

LESSON 9

The Stayman Convention



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

The Bidding

It is important to introduce students to the concept of a convention and its purpose, *i.e.*, it helps us ask and answer bidding questions that normal bidding methods cannot answer. The Stayman convention is one of the world's most popular and respected conventions.

Stayman is used after partner opens the bidding with 1NT. The Stayman bid of 2♣ is used by responder to ask if opener has opened 1NT with a four-card major suit.

Opener's rebids:

- 2♦ No four-card major
- 2♥ Shows a four-card heart suit. Opener also may have four spades
- 2♠ Shows a four-card spade suit. Opener denies four hearts

Responder's rebids:

Responder is able to show both invitational and game-forcing hands after utilizing Stayman.

Another reason to use Stayman is that it provides a method for responder to show an invitational hand with a five-card major. It should be explained that without Stayman responder really cannot show this type of hand.

Basic information on how to use Stayman over an opponent's interference is also included.

The Play

There are eight deals in this lesson. The teacher should decide how to use them — a long lesson or dividing it into two short lessons. The deals all focus on using Stayman. Most of the deals will go down if Stayman is not employed to find the right contract. You can have the students bid and play each deal twice — once without Stayman (playing in the wrong contract) and the second time with Stayman (playing in the correct contract).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“As we have learned in Chapter 3, when partner opens the bidding with 1NT, you often know the final contract immediately. Sometimes, however, the decision is not so easy. There is a method to help you make these decisions more easily. It is called the Stayman convention.

“A convention is an artificial bid that does not pertain to the strain named — in this case 2♣. Conventions are used to help us with bidding questions that normal bidding methods cannot answer. There are many conventions in the bridge world, but virtually none is more widely accepted and used than the Stayman convention. As you will see, using the Stayman convention at the correct time will help you get to the proper level and strain for your contracts after partner has opened 1NT.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE – Using the Stayman Convention

Introduction

“When partner opens the bidding with 1NT, you often will know the level and strain for the final contract immediately. But sometimes you come across a hand that you feel should be played in a Golden Fit, if there is one. Let’s give the following hand to South:

♠ A Q 7 2
♥ K Q 5 4
♦ 9 8 7 6
♣ 8

“After partner opens 1NT, this is your hand. First, you should recognize that you and partner have enough total points for game. The question really is, “What is the proper strain?” With our current bidding methods, we don’t have the ability to ask if partner has a four-card major. The Stayman convention comes to the rescue.

“With the hand on the table, we now have the ability to ask if partner has a four-card major. The way we do this is by responding 2♣. If you recall in Chapter 3, we had already reserved this bid for the Stayman convention. In order to use Stayman, we need to have a minimum of four cards in at least one major and enough strength to invite game. We never use Stayman without the proper major-suit length or with fewer than 8 high-card points. If partner indeed has a four-card major, you should begin to see that the trick-taking potential for this hand has probably increased because partner can ruff losing clubs with a major suit as trump. Keep South’s hand on the table and open your text to Chapter 9, Exercise 1.”

Instructions

“Your partner opens the bidding 1NT. What do you respond with each of the following hands?”

1) ♠ K Q 5 4
♥ A 9 8
♦ 3 2
♣ J 9 8 4

2♣

2) ♠ K 5 3 2
♥ 9 4 3
♦ 9 7 6 5
♣ Q 2

Pass

3) ♠ 4
♥ A J 9 4 3
♦ K 3 2
♣ 10 8 4 3

2♣

4) ♠ J 9 8 4
 ♥ J 9 8 4
 ♦ A K
 ♣ 8 6 2

2♣

5) ♠ 9 5 4
 ♥ J 9
 ♦ A 5 3
 ♣ K Q 9 7 6

3NT

6) ♠ A K 8 7 6
 ♥ 6 4
 ♦ A 5 4
 ♣ 9 6 5

3♠

Follow-up

Students should recognize that many of their bids do not change just because they play Stayman. In addition, students should recognize that even though partner may have shown a balanced hand by opening 1NT, the ability to find a Golden Fit in a major suit helps make the final determination of the proper final contract easier.

Conclusion

“The Stayman convention begins when partner opens the bidding with 1NT and you bid 2♣. You must have a least one four-card major and at least 8 high-card points to use the Stayman convention.”

EXERCISE TWO: Responding to the Stayman Convention

Introduction

“When you have opened the bidding 1NT and partner bids 2♣, partner is asking if you have a four-card major. As you will learn with any convention, there are specific rules and answers. The most important rule about Stayman is that you, as the 1NT opener, can never pass the 2♣ inquiry. Remember, responder is saying nothing about the club suit. Let’s give North the following 1NT hand. You will see how both hands begin to work together.

