



Lesson 13 Teacher's Notes

The Stayman Convention

Aims

- To introduce our first **Conventional** bid
- To emphasise that Stayman is used to find a 4-4 fit in a major. To use it you must hold a **four**-card major – no more and no less. With a 5-card major we bid it.

Content

- 1 Revise Lesson 12: the logic of the responses to the opening bid of 1NT (limited in both strength and distribution)
 - with 0-10 HCP stop in a part score: (pass)
 - with 11-12HCP invite game with a limit bid of 2NT if balanced
 - with 13+HCP we bid to game 3NT with a balanced hand
 - 4♥/4♠ with a 6-card major

- 2 Show a type of responding hand – worth game, unsuitable for 3NT but with no 5+-card major to bid
Introduce The Stayman Convention (named after the American Saml Stayman who popularised it)

Opener Responder

1NT 2♣ Over 1NT 2♣ is an *asking bid*- it says “partner, do you have a 4-card major?”

It is our first *conventional bid*: It is not *Natural*: it says **nothing** about clubs

It is NOT a weak bid: it is NOT a limit bid

It simply asks opener to bid a 4-card major if he has one

Opener answers the question like this:

2♦	“I do not have 4cards in either major”
2♥	“I have 4 hearts (and maybe 4 spades as well)”
2♠	“I have 4 spades, but not 4 hearts”

- 3 You use the Stayman convention when you think that 4♥ or 4♠ may be a better contract than no-trump
This means you must have a 4-card major yourself.
If you have three or fewer cards in each major there is no point in asking whether partner has four.
If you have a 5-card or longer major you just bid it
You use the Stayman convention to look for a 4-4 fit in a major

- 4 When you use Stayman you must be prepared for any reply partner may make

If you hold a hand like this:

♠ 2	
♥ K1053	
♦ Q652	
♣ K1032	what will you do if partner responds 2♠?

You will have to rebid 2NT, without the values to invite game. That is wrong – it misleads partner.

You need at least the values to invite game to use Stayman – ***it is a tool to guide you to the best game***

With this sort of hand you just have to pass 1NT and hope for the best.

- 5 There is one exception to the above. If you have a weak hand that can stand any reply to a 2C Stayman bid. For example after 1NT, bid Stayman and pass partner's reply

♠ 9642
♥ 10953
♦ Q652
♣ 2

Stayman may also be used after a 1NT overcall and 2NT (covered in later lessons)