

# EGCC Stayman

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## Conventions

A convention is where a bid does not necessarily show the suit bid (or not just that suit). Conventions are very useful as they can help you deal with common situations, such as an opening 1NT bid by partner.

Opening 1NT is an excellent bid – not only does it tell your partner a lot about your hand, it also prevents your opponents from bidding at the 1 level.

The difficulty is that you may have a major fit (4-4 or 5-3), but how do you find it?

Stayman is a convention that helps you find a 4-4 major fit after a 1NT opening.

## Stayman

Stayman is a bid of 2♣ in response to your partner's 1NT opening bid.

It DOES NOT mean you have clubs, but instead asks partner if they have any 4 card majors (they will not have 5 of a major). You must have a 4 card major to bid this – otherwise there is no point asking.

Partner responds:

2♦ If they have no 4 card major

2♥ If they have a 4 card heart suit (they may have a 4 card spade suit as well)

2♠ If they have a 4 card spade suit but no 4 card heart suit.

## When do I use it?

It is important when bidding Stayman that you have a suitable rebid for all responses. The main time you bid Stayman is when you have at least one 4 card major and 11+ points.

## What next?

If partner bids your major, then you have a fit. Bid 3 (invitational) or 4 of that suit according to your point count.

If partner does not bid your major (including bidding 2♦), then bid either 2NT (invitational) or 3NT according to your point count.

## Alerting and Announcing

Because conventional bids do not mean what they seem to, your opponents must be informed of this. You do this by alerting or announcing whenever your partner (not you) makes a conventional bid.

Announcing is for the common conventions that “everyone” plays, including Stayman. Alerting is for less common ones. You will not meet any alertable bids for a while.

To announce Stayman, you simply say “Stayman” when your partner bids 2C over your opening 1NT. You do not announce or alert any of partner’s responses, including 2♦. Although the 2♦ is not natural (does not show a diamond suit), the fact that you have already announced Stayman means everyone knows what it is.

## Some Examples (showing only NS bids - EW pass throughout)

### When Opener has your suit

Consider these hands:

North	South
♠ AQT3	♠ J974
♥ 534	♥ A96
♦ K7	♦ AJ32
♣ AJT4	♣ K3

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♠	4♠

The 1NT bid shows 12-14 points.

The 2♣ bid is Stayman, asking for 4 card majors.

The 2♠ bid shows exactly 4 spades. South now knows they have a fit (8+ cards) in spades, so the denomination is determined. South knows they have enough for game (at least 25 points) so bids it.

Compare to this, where South has Q♦ instead of A♦:

North	South
♠ AQT3	♠ J974
♥ 534	♥ A96
♦ K7	♦ Q832
♣ AJT4	♣ KJ

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♠	3♠
4♠	

As before, the 1NT bid shows 12-14 points, the 2♣ bid is Stayman, and the 2♠ bid shows exactly 4 spades.

South now knows they have a fit (8+ cards) in spades, so the denomination is determined.

This time South does NOT know if they have enough for game, as the combined point count is between 23 and 25. This time South bids 3♠, saying we have a spade fit and enough for game if you have a good 13 or 14 points. North has 14, so bids the game.

And this, where North has J♦ instead of K♦:

North	South
♠ AQT3	♠ J974
♥ 534	♥ A96
♦ J7	♦ Q632
♣ QJT4	♣ KJ

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♠	3♠
Pass	

As before, South bids 3♠, saying we have a spade fit and enough for game if you have a good 13 or 14 points. North has 12, so passes.

## When Opener has no 4 card major

Consider these hands:

North	South
♠ QT3	♠ J974
♥ 534	♥ A96
♦ AK7	♦ AJ32
♣ AJT4	♣ K3

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♦	3NT

The 1NT bid shows 12-14 points.

The 2♣ bid is Stayman, asking for 4 card majors.

The 2♦ bid denies a four card major. Since it takes 11 tricks to make game in a minor and only 9 in NT, we ignore the possibility of a minor fit, so the only denomination we are left with is NT. South knows they have enough for game (at least 25 points) so bids it.

And these:

North	South
♠ QT3	♠ J974

♥ 534	♥ A96
♦ AK7	♦ QJ32
♣ AJT4	♣ K3

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♦	2NT
3NT	

As before, the 1NT bid shows 12-14 points, the 2♣ bid is Stayman, asking for 4 card majors, and the 2♦ bid denies a four card major.

South knows the best denomination is NT, but not if they have enough for game. South this bids 2NT, saying "no major fit, and might have game if you have maximum points".

Since North has 14 points he bids the game.

And the third possibility:

North	South
♠ QT3	♠ J974
♥ 534	♥ A96
♦ AK7	♦ QJ32
♣ QJT4	♣ K3

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♦	2NT
Pass	

As before, the 1NT bid shows 12-14 points, the 2♣ bid is Stayman, asking for 4 card majors, and the 2♦ bid denies a four card major. South knows the best denomination is NT, but not if they have enough for game. South this bids 2NT, saying "no major fit, and might have game if you have maximum points".

This time Since North only has 12 points so he passes.

## When Opener has the other major

There are two possibilities here:

### Where your major is Hearts:

North	South
♠ KQT3	♠ J97
♥ 534	♥ A976
♦ A7	♦ KQ32
♣ AJT4	♣ K3

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♠	2NT
3NT	

North cannot have a 4 card heart suit, as with both he would have bid 2♥. A major fit is ruled out and you rebid NT.

### Where your major is Spades:

North	South
♠ J534	♠ A976
♥ KQT3	♥ J97
♦ A7	♦ QJ32
♣ AT4	♣ K3

Bidding:

N	S
1NT	2♣
2♥	2NT
4♠	

North might have a 4 card Spade suit, but you don't know, so you rebid 2NT.

North now knows you have a four card spade suit (you must have one 4 card major to bid Stayman, and you don't have 4 hearts otherwise you would have raised his hearts), so he knows the denomination must be spades. Since he also knows you have 11+ points (by the 2NT rebid) he knows you have enough points for game between you, so he bids it.

If North didn't have a four card spade suit, he would just bid as before.

Note that the first time the spade suit is bid is also the last bid!

The levels of the bids are modified if either North or South have a different number of points, but the principle remains the same.