♠ 10 9 6
♥ A 7 2
♦ A K 3 2
♣ K Q J

“You open this hand 1NT and partner bids 2♣, Stayman, asking if you have a four-card major. This hand does not have a four-card major. To convey that information to partner, simply bid 2♦. This bid is part of the Stayman convention and says nothing about diamonds in particular. The bid’s only function is to tell partner that you do not have a four-card major. Don’t be tempted to bid 3NT with this maximum hand since you know partner has an invitational hand. That is not part of the convention — your job is to answer the question as to whether you have a four-card major. So, that is what you do.

“When you look at the two hands working together, you can see that 3NT would be a great final contract. You have six sure tricks (one spade, three hearts, two diamonds) with potential for five more tricks (spade finesse, hearts dividing evenly, diamond suit establishment and club promotion). That’s a lot of tricks, but all your potential tricks may not happen unless you are very lucky.

“Let’s change the 1NT hand a bit. Take away the ♣K and ♣J and replace them with the spade ♠K and ♠J. Replace the ♠9 with the ♣9. Replace the ♦3 with the ♥3.

♠ K J 10 6
♥ A 7 3 2
♦ A K 2
♣ Q 9

“Again, you’ve opened 1NT with this balanced, 17 HCP hand. But look at the difference on how this hand along with responder’s work together. You can see that notrump is bound to fail because there is no club stopper in either hand. Since there are so many clubs in the opponents’ hands, it’s probably a good bet that clubs will be led against a notrump contract. You would really like to be in a major suit. Look at the losers in the hands in either a spade or a heart contract. There are no spade losers, there is only one possible heart loser (if one opponent holds ♥J 10 9 8, which is not

very likely), one diamond loser and one club loser. 4♥ or 4♠ look like great contracts. You just need to find out how to bid properly to get to one of them.

“This time when you respond to partner’s Stayman inquiry, you will bid your four-card majors, going up the line. That means with this hand, you will bid 2♥. By bidding 2♥ you are telling partner that you have four hearts, but you also may have four spades, such as in this case. Since responder does have hearts, it will be the strain of the final contract. There is no need to search any further since you have found a Golden Fit in hearts.

“Once again, let’s change the 1NT hand. Take away the ♥7 and replace it with the ♦10. You can see the hands still work together, but this time only in a spade contract. When you respond to the Stayman inquiry, you will bid 2♠, stating that you have four spades. You have bypassed the heart suit, so you are telling partner you do not have four hearts. Again, keep these two hands on the table and open your text to Exercise 2.”

Instructions

“You open the bidding 1NT and partner responds 2♣, the Stayman convention. What do you reply with the following hands?”

1) ♠ A K 4 3
♥ 9 8 5 3
♦ A Q
♣ K J 10

2♥

2) ♠ K Q 9
♥ A J 4
♦ J 5 4 3
♣ A Q 8

2♦

3) ♠ 8 4 3 2
♥ A K Q
♦ K 10 9
♣ K Q 8

2♠

Follow-up

Make sure your students understand that the opener’s rebids are part of the Stayman convention.

Conclusion

“Opener’s rebids using the Stayman Convention are:

2♦ — no four-card major

2♥ — shows a four-card heart suit but opener may also have a four-card spade suit.

2♠ — shows a four-card spade suit and denies a four-card heart suit.”

EXERCISE THREE: Responder's Rebid after Using Stayman

Introduction

“Partner’s response to the Stayman inquiry gives the responder even more information on how the hands fit together. Many of responder’s bids will be signoff bids, placing the final contract. However, some of the bids will still be invitational bids, basically asking for more information. Let’s see how this works.

“Look at the two hands still on the table:

NORTH
 ♠ K J 10 6
 ♥ A 3 2
 ♦ A K 10 2
 ♣ Q 9
 ■
 SOUTH
 ♠ A Q 7 2
 ♥ K Q 5 4
 ♦ 9 8 7 6
 ♣ 8

“To recap, North has opened the bidding with 1NT and South has responded 2♣, the Stayman convention. North rebids 2♠, stating that the hand has four spades. Since South sees a Golden Fit in spades, the hand can be re-evaluated using dummy (short suit) points since South will be the dummy. South knows there’s game in spades and will just rebid 4♠.

“Let’s change South’s hand a bit. Take away the ♠A and the ♠7 and replace them with the ♣A and the ♣7.

♠ Q 2
 ♥ K Q 5 4
 ♦ 9 8 7 6
 ♣ A 8 7

“This time, when partner bids 2♠ in response to your Stayman inquiry, you will rebid 3NT. You know there are enough HCP for game. Partner has denied a four-card heart suit by bidding spades. So, you will just bid 3NT. Therefore, after the Stayman response by partner, with a game-going hand, make a signoff bid in the proper contract.

