

Simple Stayman

When your partner opens One No Trump, you are often in a position to immediately know whether or not you are able to make game. You know your partner has 15-17 High Card Points and that she has no more than one doubleton (you know their hand is one of 4333, 4432 or 5332 hand shapes).

However, knowing game is possible (or maybe possible) is not all you might want to know. You might want to know *which* game you should bid. If you and your partner have a 4-4 major fit, it will usually be right to play game in that major rather than in No Trumps.

When our partner opens One No Trump and we know we *might* have points for game (ie we have at least nine High Card Points), we can ask our partner about four card majors. We do this with a conventional bid of Two Clubs. It says "I have nine or more High Card Points and at least one four card major. Do YOU have a four card major?" Opener will then bid her cheapest four card major or bid Two Diamonds with no four card major.

Show a Four Card Major (show strength Later)

When our partner opens One No Trump, providing we have at least nine High Card Points, we can bid Two Clubs (Stayman) which is an artificial bid asking opener to detail which four card major they have, if any. Imagine you hold the following hands and partner opens One No Trump. What should you respond?

♠ AT2	♠ JT74	♠ AKQ	♠ 98
♥ KJ53	♥ AK62	♥ KJ5	♥ JT92
♦ QT983	♦ 73	♦ 5432	♦ 3
♣ 8	♣ QT9	♣ 754	♣ KQJT74
2C Stayman	2C Stayman	3 No Trumps	Pass

How does Opener Respond?

Responding to Stayman is just answering the question "Do you have a four card major?" If you have one, you bid it. If you have *both* you bid Two Hearts. If you have neither, you bid Two Diamonds (this is a conventional bid and says nothing about Diamonds). Your partner will know what to do next!

Two Diamonds – no 4 card major Two Hearts – 4 Hearts, maybe 4 Spades Two Spades – 4 Spades, not 4 Hearts

Responder's Continuation After Stayman

Having asked opener about their four card majors and heard their answer, you can now clarify how strong you are: If you have points for game and you have found a 4-4 fit in a major opener has shown, bid Four of that Major. If you have points for game and you have not found a 4-4 fit, bid Three No Trumps. If you have invitational hand (9 Total Points) and you have found a 4-4 fit in a major, bid Three of that Major. If you have invitational hand (9 High Card Points) and you have not found a 4-4 fit, bid Two No Trumps.

Imagine your partner opened One No Trump, you bid Two Clubs - Stayman with the following hand and they bid Two Hearts. What would you bid next?

♠ QT98	♠ AJ	♠ JT93	♠ AK32
♥ AK2	♥ 7652	♥ KQ87	♥ 76
♦ J4	♦ QJ82	♦ Q6	♦ JT9
♣ Q653	♣ KQT	♣ JT2	♣ JT98
Three No Trumps (Pd might bid 4S)*	Four Hearts	Three Hearts	Two No Trumps (And pass 3S!)*