

The Use of “Puppet Stayman” Over a 2-NT Opening

There are two main reasons to consider using Puppet Stayman as opposed to regular Stayman. Firstly, and most importantly, opposite any No-Trump opening, when Responder seeks a Major suit Golden Fit through the use of the standard Stayman System, almost 60% of the time, Opener has either no 4-card Major, else the opposite one sought by the Responder. As a result, the Partnership winds up in a final No-Trump contract with Opener’s (Declarer’s) hand, the supposed concealed hand, having disclosed the presence or absence of his/her Major suit holdings. *Puppet Stayman overcomes this to some extent by hiding Opener’s Major suit holding in most of its bidding sequences.*

Secondly, hands of 20-21-22 HCP’s (Subject to Partnership agreement), and holding a 5-card Major (Hearts or Spades), are too strong for a **1H** or **1S** opening, and not strong enough for a “**2C**” opening in standard bidding methods. Many Players, therefore, include them in the group of hands that open **2-NT**. *Thus, many Players use Puppet Stayman over a 2-NT opening, even though they might not use it over a 1-NT opening, so as to be able to uncover this, previously hidden 5-card Major suit, if present.*

This Modified “Puppet Stayman” system of bids is as follows:

| <u>Opener</u> | <u>Responder</u> |
|---------------|---|
| 2-NT | Pass |
| 3H | “3D” = A Transfer to Hearts (5 or more Hearts) “Pass,” (3-NT “Check Back”), else 4H – (Dependent upon Point Count and whether 6 or more Hearts) |
| 3S | “3H” = A Transfer to Spades (5 or more Spades) “Pass,” (3-NT “Check Back”), else 4S – Dependent upon Point Count and whether 6 or more Spades) |
| | 3-NT = To Play with no interest in Opener’s Major suit holding |
| | “3C” = Seeking info about Opener's Major suit holdings |
| | 3-NT = Denying both 4- or 5-card Major |
| | or 3H = Showing a 5-card Heart suit 4H = To Play, else 3-NT |
| | or 3S = Showing a 5-card Spade suit 4S = To Play, else 3-NT |
| | “3C” = Seeking info about Opener's Major suit holdings |
| | “3D” = Holding one 4-card Major, and denying any 5-card Major |
| | “3H” = Showing 4-Spades and fewer than 4-Hearts |
| | 4S = Evidencing 4-Spades - to Play, else 3-NT |
| | or “3S” = Showing 4-Hearts and fewer than 4-Spades |
| | 4H = Evidencing 4-Hearts - to Play, else 3-NT |
| | or “4C” = No 5-card Major, but showing both 4-Hearts and 4-Spades |
| | 4H or 4S |