“Again let’s change South’s hand. Take away the ♥ 4. Take away the ♣A and add the ♠9 and the ♠5. Replace the ♦6 with the ♦J.

♠ Q 9 5 2
 ♥ K Q 5
 ♦ J 9 8 7
 ♣ 8 7

“This is an invitational hand. When partner bids 2♠ in response to Stayman, you can invite to game by bidding 3♠. If partner bids 2♥, you would bid 2NT, your normal bid without Stayman. However, opener will know you have four spades. If you didn’t have a four-card major, you would not have started with the Stayman convention. So, if opener happened to have four spades as well as four hearts, opener would be able to bid spades confidently.

“There is one additional type of hand for which the Stayman convention can be used. Let’s change the South hand completely. Give South the following hand:

♠ Q 9 8 5 2
 ♥ 5 2
 ♦ Q 8 7
 ♣ A 9 3

“This hand contains a five-card spade suit and 9 total points (8 HCP and 1 long-suit point), too much to sign off in 2♠, but not strong enough to force to game with 3♠. This hand would like to invite game and seek three-card support at the same time. Stayman gets the job done.

“Start with a Stayman 2♣ inquiry. If partner rebids 2♦ denying a major or rebids 2♥ showing four hearts, continue with 2♠, suggesting an invitational hand with a five-card spade suit.”

Instructions

“Your partner opens 1NT and you respond 2♣, the Stayman convention. Opener rebids 2♥. What do you rebid with each of the following hands?”

1) ♠ K 9 3 2
 ♥ A Q 4 3
 ♦ Q 8 4
 ♣ 8 6

4♥

2) ♠ A K 9 5
 ♥ 9 5
 ♦ J 9 5 4
 ♣ A 9 4

3NT

3) ♠ K J 4 3
 ♥ 8 5 4
 ♦ A 8 4 3
 ♣ 6 3

2NT

4) ♠ Q 9
 ♥ K J 7 3
 ♦ Q 8 4 3
 ♣ 10 9 8

3♥

5) ♠ A J 9 5 4
 ♥ 10 7 6
 ♦ K 9 3
 ♣ 8 4

2♠

6) ♠ K Q 7 4 2
 ♥ Q 9 8 7
 ♦ A 3
 ♣ 8 5

4♥

Follow-up

Students should begin to understand the basic Stayman conversation along with the added ability to use Stayman to show an invitational five-card major suit.

Conclusion

“When rebidding, responder is able to go to game by making a signoff bid or invite game by making an invitational bid after the Stayman inquiry. By using Stayman, responder has the ability to show an invitational hand with a five-card major suit. This is a bid responder was unable to make without knowing Stayman.”

EXERCISE FOUR: More Rebids by Responder**Introduction**

“Let’s clear the table of the current hands and make a new hand:

♠ A Q 8 5
♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J 5 4
♣ 9 8

“Partner opens 1NT and you respond 2♣, Stayman. Partner now rebids 2♦, denying a four-card major. Your rebid is what it would be if you had not bid Stayman. You would have originally bid 2NT, inviting game. That is the bid you would make now. The only difference is now partner knows you have at least one four-card major. Don’t be tempted to support diamonds, since it is a conventional response and does not say anything about diamonds.

“Take away the ♣9 and replace it with the ♣Q. This time, when partner rebids 2♦, you should bid 3NT since you now have 11 HCP.

♠ A Q 8 5
♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J 5 4
♣ Q 8

“Let’s make one more change. “Replace the ♦Q with the ♠J. Replace the ♣Q with the ♣7.

♠ A Q J 8 5
♥ 4 3 2
♦ J 5 4
♣ 8 7

“Even though partner has responded 2♦ to your Stayman inquiry, don’t forget you have the ability to show your invitational hand with a five-card major by bidding 2♠.”

Instructions

“After a 1NT opening bid, partner rebids 2♦ after your Stayman inquiry. What do you rebid?”

1) ♠ 8 3 2
♥ A Q 8 5
♦ K 10 8 3
♣ 9 4

2NT

2) ♠ K Q 10 8 4
♥ 6 5 4
♦ 9 8
♣ K 5 4

2♠

3) ♠ A K 4 3
♥ Q J 9 2
♦ J 8
♣ 5 4 3

3NT

Follow-up

Your students should recognize what happens when opener responds 2♦ to a Stayman inquiry.

Conclusion

“When opener rebids 2♦ after your Stayman inquiry, bid 2NT or 3NT based on whether you have an invitational or game-forcing hand. In addition, you still have the ability to show an invitational hand with a five-card major after opener responds 2♦ to Stayman.”

