BIDDING CONVERSATIONS - WEEK 5 RESPONDING TO NO TRUMP OPENING BIDS

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RESPONDING TO ONE NO TRUMP

When your partner opens the bidding with a no trump bid, you have the most information about the strength and shape of partnership's combined hands. This means that you, *the responder*, must direct the partnership to the final contract and your partner, *the opener*, must follow your direction.

HIGH	Opener		15—17					
CARD	Responder		0—7	8—9	10—15	16—17	18+	
POINTS	Par	tnership	15—24	23—26	25—32	31—34	33—40	
RESPONDER'S		Game Unlikely	Game Possible	Game Likely	Slam Possible	Slam Likely		
	GOAL		Part Score	Invite Game	Force Game	Invite Slam	Force Slam	
NAA 105		0-3	PASS	2nt	3nt	4nt	4*	
MAJOF SUIT		4	PASS	Initiate Stayman Conversation With 2♣				
LENGT	П	5+	Initiate N	te Major Suit Transfer Conversation With 2♦ or 2♥				

The table above is an attempt to show how the main guidelines for responses to a one no trump opening bid are derived from the strength and shape of responder's hand. The "cheat sheet" on the right shows these responses in the bidding hierarchy.

Note how the response bids focus on the shape of the major suits because it is easier to make bonus points with three no trump or four in a major than it is to make bonus points with five in a minor. But there are some responses that describe a hand with a six card or longer minor suit.

RESPONDING TO ONE NO TRUMP CHEAT SHEET (Shaded Points are High Card Points)

Stayman • Major Suit Transfer • Gerber • Quantitative 4NT

BID	PTS	SHAPE OF HAND
4NT	16-17	Balanced. ¹ Quantitative. Invites slam.
4.	18+	Gerber. Asks for aces. Artificial.
3NT	10-15	Balanced. ¹
3♦	8-9	6+ ♦ (2+ honors). <i>Invites game</i> .
3♣	8-9	6+♣ (2+ honors). <i>Invites game</i> .
2NT	8-9	Balanced. ¹ Invites game.
2 🖍	0+	6+♣ or 6+♦. <i>Relay to</i> 3♣ . <i>Artificial</i> .
2♥	0+	5+ A. Transfer to 2 A. Announce. Artificial.
2♦	0+	5+♥. Transfer to 2♥. Announce. Artificial.
2.	8+	4Maj, 4:4Maj, or 5:4Maj. Stayman. Artificial.

¹ Balanced: May have a five card minor.

See the *Beginning Bridge*, *Week 2 Lecture* document for bidding tables and examples for responses to one and two no trump opening bids.

RESPONDING TO TWO NO TRUMP

HIGH	Opener		20—21				
CARD	Responder		0—3	4—10	11—12	13+	
POINTS	Partnership		20—24	24—31	31—33	33—40	
RESPONDER'S			Game Unlikely	Game Likely	Slam Possible	Slam Likely	
GOAL		Part Score	Force Game	Invite Slam	Force Slam		
MAJOD		0-3	PASS	3nt	4nt	4*	
MAJOF SUIT	Г 4		PASS	Initiate Stayman Conversation With 3♣			
LENGT			Initiate Major	ate Major Suit Transfer Conversation With 3♦ or 3♥			

The table above is an attempt to show how the guidelines for responses to a two no trump opening bid are derived from the strength and shape of responder's hand. The "cheat sheet" on the right shows the responses in the bidding hierarchy.

Note how these responses are similar to the responses to one no trump. The main difference is in the point count ranges and the level of the bids but the basic strategy is the same.

RESPONDING TO TWO NO TRUMP CHEAT SHEET

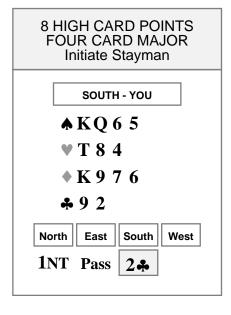
(Shaded Points are High Card Points)

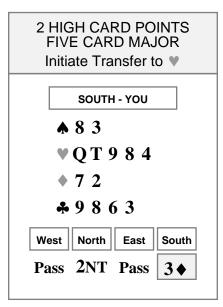
Stayman • Major Suit Transfer • Gerber • Quantitative 4NT

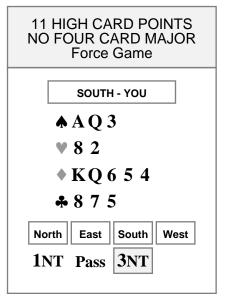
BID	PTS	SHAPE OF HAND
4NT	11-12	Balanced. 1 Quantitative. Invites slam.
4 ♣	13+	Gerber. Asks for aces. Artificial.
3NT	4-10	Balanced. ¹
3♥	0+	5+ A. Transfer to 3 A. Announce. Artificial.
3♦	0+	5+♥. Transfer to 3♥. Announce. Artificial.
3♣	4+	4Maj, 4:4Maj, or 5:4Maj. Stayman Artificial.

