

# Puppet Stayman

When opening 2NT there is a reasonable prospect that **opener** may have a five-card major. Using standard Stayman and Transfers an 8 card major fit may be missed. For example, in the following deal the partnership has 30 combined points but with a club lead 3NT will fail, but 4♠ makes:

<b>West</b> ♠ A Q J 9 2 ♥ A K ♦ A J 3 2 ♣ Q 3	<b>East</b> ♠ K 8 6 ♥ Q 10 4 2 ♦ K 7 6 5 4 ♣ J	<b>West</b> 2NT 3♠	<b>East</b> 3♣ 3NT
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**Five-card Puppet Stayman** enables responder to investigate for both possible 4-4 major fits and 5-3 major fits. The bid is game-forcing. The ‘puppet’ method enables the stronger hand to be declarer (i.e. concealed). (Don’t confuse with transfers in which the **responder** may have a **5-card major**).

## Responses to 2NT (with 4+ HCP):

- 3♣ = Puppet Stayman (“I have at least one 3 or 4 card major but no 5 card major”). For responses, see next section.
- 3♦ = --> transfer to hearts (shows 5 hearts)
- 3♥ = --> transfer to spades (shows 5 spades)
- 3♠ = --> shows 5 spades and 4 hearts (with 5 hearts and 4 spades, transfer to 3♥ and then bid 3♠). Opener chooses the contract.
- 3NT = --> shows no 3+ major, to play

## Opener’s responses to responder’s 3♣ Puppet Stayman bid:

- 3♦ - “I have at least one 4-card major but no 5-card major. Is that useful? If so, bid **the other** major. I will convert to your major so that my hand is concealed. If you have both majors, bid 4♦. I will convert to my preferred major”
- 3♥ - “I have a 5-card heart suit. Is that useful? If so bid 4♥”
- 3♠ - “I have a 5-card spade suit. Is that useful? If so bid 4♠”
- 3NT denies a 4-card major. Sign off.

Puppet Stayman is announced as “Stayman”. Responses are alertable.

## Examples:

<b>West</b> ♠ A K J 9 3 ♥ A 7 ♦ A J 4 ♣ K 8 2	<b>East</b> ♠ Q 7 4 ♥ K 8 3 ♦ Q 7 6 5 2 ♣ 9 4
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2NT - 3♣ - 3♠ - 4♠.

Responder would prefer a 5-3 major game on account of the fragile club suit, so bids 3♣. 3♠ from opener shows a five-card spade suit

West	East
♠ A K J	♠ Q 7 4
♥ A K 7	♥ Q 8 3
♦ J 8 4	♦ Q 7 6 5 2
♣ K J 8 3	♣ 9 4

2NT - 3♣ - 3NT - pass.

East is hoping that opener has a 5 card major. 3NT from opener denies a four-card or a five-card major.

West	East
♠ A K J	♠ Q 7 4
♥ A K 7	♥ Q 8 3 2
♦ J 8 4	♦ Q 7 6 5 2
♣ K J 8 3	♣ 9

2NT - 3♣ - 3NT - pass.

East would prefer to play in hearts if opener has four hearts - 3NT from West shows he has no 4-card or 5-card major.

West	East
♠ A K 6 3	♠ Q 7 4
♥ A K J	♥ Q 8 3 2
♦ J 8 4	♦ Q 7 6 5 2
♣ K J 8	♣ 9

2NT - 3♣ - 3♦ - 3♠ - 3NT - pass.

West's 3♦ shows at least one four-card major. East would prefer to play in hearts so bids 3♠. East has not bid 4♦ so is not 4-4 in the majors. He has not bid 3NT which would deny both 4-card major, which must therefore be hearts.

West	East
♠ A K 6	♠ Q 4
♥ A K J 7	♥ Q 8 3 2
♦ Q 8 4	♦ J 7 6 5 2
♣ K 8 3	♣ 9

2NT - 3♣ - 3♦ - 3♠ - 4♥ - pass.

West's 3♦ shows at least one four-card major. East would prefer to play in hearts so bids 3♠. East has not bid 4♦ so is not 4-4 in the majors. East has not bid 3NT which would deny both majors, so he must have four hearts.

West	East
♠ A K 3	♠ Q 7 4 2
♥ A K J 7	♥ Q 8 3 2
♦ Q 8 4	♦ J 7 6 5
♣ K 8 3	♣ 9

2NT - 3♣ - 3♦ - 4♦ - 4♥ - pass.

4♦ from responder shows both majors; North supports hearts.

West	East
♠ A K J 9 3	♠ Q 7
♥ A 7	♥ K 8 3 2
♦ A J 4	♦ Q 7 6 5 2
♣ K 8 2	♣ 9 4

2NT - 3♣ - 3♠ - 4♠ - pass.

East would like to find a 4-4 heart fit, but when West shows the five card spade suit, East knows that West cannot have four hearts for his 2NT opening bid. East could bid either 4♠ or sign off in 3NT. Despite being only a doubleton spade, the poor club suit favours a bid of 4♠, hoping for a possible club ruff before defenders can draw trumps.

West	East
♠ A K 3	♠ Q 7 6 4 2
♥ A K J	♥ Q 8 3
♦ J 8 4	♦ Q 7 6 5
♣ K J 8 3	♣ 9

2NT - 3♥ - 3♠ - 3NT - 4♠ - pass.

**Not 5-card Stayman** - an ordinary transfer sequence when **responder** has the 5-card major.