EXERCISE FIVE: Finishing the Bidding Conversation**Introduction**

“Sometimes the responder needs a little help to decide the final level and strain of the contract even when using Stayman. Let’s consider your next bid as the 1NT opener in the following auction:

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
1NT	2♣ Stayman
2♦	2♠

“What do you do now? Let’s put the following hand on the table.

♠ K Q 7
♥ 9 8
♦ A K J 2
♣ A 9 7 6

“Responder has shown an invitational hand with five spades. You have three spades so you know you have a Golden Fit in spades as well as a maximum hand — rebid 4♠.

“Take away the ♠K and replace it with the ♥K.

♠ Q 7
♥ K 9 8
♦ A K J 2
♣ A 9 7 6

“This time your rebid is 3NT. This shows a maximum hand with two spades. You obviously have at least two spades since you needed a balanced hand to open 1NT.

“Replace the ♦K and the ♦J with the ♦Q and the ♦4.

♠ Q 7
♥ K 9 8
♦ A Q 4 2
♣ A 9 7 6

“Since you have a minimum notrump hand and partner has an invitational hand, you do not accept the invitation. Bid 2NT.

“Replace the ♦2 with the ♠2.

♠ Q 7 2
♥ K 9 8
♦ A Q 4
♣ A 9 7 6

“You still have a minimum notrump opening bid, but this time you and partner have a Golden Fit in spades. Since partner just has an invitational hand and you do not want to accept a game invitation, you may pass partner’s 2♠ bid.”

Instructions

“You open 1NT, partner bids the Stayman convention and you reply 2♦. Partner now bids 2♥. What do you do now?”

1) ♠ A K 4
♥ K 10 8
♦ A Q 10
♣ J 10 9 8

4♥

2) ♠ K 10 5
♥ K J
♦ A Q J 6
♣ J 10 9 8

2NT

3) ♠ A Q J
♥ 10 6
♦ K Q J 10
♣ A 10 8 5

3NT

Follow-up

Make sure your students understand how the 1NT opener may have to decide the final contract.

Conclusion

“Although responder is the Captain, there are times when the opener, the Describer, has to help in the decision process. Through the years Stayman has proved itself to be a great convention. Every conventional bid has a downside of replacing a natural bid — in this case, a natural signoff bid of 2♣. For a convention to be good, its advantages must provide compensation for the natural bid it replaces. As you can see, Stayman provides many more advantages than a natural 2♣ signoff bid would.”

EXERCISE SIX: Handling Interference

Introduction

“In competitive games, you don’t always have the auction to yourselves, even when partner opens 1NT. Before moving on to the practice deals, it’s a good idea to know how to handle the auction when the opponents interfere.

“To explain how to handle interference from the opponents, let’s build some basic hands.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K 10 x x				1NT	♠ Q J x x
♥ K J x x	2♦	3♦	Pass	3♠	♥ A x x
♦ x x x	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass	♦ Q x
♣ K x	Pass				♣ A Q J x

“What is South’s opening bid? (1NT.)

“What do you plan to bid with the North hand? (Use Stayman to look for a major-suit fit.) Before North bids 2♣, however, West bids 2♦. Now what? Discuss your options with the others at your table for a moment.

“Is there any consensus? (Likely not.) If you jump to 3NT, you might miss a major-suit fit. You can’t bid 2♥ or 2♠. That would tend to show a five-card suit and partner might pass, since you didn’t jump. If you bid 3♥ or 3♠, you show a five-card suit. Double is a reasonable choice. It’s for penalty. The danger is that you might not get a large enough penalty to compensate for your game. The 2♦ overcall has opened up one other option. A bid of 3♦, the opponent’s suit, can’t logically be an attempt to play in diamonds. With good diamonds, you’d simply double West for penalty. Instead, 3♦ is referred to as a cuebid (a bid of the opponent’s suit) and it is used to replace the use of 2♣ as Stayman.

“Let’s see how that works.

“South starts with 1NT, West overcalls 2♦, and North makes a cuebid of 3♦. What does South bid? (3♠.) Since the cuebid replaces Stayman, South bids a four-card or longer major suit. South shows the spade suit.

“What does North bid? (4♠.) Having found a major-suit fit, North raises to game. The partnership reaches its best contract despite the interference of the opponents.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the queen.

“In diamonds: add the king.

NORTH ♠ K 10 x x ♥ K J x x ♦ x x x ♣ K x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1NT 3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	2♦	3♦	Pass	1NT 3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass		SOUTH ♠ J x x ♥ A x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A Q J x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
2♦	3♦	Pass	1NT 3NT											
Pass	Pass	Pass												

“**South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♦. What does North bid? (3♦.)**

North cuebids the opponent’s suit in place of Stayman.