¹ Balanced: May be unbalanced with minors.

RESPONDER'S RESPONSES TO A NO TRUMP OPENING BID



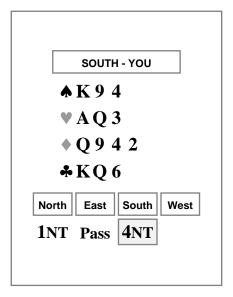




QUANTITATIVE FOUR NO TRUMP

Suppose your partner opens **1NT** (15-17 **HCP**) and you hold the hand on the right. You have 16 **HCP** so you know that your partnership has a combined 31-33 (16+15 to 16+17) **HCP** which means a small slam is possible. Since you are the captain of the bidding, how to you determine if your partnership should bid the slam?

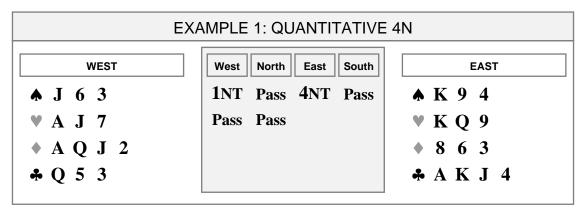
- ✓ Trump Fit: With a balanced hand and no four card or longer major, you know the partnership should bid a no trump contract.
- **X** Combined Strength: If your partner opened with 17 **HCP** your partnership has 33 **HCP**, enough for a small slam.



✓ *Control:* You can assume that with a combined 33 HCP your partnership has the necessary controls for a small slam because you can not get 33 total high card points if your partnership is missing two aces.

The *Quantitative* **4NT** *Response* was designed to cover this situation. It tells your partner that you have:

- ✓ 16-17 high card points
- ✓ A balanced hand and agree that the contract should be played in no trump
- ✓ Invited your partner to bid **6NT** if partner opened with 17 high card points or a high quality 16 high card points.



- West: Has a balanced hand with 15 high card points. Although the ♣ Qxx is a weak stopper, West prefers to open 1NT to describe a balanced hand with 15-17 high card points and stoppers in at least three suits. This limiting bid makes East the captain of the bidding but does not force East to respond. East says "15-17."
- *East:* Has a balanced hand with 16 high card points and knows the partnership has 31-33 (16+15 to 16+17) total high card points which means a small slam is possible. East responds a *quantitative* **4**NT to invite West to bid a **6**NT small slam.
- West: With just 15 high card points, West decides not to risk a small slam.

STAYMAN BIDDING CONVERSATIONS

The *Stayman* bidding convention is used after a no trump opening bid to explore for an eight-card trump fit in a major suit. If there is an eight card fit, the partnership is <u>usually</u> safer playing in the major instead of in no trump.

Note that with the appropriate adjustment in the point values, *Major Suit Stayman* can also be used after a **2NT** opening bid.

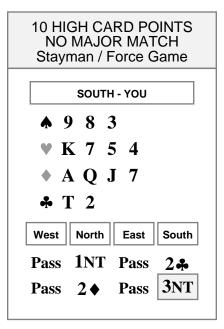
PLAYER	BIDDING				
Opener:	Opens the	bidding:			
	1nt	Describes a balanced hand with 15-17 HCP. Responder says "15-17." ²			
Responder:	Initiates the <i>Stayman</i> convention:				
	2.41	Artificial, forcing. Promises 8+ HCP and four cards in a major or a five-card and a four-card major. Directs opener to bid a four-card major.			
Opener:	Responds	to the <i>Stayman</i> request (bid up the line):			
	2♦	Artifical. Indicates no four-card major.			
	2♥	Promises four hearts. Might also have four spades.			
	2 🖍	Promises four spades and less than four hearts.			
Responder:	With 8-9 HCP, invites partner to bid a game:				
	2 _{NT}	If opener did not bid a major or opener's major does not match responder's major. <i>Invites opener to bid</i> 3NT or, with four hearts and four spades, 3 \(\hbar \) or 4 \(\hbar \).			
	3 Maj	If opener's major matches responder's major. <i>Invites opener to bid the game</i> .			
With 10-15 HCP, bids a game:					
	3 _{NT}	If opener did not bid a major or opener's major does not match responder's major. <i>Invites opener with four hearts and four spades to pass or bid</i> 4 .			
	4 Maj	If opener's major matches responder's major.			
With 16+ HCP, confirm a slam:					
	4*	Artificial, Gerber. Directs opener to bid an Ace count.			
Opener:	If invited,	determines final contract based on combined points and trump fit.			

