

Stayman III: After 2NT Opening

After partner opens 2NT (20-21 balanced), the Stayman convention is used via a 3♣ response to find a 4-4 major fit. Generally a major fit plays better than NT. The point needed for Stayman over 2NT opening are less than Stayman over 1NT. The 3♣ response asks opener to bid a 4-card major or deny such a holding by bidding 3♦. Both of these bids are artificial but so common no alert is necessary.

Requirements

With rare exceptions, here are the minimum requirements for using Stayman after Partner Opens 2NT:

- 5+ points
- At least one 4-card major
- At least one short suit, i.e., a doubleton

Specified Responses

Opener Rebid	Meaning
3♦	Opener lacks a 4+card major
3♥	Opener has 4-card ♥ suit; may have 4-card ♠
3♠	Opener has 4-card ♠ suit only

There are no game invitational sequences after a 2NT/Stayman auction, as there are with a 1NT opening.

Responder Rebids (5+)

Responder rebids 3NT without a 4-4 major fit, unless Responder has a 5-card major and a 4-card major. In the case of 5-4 in the majors, Responder bids the 4-card major, which must be alerted by Opener. This is the Smolen convention.

Stayman with an unbalanced Weak Hand (Under 5 points)

With an unbalanced weak hand, there are two hand distributions with which Responder may use Stayman over 2NT: when holding at least 4 cards in ♠, ♥, and ♦, which leaves zero or one card in ♣s. Note: With a weak hand and 5+cards in a major, use Jacoby Transfer and Pass.

For example, with ♠J742 ♥T963 ♦T942 ♣3 use Stayman but Pass any bid Opener makes. This is called "Garbage Stayman."

After Other 2NT Bids

Opener jumps to 2NT after opening a minor: New Minor Forcing is on; Responder needs more points for game as Opener promises 18-19.

Opener rebids 2NT after opening 2♣: Stayman is on; Responder needs less points.

Quiz 28: Stayman III

Your Partner opens 2NT. Pick your response and write it using the ___ in the “1st Response” column. If you choose 3♣ for Stayman, write in the “2nd Bid” column, your bid if Opener bids 3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ (top to bottom).

	1 st Response	2 nd Bid	Your Hand		1 st Response	2 nd Bid	Your Hand
1.	2NT – P – ____	— — —	♠ QT54 ♥ 9532 ♦ 7 ♣ K842	2.	2NT – P – ____	— — —	♠ 865 ♥ T9653 ♦ 5 ♣ JT42
3.	2NT – P – ____	— — —	♠ J532 ♥ AK632 ♦ 643 ♣ T	4.	2NT – P – ____	— — —	♠ KQJT ♥ QT63 ♦ 82 ♣ 765
5.	2NT – P – ____	— — —	♠ KQ72 ♥ QT43 ♦ 52 ♣ AQ8	6.	1♦ – 1♥ 2NT – ____	— — —	♠ KT9 ♥ KQ843 ♦ JT87 ♣ 4