

GARBAGE STAYMAN

Garbage Stayman is used by most people when Opener bids 1NT and Responder has 0-7 points with a singleton or a void in clubs. Typical hand patterns for Responder could be: 4-4-4-1 or 4-4-5-0 or 4-3-6-0. With classic Garbage Stayman, you will pass whatever partner bids (2D/2H/2S) and it will usually play better than 1NT.

You can also use Garbage Stayman with 5-5 in majors and even with 5-4 (or 4-5)—**if you and your partner agree**. You still bid 2C. If partner bids 2D, you respond 2H with the 5-5 hand—asking partner to choose between hearts and spades.

If you have a bad 5-card major and a good four-card major (with an overall weak hand), it is probably better to use Garbage Stayman. If, however, you have a “good” 5-card major and a bad four-card major, simply transfer to your 5-card major and pass.

Some experts recommend that you transfer with 5 hearts and 4 spades (if suits are approximately equal in strength) with a bad hand, and use Garbage Stayman with 5 spades and 4 hearts and a bad hand. This allows partner—after 1NT-P-2C-P-2D-P-2H to bid 2S when the NT Opener is 3-3 in the majors, knowing you will be in a 5-3 fit and strong hand will be Declarer.

Some experts use Garbage Stayman even with hands that are 4-4 in majors without a singleton or void in clubs. That means you will sometimes play in a 4-3 major fit rather than 1NT. It may work out; it may not. The estimate is that the NT Opener will have a 4-card major about 40 % of the time.

(With a game-going hand and 5-4 or 4-5 in the majors, you use regular Stayman and raise any major bid to game. If NT Opener rebids 2D, you bid your 5-card major at 3 level to create game force. Or, if you are using Smolen convention, bid 4-card major at 3 level.)

Some Standard Sequences:

1NT: 2C-2D-2H: = Garbage Stayman. Opener must pass or bid 2S (should normally bid 2S with 3-3).

2C-2H-2S: shows four spades and invitational values (NOT Garbage Stayman).

2C-2H-2NT: denies four spades, shows invitational values (used by people who cannot invite directly with 2NT as an immediate 2NT would be a transfer. They must go through Stayman to make the game invitation.)

2C-2D-2S: shows five spades, four hearts and invitational values. (If you have the weak hand with 5 spades and 4 hearts, you must bid 2H over 2D and hope partner corrects to 2S OR just transfer to spades originally and pass.)

2D (transfer)-2H-2S: shows five hearts, four spades and invitational values.

2D or 2H (transfer, forcing 2H or 2S)-2N: shows 5 card major & invitational values.