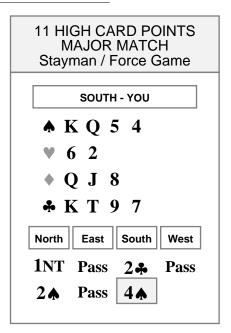
¹ Make a *stolen bid double* if opponent overcalls 2♣.

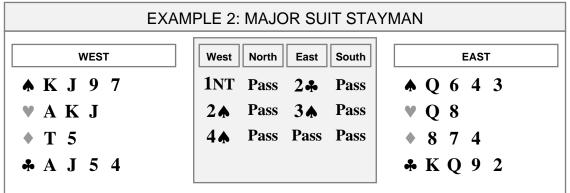
² In duplicate, responder must announce opening no trump point range.

RESPONDER'S REBIDS AFTER STAYMAN REPLY









- *West:* Has a balanced hand with 17 high card points and opens **1NT** to describe a balanced hand with 15-17 high card points and stoppers in at least three suits. This limiting bid makes East the captain of the bidding. *East says "15-17."*
- *East:* Has 9 high card points, enough to invite partner to bid a game. Given four spades, East responds an *artificial Stayman* 2. to describe a hand with at least 8 high card points and at least one four-card major. This artificial unlimited bid forces West to reply. East continues to be the captain of the bidding.
- West: Rebids 2 to indicate a four-card spade suit. This bid also denies a four-card heart suit (bid up the line with two four-card majors).
- *East:* Rebids 3 to indicate the eight-card trump fit with 8-9 high card points. This limiting bid makes West the captain of the bidding and invites, but does not force, West to bid a game in 3NT or 4 to if West is at the upper end of the no trump opening range.
- West: Knows the partnership has 25-26 (17+8 to 17+9) high card points with and eight-card spade fit. Given the worthless diamond doubleton, West decides to bid a 4 and game.

See the <u>Beginning Bridge</u>, <u>Week 3 Lecture</u> document for a general description and examples of the <u>Stayman Convention</u> and the <u>Major Suit Transfer Convention</u>.

MAJOR SUIT TRANSFER BIDDING CONVERSATIONS

The *Major Suit Transfer* convention is one of the most useful in bridge when No Trump has been opened:

- ✓ a responder with at least a five card major can make a response without any points!
- ✓ the weak hand is the dummy and the strong hand is the declarer.

Note that with the appropriate adjustment in the point values, *Major Suit Transfers* can also be used after a **2NT** opening bid.

PLAYER	BIDDING			
Opener:	Opens the bidding: 1NT Describes a balanced hand with 15-17 HCP. Responder says "15-17." 3			
Responder:	Initiates the <i>Transfer</i> convention:			
	2 ♦ 1	Artificial, forcing. Promises five or more hearts. Directs opener to rebid 2♥. Opener says "transfer" immediately. 4		
	2♥²	Artificial, forcing. Promises five or more spades. Directs opener to rebid 2♠. Opener says "transfer" immediately. 4		

Opener: Rebids two of the major suit one rank above responder's bid suit.

Responder: With 0-7 HCP, game is unlikely:

Pass

With 8-9 HCP, invites opener to bid the game:

2 _{NT}	Promises exactly five cards in major. Invites opener to bid game.	
3 Maj	Promises six or more cards in major. Invites opener to bid game.	

With 10-15 HCP, bids game or *control bids* a suit with an ace:

New Suit	Forcing to game. Promises an ace in the new suit. ⁵ Indicates possible slam interest. Directs opener to bid again.
3NT	Promises exactly five cards in major. Invites opener with three or more cards in the major to pass or bid 4 Maj.
4 Maj	Promises six or more cards in major.

With 16+ HCP, confirms a slam:

Confirm a slam.

If invited, determines final contract based on combined points and trump fit.

¹ Make a *stolen bid double* if opponent overcalls 2♦.

Opener:

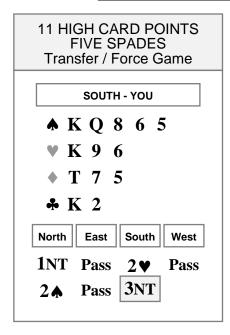
² Make a *stolen bid double* if opponent overcalls 2∇ .