“**What would South bid? (3NT.)** With no major suit to bid, South bids 3NT.

“**What will North do? (Pass.)** By using the cuebid to replace Stayman, the partnership can deal with the overcall when North has a game-going hand and interest in a major suit.

“There are other types of hands that North might hold after the interference.

“Let’s look at a couple of examples.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In hearts: add a low card.

NORTH ♠ 10 x x ♥ K J x x x ♦ x x x ♣ K x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1NT Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	2♦	2♥	Pass	1NT Pass	Pass				SOUTH ♠ J x x ♥ A x x ♦ K Q x ♣ A Q J x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
2♦	2♥	Pass	1NT Pass											
Pass														

“Suppose the auction starts the same way.

“**South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♦. What does North bid? (2♥.)**

“**Is this forcing? (No.)** North could jump to 3♥ with a game-going hand.

“**Does North show a weak hand? (No.)** With a very weak hand, North would pass and defend 2♦. So North is showing some strength. Most partnerships play the 2♥ bid in this situation as mildly invitational. Unfortunately, the overcall has taken away some of your side’s bidding room. It’s difficult to be too exact. Experienced partnerships can use other conventions to compensate somewhat after the interference. Unless you are an experienced partnership, however, you’ll probably have more to lose than to gain by using complicated bidding sequences.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add the king and the queen.

“In hearts: take away the jack and a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K Q 10 x x				1NT	♠ J x x
♥ K x x	2♦	3♠	Pass	4♠	♥ A x x
♦ x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♦ K Q x
♣ K x					♣ A Q J x

“**What would you bid if South opened 1NT and West overcalled 2♦?** (3♠.) You can still jump to 3♠ to show a game-going hand with a five-card spade suit. South can choose between 3NT and 4♠.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king.

“In diamonds: add a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ Q 10 x x x				1NT	♠ J x x
♥ K x x	2♠	Double	Pass	Pass	♥ A x x
♦ x x x x	Pass				♦ K Q x
♣ K x					♣ A Q J x

“**Suppose South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♠. What does North do?** (Double.) Don’t forget to use the penalty double if the opponents come into your auction and you have a good defensive hand. Opposite partner’s 1NT bid, you can probably extract a large penalty from 2♠. If you bid 2NT, you’re losing an opportunity for a good score.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add the ace.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ Q 10 x x				1NT	♠ J x x
♥ K x	2♥	3♥	Pass	3NT	♥ A x x
♦ A x x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♦ K Q x
♣ K x					♣ A Q J x

“**South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♥. What do you bid as North?** (3♥.) With interest in finding a spade fit, cuebid the opponent’s suit as the Stayman convention.

“**What will South rebid?** (3NT.) With no four-card major, South bids 3NT.

“What does North bid now? (Pass.) That should end the auction. North looked for a major-suit fit, didn’t find one, and settled for game in notrump.

“It’s also possible that the opponents will interfere after Stayman has been used. In this situation, opener shows a four-card major if it is convenient to do so, but has the option of passing or doubling the opponent’s contract.

“Suppose South opens 1NT and West passes. What does North respond? (2♣.) North is interested in looking for a spade fit and uses the Stayman convention.

“Before South can reply, East pops in with an overcall of 2♥. What does South do? (Pass.) With no four-card major to show, South simply passes, leaving the next decision to North.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the ace.

“In hearts: take away the ace.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ Q 10 x x	Pass	2♣	2♥	1NT	♠ A J x x
♥ K x	Pass	4♠	Pass	2♠	♥ x x
♦ A x x x x	Pass			Pass	♦ K Q x
♣ K x					♣ A Q J x

“Suppose the auction begins the same way.

“South opens 1NT, North bids 2♣, and East comes in with 2♥. What does South rebid? (2♠.) South can show the spade suit and the partnership is on its way.

“What if East had bid 2♠ instead of 2♥? (Double.) South can double, showing an interest in defending for penalty.”

Instructions

“Partner opens 1NT and the opponent on your right overcalls 2♦. What do you bid with each of the following hands?”

1) ♠ 10 2
♥ J 6 3
♦ 6 5 3
♣ Q 9 8 4 3

Pass

2) ♠ K Q 8 7 5
♥ 8 4
♦ Q 9 3 2
♣ 7 5

2♠

3) ♠ 3
♥ A Q J 6 5
♦ K 10 8 5
♣ J 8 2

3♥

4) ♠ Q 10 8 6 5 2
♥ A 10 3
♦ 7 6
♣ K 2

4♠

5) ♠ Q J 9 6
♥ A 10 8 5
♦ 6 3
♣ A 7 4

3♦

6) ♠ 8 7 3
♥ A 4
♦ K J 9 2
♣ 10 9 7 6

Double

Follow-up

“When you are first starting to play bridge, the opponents will usually stay out of a notrump auction, recognizing that their opponents have a lot of points. The more you play, the more frequent interference by the opponents will become. More experienced opponents are more adventurous and they will try to make the bidding more complex. There are many other conventions that you will learn as your game develops that the opponents can use against notrump auctions.”

