

Stayman Convention

Stayman after pard's 1NT (15-17 HCP) opening bid: An artificial bid by responder that requires the opening bidder to bid a four card major if she has one. Responder must hold at least one four card major.

Logic

- Goal is to find the **golden 8-card major suit fit**, improving probability that you will make your contract, make overtricks, or go down fewer tricks.
- Opening bidder becomes declarer, improving declarer's prospects by $\frac{1}{2}$ trick on average. Why? Opening leader leads into the honors (jaws!) held by opening NTer.
- Partner of the opening NT bidder is boss for the hand. Why? Responder knows within one point the HCP assets of the partnership ($16 + \text{responder's HCP}$). Simple addition enables responder to determine whether the pair should stop in a part score, invite game, or force to game.
 - Invite with 9 HCP ($9+16=25$ HCP)
 - Game force with 10 to 14 HCP ($10+16=26$ HCP)
 - Part score with 8 or fewer HCP, usually responder passes the 1NT bid.

Finding the golden major suit 8-card fit: Responder's bid of two clubs asks opener a question, "do you have a four card major?". Opening bidder says "yes" by bidding her

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four card major at the two level when she has one. Otherwise she says “no” by bidding two diamonds.

- GF examples (assumes opps are passing):
 - 1NT – 2C – 2S – 3N – Pass (responder shows 4 hearts but fewer than 4 spades)
 - 1NT – 2C – 2H – 3N – 4S (opener has 4 spades and 4 hearts)
 - 1NT – 2C – 2H – 4H (responder has 4 hearts)
- Invite examples (assumes opps are passing):
 - 1NT – 2C – 2S – 2N – Pass (responder shows 4 hearts but fewer than 4 spades)
 - 1NT – 2C – 2S – 3S – Pass (responder has 4 spades)
 - 1NT – 2C – 2H – 2NT – 3S (responder shows 4 spades but fewer than 4 hearts)
 - How would opener accept the invite in each of these cases?
- What does responder do with 8 or fewer HCP?
 - Usually best to Pass
 - Occasionally you can reduce the magnitude of a disaster if your bad hand is shapely. For example, 4-4-5-0 shape for responder screams bid 2C even if you hold a bust hand; you are likely to find an 8-card major suit or 8 (or 9) card diamond fit.