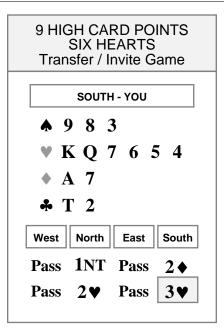
³ In duplicate, responder must announce opening no trump point range.

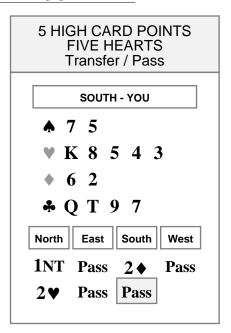
⁴ In duplicate, opener must announce use of the transfer convention.

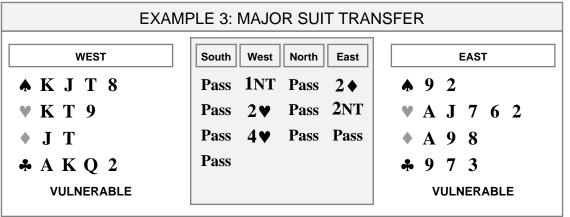
⁵ Some partnerships prefer to use a new suit to show a good four card or longer suit.

RESPONDER'S REBIDS AFTER TRANSFER ACCEPTED









- West: Has a balanced hand with 16 good high card points and 1 very weak high card point (the ◆ JT). West opens 1NT to describe a balanced hand with 15-17 high card points and stoppers in at least three suits. This limiting bid makes East the captain of the bidding but does not force East to respond. East says "15-17."
- *East:* Rebids an artificial **2** to describe a hand with at least five hearts. This bid directs West to transfer to hearts. *West says "transfer" immediately.*
- West: Rebids bids 2♥ to accept the transfer.
- *East:* Has 9 high card points. East rebids 2NT to describe a hand with 8-9 high card points and exactly five hearts. This limiting bid makes West the captain of the bidding and invites West to bid a game in either 3NT or 4♥ if West is at the upper end of the no trump opening range.
- West: With three-card heart support, West can revalue the hand to 17 dummy points (16 HCP + 1 ◆ SSP). If hearts are trump, West can also revalue partner's hand to 9-10 declarer points (8-9 HCP + 1 ♥ LSP) for a partnership total of 26-27 (17+9 to 17+10) points. Given the high point count with an eight-card heart fit, and the weak diamond holding, West decides to try for a game in 4 ♥.

INTERFERENCE FROM OVERCALLS

There are a number of possible partnership agreements that can be used if an opponent interferes with conventional bidding. We suggest the following simple guideline.

When you want to make an *artificial response* to initiate a convention and your right hand opponent doubles or overcalls:

✓ If opponent doubles:

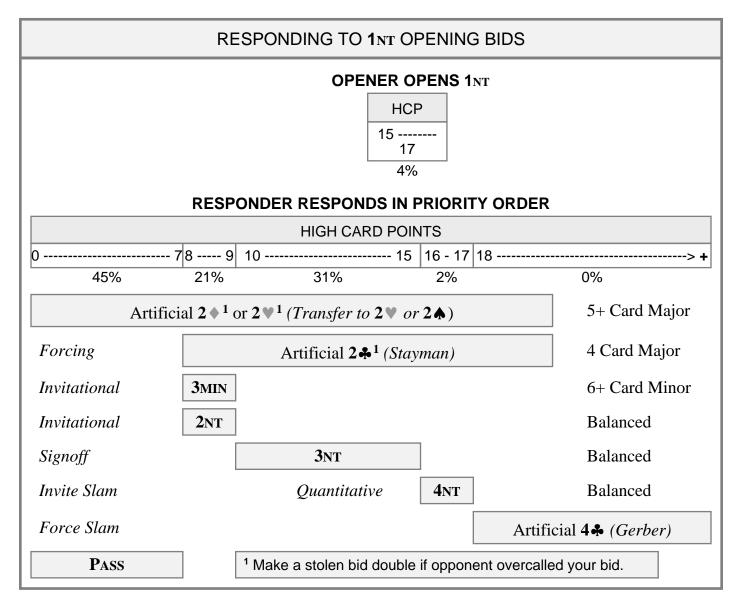
• Make the normal initiating bid and the **convention is on**.

✓ If opponent's overcall steals your artificial bid:

• Double to tell your partner that you wanted to make that bid (a "stolen bid double") and the **convention is on**.