Conclusion

“The opponents’ interference won’t usually prevent you from using the Stayman convention to effectively find your fits. The opponents’ interference makes two new calls available, the cuebid of their suit and the penalty double. These can usually compensate for the bidding room that has been taken away. There’ll be exceptions, of course, but if the partnership is on the same wavelength, you shouldn’t go far astray.”

SAMPLE DEALS

EXERCISE SEVEN: Showing an Invitational Five-Card Major by Responder

(#9, Deal 1)

Dealer: North					
	♠ Q J 10 5				
	♥ 4 3 2				
	♦ 4				
	♣ J 8 4 3 2				
♠ A 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ K 9 8
N					
W E					
S					
♥ Q J 10 9 6		♥ A K 8			
♦ J 7 6 2		♦ A Q 10 9 3			
♣ 6 5		♣ 9 7			
	♠ 7 6 3 2				
	♥ 7 5				
	♦ K 8 5				
	♣ A K Q 10				

The Bidding

“North passes. With a balanced hand and 16 HCP, what is East’s opening bid? (1NT.)

“South passes and West considers what to do. Does the partnership belong in game or in partscore? (West is not sure.) Does West know whether there is a Golden Fit in the heart suit? (Not yet.) How can West find out? “(Bid 2♣, Stayman, and then bid hearts. This would show an invitational hand with a five-card heart suit.)

“North passes. What is East’s reply to Stayman? (2♦.) South passes. What should West rebid? (2♥.) North passes. What should East bid now? (East recognizes an invitational bid by West with a hand containing a five-card heart suit. East should bid 4♥ with a maximum notrump.)

“What will the final contract be? (4♥.) Who is the declarer? (West.)”

The Play

“Which player makes the opening lead? (North.)

“What will the opening lead be? (North has a great lead in the ♠Q. However, North may elect to lead the singleton diamond.)

“How many losers can declarer afford? (Three.) How many losers does declarer have? (Two clubs plus the ♦K if the finesse loses.) Are there any potential problems based upon which lead North chooses? (If North chooses the singleton diamond lead, West must not take the finesse. If West does, the contract goes down two by losing a diamond, two diamond ruffs and two clubs. If West rises with the ♦A, West can safely pull trumps and lose the ♦K later along with two clubs and make the contract.)”

EXERCISE EIGHT: Getting to the Right Contract

(#9, Deal 2)

Dealer: East											
	♠ A K J 10										
	♥ 5 4 3										
	♦ Q 9 6 4										
	♣ 6 3										
♠ 9 8 7 6 3	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 2		♥ 10 9 8 7 6									
♦ A 8 7		♦ 5 3 2									
♣ A 10 9		♣ Q J 5									
	♠ Q 5										
	♥ A Q J										
	♦ K J 10										
	♣ K 8 7 4 2										

The Bidding

“East is the dealer and passes. With a balanced 16 HCP hand, what is South’s opening bid? (1NT.)

“West passes. North has 10 HCP. Does the partnership belong in game or partscore? (Game.) Does North know if there is a Golden Fit in a major suit? (No.) What should North do to find out? (Bid 2♣, Stayman.)

“East passes. What should South’s rebid be? (2♦, since South does not have a four-card major.) What will North do? (Bid 3NT.)

“What will the final contract be? (3NT.) Who will be the declarer? (South.)”

The Play

“Which player makes the opening lead? (West.) What will the opening lead be? (♠9.) Why would West make this lead? (Not only is it the top of a sequence, but West has enough entries to hope to set up a spade trick.)

“How many sure tricks does South have? (Five tricks — four spade tricks and one heart trick.) What should declarer do to make the extra tricks? (Timing is important on this deal. South should win the spade trick in hand and immediately play diamonds to establish three tricks in diamonds. Then South should take the heart finesse from the dummy. If declarer wins the spade trick in the dummy and takes the heart finesse before knocking out the ♦A, West can prevent declarer from reaching the dummy to cash a good diamond. In order to do this West would win the heart finesse, play another spade and hold up the ♦A until the third round.)”

