

“NAMYATS”

The benefit of “NAMYATS” (“Stayman” spelled in reverse) is to differentiate between a strong distributional hand (based upon losing trick count, strength, and distribution), which may provide a Slam opportunity with less Opponent interference, and a pre-emptive bid which has no Slam opportunity. “NAMYATS” is an artificial convention which employs an opening bid of “4C” or “4D” used to signify a good hand with 7 (+) cards in length in either Hearts or Spades, respectively. Opener's hand should hold 8 or 8½ playing tricks with good honors in the referenced Major suit, usually accompanied by an outside Ace or King. Conversely, an opening bid of 4H or 4S shows a weak pre-emptive hand not meeting these criteria, and is purely pre-emptive and defensive. Before deciding to open with the NAMYATS convention, it is of the utmost importance that the Opener recognizes the quality and shape of the hand and distinguishes between a pre-emptive opening and a NAMYATS opening. The following two examples should clarify this point.

Hand 1

♠ 4
♥ AQJ98643
♦ 75
♣ 93

4♥: Pre-empt in Hearts

Hand 2

♠ 4
♥ AKQJ9864
♦ 7
♣ AJ3

4♣: NAMYATS for Hearts

The difference in the bidding between a normal pre-empt and a NAMYATS transfer is the quality of the long suit in addition to the number of Losing Tricks. With **Hand 1**, the correct procedure would be to open 4H since the quality of the holding is less superior to Hand 2, and because the holding contains at least six losers. The general consensus is that to invoke NAMYATS, the holding should contain no more than five Losing Tricks. Since **Hand 2** is stronger in the long suit and contains only four Losing Tricks, and to give Partner a better informative description of the winning trick ability of the hand, the Opener would bid “4C,” transferring his Partner to Hearts. Even if the Partner has already “*passed*,” he/she still may have 2 Aces, or 1 Ace and the King of Clubs, which would put the Partnership in Slam territory.

The decision can be made by the Partner to allow the NAMYATS Bidder to become the Declarer. The Partner simply bids the next higher-ranking suit to indicate that he has no Slam interest, and that he would rather that the NAMYATS Bidder be the Declarer. If, on the other hand, the Partner has reasons to believe that it would be better for him/her to become the Declarer, and he/she has no Slam interest, then he/she simply bids “4” of the suit indicated. For example, if the Partner has a tenace to protect, or a King small in one or more of the side suits, it would be preferable if the Partner were to become the Declarer.

As a defense against the NAMYATS convention, most Partnership understandings are that: A direct “double” of the NAMYATS bid is natural; i.e., a **Take-Out** for the alternate Major; and a delayed “double” of the final contract is for Penalty.