

“Garbage” Stayman and “Crawling” Stayman

Under normal circumstances, and assuming one’s Partnership agreement is that their 1-NT opening count is limited to 15-17 HCP’s, Responder, in order to invoke regular Stayman seeking an 8-card Major suit fit, is required to hold no fewer that 8-HCP’s if holding a 5-card or longer suit, or no fewer than 9-HCP’s, absent any 5-card suit. This requirement is necessary so that in case no 8-card Major suit fit is found, Responder can then bid 2-NT or 3-NT, both of which, then, are feasibly, makeable contracts, given the combined Partnership high-card point count holdings.

Regular Stayman, for example, could not be initiated if Responder were to hold:

Axxx	Responder, having invoked Stayman here,
x	Could “ pass ” a response by Opener of either “ 2D ”
Qxxx	or 2S , but could <u>not</u> do so if Opener were to
xxxx	respond 2H . Therefore, Stayman <u>cannot</u> be used here.

There are two variations of the Stayman convention, however, which *do allow* Responder to act with fewer HCP’s than usually necessary for at least an invitation to a Game-level final contract. Because each variation is unique, however, they can only be played with Partnership understanding and agreement as to their use.

A. The first alternate version of Stayman is known as “*Drop Dead,*” “*Junk,*” or “*Garbage*” Stayman. It is only employed when the Responder has seven or fewer high-card points and a unique distribution; i.e., a 3-suited hand with the Club suit being short. The concept is only used with the following requirements:

1. The Responder has 0-7 points, but Responder should respond “**2C**”, initiating the “*Garbage*” Stayman convention, identical to that which is done in the case of regular Stayman.
2. The ideal distributional pattern is, or nearly is, as shown here (short in Clubs):

4=4=4=1	5=4=4=0	4=5=4=0	4=4=5=0
xxxx	Kxxxx	Axxx	Qxxx
Axxx	(or) Kxxx	(or) xxxxx	(or) Qxxx
Qxxx	xxxx	Jxxx	Qxxxx
x	---	---	---
3. On his/her next turn to bid, Responder will simply “*pass*” any response (**2D**, **2H**, or **2S**) made by the Opener.

The main objectives for the Partnership are, to seek a more viable final contract, and to disturb the Opponents to the extent that they do not enter the auction or compete in any manner, believing that the invoking Partnership holds at least half of the total number of high-card points. When “*Garbage*” Stayman is used, the Opponents have to find a fit on the 2-level or higher, which can prove awkward, sometimes difficult, or even impossible.

“Garbage” Stayman, therefore, is more obstructive than constructive in nature.

B. A second alternate version of Stayman is known as “Crawling,” or “Creeping” Stayman. It is an extension (additional treatment) of “Garbage” Stayman. The name “Crawling” Stayman comes from the fact that the bidding “crawls” at the slowest possible pace as each Player takes multiple bids: (pass) – 1-NT – (pass) – “2C”; (pass) – “2D” – (pass) – “2H”; (pass) – 2S; (pass) – pass – (pass).

When, opposite Partner’s opening 1-NT call, Responder has a very weak hand with both Major suits, he/she, normally, can’t use Stayman, as it is required to have around 8 or more high-card points to use it, as discussed above. However if one’s Partnership decides to play “Crawling” Stayman, Responder can still bid “2C”, asking if Opener has a 4-card major. If Opener responds 2H or 2S, Responder is prepared to “pass.”

If Opener responds “2D,” denying a 4-card Major, a “2H,” bid by Responder, now becomes “Crawling” Stayman. The “2H” re-bid by Responder shows a weak 3-suiter short (fewer than 4-pieces) in diamonds. It demands that Opener chose between playing in 2H or in 2S. Playing “Crawling” Stayman, Opener must either “pass” 2H or “correct” to 2S, choosing his/her longer 3-card major if he/she is 3-2, else bid 2S if he/she is 3-3 in the Major suits.

<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
AJ	QXXX	AJX	QXXX	AJX	QXXX
AXX	JXXX	AX	JXXX	AXX	JXXX
KQXX	XX	KQXX	XX	KQXX	XX
KXXX	XXX	KXXX	XXX	KXX	XXX
1-NT	“2C”	1-NT	“2C”	1-NT	“2C”
“2D”	“2H”	“2D”	“2H”	“2D”	“2H”
Pass		2S		2S	

Yes, when using “Crawling” Stayman, the final contract is often in a 4-3, a so-called “Moysian” fit, but the weaker Responder’s hand, the more likely the final 2H or 2S contract is the preferred one over the alternate one of 1-NT.

Note: Using “Crawling” Stayman, Responder to a 1-NT opening by Partner can now bid “2C” when holding 5-5 in the Majors, resulting in possibly finding a 5-4 fit, but, at the very least, always ending up in at least a 5-3 fit.

Both “Garbage” and “Crawling” Stayman bids over a 2-NT opening bid, or over Opener’s “2C” opening followed by his/her re-bid of 2-NT, work the same way, but occur at the 3-level instead.

“Garbage” and “Crawling” Stayman, however, are not capable of being used after an opening 1-NT, opening 2-NT, or opening “2C” – 2-NT re-bid scenarios whenever “Puppet” Stayman is used by the Partnership in response to any of these opening sequences. In other words, the use of “Garbage” and “Crawling” Stayman and that of “Puppet” Stayman are usually mutually exclusive. This exclusivity can be eliminated if a Partnership using “Puppet” Stayman uses a “2C” Stayman request, if the Responder has fewer than Game-going high-card point values, and a “3C” Stayman request, when holding Game-going values.