EXERCISE NINE: With an Invitational Hand*(#9, Deal 3)*

Dealer: South											
	♠ A Q 5 4										
	♥ K Q 9										
	♦ A 9										
	♣ Q 9 8 7										
♠ 7 6 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J 10 7 6 5		♥ A 3 2									
♦ 8 7 6 5		♦ K Q J 10 4									
♣ A		♣ 4 3 2									
	♠ K J 10 9										
	♥ 8 4										
	♦ 3 2										
	♣ K J 10 6 5										

The Bidding

“South is the dealer. What should South do? (Pass.) What should West do? (Pass.)

“What about North? (Bid 1NT.) East passes. What should South do? (With 8 HCP, South should bid 2♣, Stayman, to find out if North has a four-card spade suit.) Does South know if the partnership belongs in game or partscore? (Not yet. South has an invitational hand until North answers the Stayman inquiry.)

“What will North rebid? (2♠.) The partnership has found a Golden Fit in spades. Does this change South’s hand? (Yes, South will be the dummy in a spade contract, so South can count dummy points.)

“What is the value of South’s hand? (8 HCP plus 2 dummy points — one for each doubleton — for a total of 10 points.) What should South bid? (4♠.)

“What is the final contract? (4♠.) What should North do? (Pass.) Who is the declarer? (North.)”

The Play

“Who is on lead? (East.) What should East lead? (♦K, top of a sequence.)

“How many losers can North afford? (Three.) How many losers does North have? (Four losers — two hearts, one diamond and one club.) How can North get rid of a loser? (Ruff a heart in the dummy or establish the club suit on which to pitch a heart loser.) Can North afford to pull trumps? (Yes.) What should North do after pulling trumps? (Establish the club suit.)

“Will this hand make 3NT? (No, the defense can possibly win four diamonds, one club and one heart for down two.)”

EXERCISE TEN: Uncovering a Golden Fit

(#9, Deal 4)

Dealer: West											
	♠ 4 3										
	♥ 7 5										
	♦ K 9 8 7 6										
	♣ 9 8 5 3										
♠ K J 10 8	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q 9 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 6		♥ K 8 4 3									
♦ 5 3 2		♦ A 10									
♣ Q 7 4 2		♣ K J 6									
	♠ 6 5 2										
	♥ Q J 10 9 2										
	♦ Q J 4										
	♣ A 10										

The Bidding

“West is the dealer, but who will open the bidding? (East.) What would the opening bid be? (1NT.) Does the partnership belong in game or partscore? (Game.) What can West bid to find out if East has four spades? (Bid 2♣, Stayman.)

“With both four-card majors, what would East reply? (2♥.) What would West rebid? (3NT.)

“What should East do? (Since West showed enough points for game but bid game via the Stayman convention, West is promising a four-card major. Since West doesn't have four hearts, West must have four spades. East should confidently bid 4♠ knowing this is the proper strain for the final contract.)

“What should West do? (Pass.) What is the final contract? (4♠.) Who is the declarer? (East.)”

The Play

“Which player makes the opening lead? (South.) What will the opening lead be? (♥Q, top of the sequence is the typical lead. But knowing that East has four hearts, South may elect to lead a spade.)

“How many losers can declarer afford? (Three.) How many does declarer have? (Four.) How should declarer get rid of a loser? (East can ruff two heart losers in the dummy even if South leads a trump.)

“Would a contract of 3NT be successful? (Against a ♥Q lead, the contract will probably be successful with four spades, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs. However, against the ♦Q lead, should South find it, the contract will not make.)”

“Playing duplicate bridge, North may want to try for an overtrick after the opening club lead by discarding a club loser on one of dummy’s extra diamond winners before letting the defenders in with the ♠A. On the actual deal, East ruffs the third round of diamonds as North discards a club. North still makes the contract, since there will be only one club loser left to go with the spade loser.

“If North–South were to reach 3NT, rather than 4♠, East would lead a club to defeat the contract. After the ♣A is driven out, North doesn’t have enough tricks and will have to promote extra winners in spades. East–West take four club tricks, along with the ♠A.

“Although East–West can’t defeat a contract of 4♠, they must be careful not to let declarer make an overtrick. When East leads the ♣Q, West should play the ♣K on this trick to avoid blocking the suit. Otherwise, if declarer wins the first trick with the ♣A and drives out East’s ♠A, the defenders can take only one club trick with West’s ♣K. West doesn’t have a club left to return, and declarer can discard a club loser on dummy’s diamonds after drawing the remaining trumps.”