✓ If opponent's overcall is above or below your artifical bid:

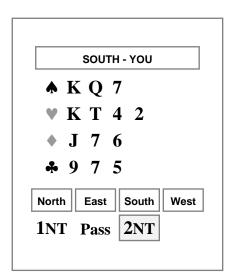
• The **convention is off** and you must either pass or make a natural bid.



REFINING THE CONVERSATIONS

AVOID STAYMAN

Consider the hand on the right. Although it does have a four-card major, it is perfectly balanced and does not contain a short suit. Suppose your partner has four hearts. If the partnership bids a heart contract, the most the heart suit will generate is four heart tricks because there will be little or no chance to ruff a loser in the exposed dummy. For this reason, *Stayman* should not be initiated if a hand with a four-card major does not contain a doubleton, a singleton, or a void. Given 9 high card points, the best response for this hand is 2NT to invite partner to bid a 3NT game.



BYPASS STAYMAN

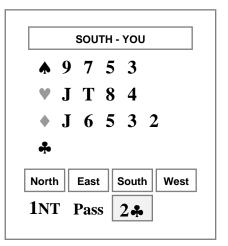
Consider the next hand on the right. Although it does have a four-card major, it also has 14 high card points. With a combined 29-31 total high card points, the partnership should be able to take ten tricks if the contract is **3NT** to get a higher score than the score for ten tricks if the contract is **4MAJ**. This suggests:

- ✓ With 8-13 HCP: Respond 2♣ (Stayman)
- ✓ With 14-15 HCP: Respond 3NT
- ✓ With 16-17 HCP: Respond 4NT (Quantitative)

SOUTH-YOU ** K Q 7 ** Q J 4 2 ** Q 7 6 ** A 7 5 North East South West 1NT Pass 3NT

GARBAGE STAYMAN

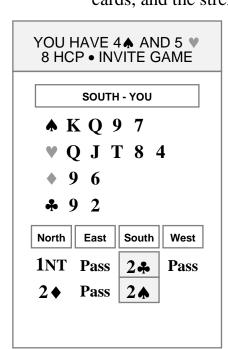
Consider the hand on the right. It is, in a word, garbage and if you pass, your partner will have a hard time making a **1NT** contract. But you do have four cards in each major along with diamonds. If you bid **2♣** to initiate Stayman your partner must bid **2♠**, **2♥**, or **2♠** which means the partnership will have an eight-card major fit or a seven to ten card diamond fit. Your partner will be surprised when your next bid is **PASS** but your partner should find it easier to make the suit contract at the two level instead of the no trump contract at the one level.

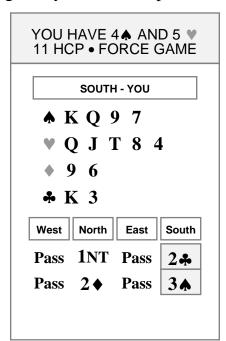


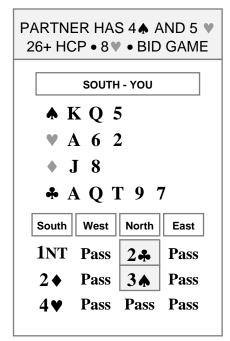
STAYMAN WITH 5-4 MAJORS

Suppose partner opened **1NT** and you have 8+ **HCP** with a five-card major and a four-card major. How do you search for an eight-card major suit fit in such a way that partner becomes the declarer in your longer major suit? Dave March suggests the following:

- ✓ With 0-7 HCP: Transfer to the five-card major and pass.
- ✓ With 8+ HCP: Respond 2♣ to initiate Stayman:
 - ✓ If opener responds 2♥ or 2♠, continue Stayman:
 - With 8-9 HCP: Rebid the major fit at the three level (invite game).
 - With 10+ HCP: Rebid the major fit at the four level.
 - ✓ If opener responds 2 ♦ to deny a four-card major:
 - With 8-9 HCP: Rebid your four card major at the 2-level (invite game).
 - With 10+ HCP: Rebid your four card major at the 3-level (force game). Opener now knows your bid major has four-cards, your unbid major has five cards, and the strength of your hand. Opener can place the final contract.







SUPER ACCEPT A TRANSFER

Consider the hand on the right. Your partner's artificial 2♦ response directs you to say "transfer" and then bid 2♥ to accept the transfer. But you have:

- ✓ A maximum opening point count
- ✓ Four card support in responder's suit (a nine-card fit)
- ✓ A doubleton for ruffing power

Say "transfer" and jump to **3** ♥ to accept the transfer and describe this combination of attributes.

