twist. It starts off the same but this time partner bids 4NT after our 2♥ response. What is this? We will cover Blackwood later, but this bid is not Blackwood, it is natural (quantitative). It is a slam invitation and we should bid slam with Hand 9 but not with Hand 8. So what do we do with Hand 8? Pass or 5♠ would both be reasonable and I'm sure that either would get lots of votes; but what do you bid with Hand 9? 6♠! This is not a 'new suit at the 6 level'! partner had promised a 4 card ♠ suit and 6♠ is usually better than 6NT when you have a good 4-4 fit and no points to spare.

Remember, the 2♣ Stayman bid *promises* at least one 4 card major.

Next week... what to do with a 5 card major.