EXERCISE TWELVE — Using Stayman with Interference*(#9, Deal 6)*

Dealer: East	♠ K Q J 7 5 2										
	♥ 7 3										
	♦ A Q 6										
	♣ 9 4										
♠ A 8 4	<table style="margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 6 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q 8 5		♥ K 10 6 4									
♦ K 8 2		♦ J 7 5 3									
♣ K 10 5		♣ A Q 8									
	♠ 10 9										
	♥ J 9 2										
	♦ 10 9 4										
	♣ J 7 6 3 2										

The Bidding

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass
1NT	2♠	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

“After West’s 1NT opening bid following two passes, North overcalls 2♠ with the good six-card suit. When North has a good suit, it’s unlikely that East–West will double the overcall for penalty. Even if 2♠ is doubled and defeated, the penalty is likely to be less than the value of East–West’s potential contract.

“With 10 high-card points, East has the strength to take the partnership to the game level and would like to investigate whether there is an eight-card heart fit. 2♣ is no longer available as the Stayman convention after the overcall. In this situation, a cuebid of the opponent’s suit replaces Stayman. It’s forcing and commits the partnership to game. Holding a four-card or longer major suit, opener shows it in response to the cuebid. Opener has the other major suit and shows it by bidding 4♥. Without a four-card heart suit, opener would rebid 3NT with some strength in spades or bid a four-card minor. East–West find their heart fit despite North’s interference.”

The Play

“North is on lead and starts with the ♠K, top of a sequence.

“West’s 4♥ contract is a little precarious. West needs the defenders’ hearts to divide 3–2 to avoid a heart loser. In addition, there are two spade losers and three diamond losers. One spade loser can be ruffed in dummy, so declarer wants to restrict the diamond losers to two.

“After winning the ♠A and drawing trumps, declarer tackles the diamond suit by leading toward one of the honors. Declarer might start by leading a low diamond from dummy toward the ♦K, hoping South holds the ♦A. When the ♦K loses to North’s ♦A, declarer still has a chance. Later, declarer can lead a low diamond toward dummy’s ♦J, hoping that North holds the ♦Q. The second finesse works.

“On this layout, it doesn’t matter whether declarer leads toward the ♦K or toward the ♦J first. As a matter of good technique, however, leading toward the ♦J first is better. The 2♠ overcall makes it more likely that North holds the ♦A. At the same time, it’s unlikely North holds a lot of diamonds. Exchange North’s ♦Q and ♦6 for two low clubs in the South hand to see why it might be a good idea to lead a low diamond from the West hand first. Also, if the ♦J does lose to South’s ♦Q, declarer still has the option of “guessing” that North started with the doubleton ♦A. Try exchanging North’s ♦Q for a low club in the South hand. Declarer might still make the contract. If North hesitates when a low diamond is led toward the ♦J, declarer could infer that North holds the ♦A. On the next round of diamonds, declarer might play a low diamond from both hands rather than lead a diamond toward the ♦K.

“The defenders can’t defeat 4♥ if declarer plays correctly. They may get a chance, however, if declarer slips slightly. Suppose declarer wins the ♠A, draws trumps, and then takes all of the club winners before leading a diamond to the ♦K. North can win this with the ♦A, take a spade winner, and play another high spade, forcing declarer to trump in the dummy. With no club entries left, declarer will have to lead a diamond from dummy, away from the ♦J. North will win this trick and South will still have the ♦10 left to defeat the contract.”

enough tricks. There's an easier way to keep control, however.

“On the lead of the ♣Q, declarer should discard a spade loser from dummy. East will win this trick with the ♣A, but now declarer is in command. South's ♣K is a winner and can be used to discard another spade loser from dummy. The defenders can't force declarer to use dummy's trumps right away. On regaining the lead, South can drive out the ♦A, draw trumps, and then drive out the ♥A. South should finish with an overtrick, losing one spade — having discarded two spade losers on the clubs — one heart, one diamond and one club.

“The play of discarding a spade loser from dummy while losing the first trick to East's ♣A is referred to as a loser on a loser. This type of play arises in many situations and, by exchanging one loser for another, declarer can often gain a trick. In this deal, for example, declarer develops the ♣K into a winner while preserving dummy's trumps.

“With the favorable lie of the cards for declarer — diamonds dividing 3–2 and hearts dividing 3–3 — the defenders will have a difficult time holding declarer to fewer than eight tricks. Holding declarer to eight tricks is a reasonable result, however, since South might take nine tricks.

“If South declares 1NT, the defenders have a chance to defeat the contract. They can establish four club winners by giving South a trick with the ♣K. They must then restrict declarer to two heart and two diamond winners and the ♠A. They can do this, for example, if West holds up the ♦A for two rounds, and East holds up the ♥A for two rounds. Now South can never get to the dummy. The defenders eventually get a spade winner (maybe two) to go along with four club tricks and two aces.”

ruff. South then leads another club which North can ruff. Since North-South are also due a heart trick that totals six tricks for the defense! East can stymie this attack by winning the diamond lead and cashing the A♠ and K♠ and not taking the finesse.)”