

THE “SMOLEN” CONVENTION

Opposite Partner’s opening bid of 1-NT, evidencing 15-17 HCP’s in **Standard American (S.A.)**, and 12-14 HCP’s in “**ACOL**”, both the **Stayman** and **Jacoby Transfer** Conventions are employed by Responder in an attempt to seek a Major suit Golden Fit. If the Responder holds game values, but with a 5-4 distribution, or even a 6-4 distribution, in both Major suits, the Responder will, preferentially, use the Stayman convention (Stayman always takes precedent over Jacoby Transfers), since a 4-4 Major suit, Golden Fit is, most times, shown to be preferable to a 5-3, or a even a 6-2, fit.

If the response by the No-Trump bidder to Responder’s “2C” Stayman call is “2D”, denying a 4-card Major suit, then, *using standard bidding*, a continuance by Responder bidding the longer Major suit at the 3-level, is game-forcing, and shows at a 5-card Major suit, (11+ HCP’S in S.A., and 14 + HCP’s in ACOL). When this occurs, however, the transfer advantage has been lost, and the weaker of the two holdings becomes the Declarer, should the Major suit fit be found. Instead of concealing certain tenaces, such as King-Jack or Ace-Queen, these tenaces are, thus, revealed to the Defenders, providing them with additional defensive advantages, as the stronger hand becomes the Dummy and is exposed.

When the Partnership employs the “**SMOLEN**” **CONVENTION**, however, this disadvantage is eliminated. Designed specifically for this situation, the Responder will now jump to the 3-level in the shorter (4-card) Major suit (*an alertable call*). It is this jump which shows a 4-card suit in the Major suit bid and a 5-card, or a 6-card or longer, holding in the alternate un-bid Major. Using this data and the steps denoted in this system, as shown in the S.A. examples below, the No-Trump bidder, the Partner holding the usually stronger hand, then becomes the Declarer, which is the intention of the Smolen Convention.

(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
A74	K9865	A7	K9865	A7	K985	A74	K984
A76	K984	A76	K984	A76	K9842	A7	K98432
Q843	K7	Q843	K7	Q843	K7	Q843	K7
AK8	QJ	AK85	QJ	AK85	QJ	AK85	Q
1-NT	“2C”	1-NT	“2C”	1-NT	“2C”	1-NT	“2C”
“2D”	“3H”	“2D”	“3H”	“2D”	“3S”	“2D”	“3S”
4S	P	3-NT	P	4H	P	3-NT	“4D”
(Smolen finding a) (5-3 Spade Fit)		(Smolen finding no) (Major Suit Fit)		(Smolen finding a) (5-3 Heart Fit)		(Use of Smolen + a Transfer) (With a 6-4 Distribution)	

(5)		(6)		(7)	
<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>	<u>Opener</u>	<u>Responder</u>
AK7	Q9865	AQ3	K985	AK	Q9865
A7	K984	AQ5	K9842	A7	K984
AJ43	97	KJ43	87	AJ43	97
AJ85	Q4	AK8	Q7	AJ852	Q4
2-NT	“3C”	“2C”	“2D”	2-NT	“3C”
“3D”	“3H”	2-NT	“3C”	“3D”	“3H”
4S	P	“3D”	“3S”	3-NT	
(Smolen finding a) (5-3 Spade Fit)		(Use of Smolen finding a) (5-3 Heart Fit)		(Smolen finding no) (Major Suit Fit)	