

## Responding to one no trump

### General Approach

The response structure to one no trump is one area where a partnership can agree to play their own methods. If there were a 'best' set of responses, we'd all be playing them and the truth is that most partnerships are playing their own flavour. What is important is that you know what you are playing.

The response structure given would be familiar to most American experts (but not Scottish ones) and is quite different from the simple Stayman and transfers that you will have been taught. It includes 5-card Stayman, because we happily open one no trump with a 5-card major.

The basic responses are:

2C Stayman. We use Stayman when we have

- (i) a weak hand with both majors
- (ii) an invitational hand with one or two four-card majors
- (iii) a game-forcing hand with two four-card majors
- (iv) a game-forcing hand with one four-card major and a longer minor
- (v) a game-forcing hand with a 5+ major AND a four-card major

**We do not use Stayman with a game-forcing hand with one 4-card major when we are just looking for a major fit - use 5-card Stayman with this hand**

2D Transfer to hearts. A new suit at the three-level is game forcing.

2H Transfer to spades. A new suit at the three-level is game forcing.

2S Range enquiry or transfer to clubs with any strength  
We use the 2S response when we have an invitational hand without a 4-card major, essentially the same as the traditional 1NT-2NT sequence. The opener bids 2NT with a minimum opener or 3C with a maximum.

We also use the 2S response when we have a weak hand with clubs and when we have a strong hand with clubs, typically slam interest with a strong one-suited hand in clubs. You can show this hand by bidding SHORTAGE over opener's response.

2NT 5-card Stayman  
Opener bids his 5-card major or bids 3C without one. If responder has one four-card major, then you bid the OTHER MAJOR so that opener always plays the contract. For example, 1NT-2NT-3C-3S shows 4 hearts and denies 4 spades.

The advantage of this method is that opener does not reveal his major suit holdings

when you do not have a major-suit fit. For example, traditionally the auction may go 1NT-2C-2D-3NT and opener has denied both 4-card majors.

- 3C Transfer to diamonds. This is either weak (you will pass 3D) or a strong one-suited hand with some slam interest (you will bid major shortage or 3NT next)
- 3D 5-5 or better in the minors, game forcing. A rare bid but a difficult hand to show. If opener bids a major, it shows a stop and concern about the other major for no trump.
- 3H 1444 - exactly a singleton spade with a game forcing hand. Opener chooses best game.
- 3S 4144 - exactly a singleton heart with a game forcing hand. Opener chooses best game.
- 3NT To play
- 4C Gerber. Asks for aces with 4D=0 or 4, 4D=1, 4H=2, 4S=3
- 4D 5-5 majors. Opener chooses best game.
- 4H/4S To play

### Continuations after Stayman

- |     |        |   |
|-----|--------|---|
| 1NT | 2C     |   |
| 2D  | Pass   | I was looking to escape from one no trump   |
|     | 2H, 2S | To play. Normally shows a weak hand with 5M and 4OM   |
|     | 2NT    | Invitational, guarantees a 4-card major   |
|     | 3C, 3D | Natural, 5+ suit and 4-card major. Normally some concern about 3NT being the best contract  |
|     | 3M     | Game forcing with 5OM and 4M (known as Smolen)  |
|     | 3NT    | To play, normally has two four-card majors  |
| 1NT | 2C     |   |
| 2H  | 2S     | Invitational with 5 spades (rare)   |
|     | 2NT    | Invitational with 4 spades  |
|     | 3m     | Natural, 5+ suit and 4-card spades. Normally some concern about 3NT being the best contract |
|     | 3H     | Invitational  |
|     | 3S     | SLAM try in hearts, expecting opener to cue bid   |
|     | 3NT    | Natural   |
|     | 4m     | Splinter with 4+ hearts, slam invitational  |
|     | 4H     | To play   |

	4S	Splinter with 4+ hearts, slam invitational
	4NT	Quantitative. If you want to bid key-card, start with 3S.
1NT	2C	
2S	2NT	Invitational with 4 hearts
	3m	Natural, 5+ suit and 4-card hearts. Normally some concern about 3NT being the best contract
	3H	SLAM try in spades, expecting opener to cue bid
	3S	Invitational
	3NT	Natural
	4m	Splinter with 4+ spades, slam invitational
	4H	Splinter with 4+ spades, slam invitational
	4S	To play
	4NT	Quantitative. If you want to bid key-card, start with 3H.

### Continuations after major-suit transfers

Transfer breaks should be made on all hands with 4-card support. There are many ways of doing this but I recommend just breaking to the suit above. For example,

1NT	2D	
2S		4-card heart support, any range
	2NT	Any game invitation
	3C	Natural, game forcing, mild slam try
	3D	Retransfer to hearts, either to play or raise to game
	3H	4+ diamonds, game forcing, mild slam try
	3S	Splinter in spades, slam try
	3NT	Roman Key Card Blackwood (we do not play in no trump with a 9-card major fit)
	4m	Splinter, slam try
	4H	To play, does not really exist
1NT	2H	
2NT		4-card heart support, any range
	3m	Natural, game forcing, mild slam try
	3H	Retransfer to spades, either to play or raise to game
	3S	4+ hearts, slam try
	3NT	Roman Key Card Blackwood (we do not play in no trump with a 9-card major fit)
	4m	Splinter, slam try
	4H	Splinter, slam try
	4S	To play, does not really exist

## Continuations after 5-card Stayman

When opener has denied a five-card major, responder bids the major he does not hold to show a 4-card major and allow opener to play the 4-4 major suit fit when one exists.

Responder can bid 3D to show a (31)(45) hand, that is a hand with nine cards in the minors and major shortage. If opener is worried, he can relay to discover the singleton.

1NT	2NT	
3C	3H	Four spades, not four hearts (would have used 2C Stayman instead)
	3S	Four hearts, not four spades (would have used 2C Stayman instead)

1NT	2NT	
3C	3D	(I have 54/45 in the minors and a major shortage)
3NT		I don't care!
3H		Which singleton do you have
	3S	Heart singleton - 31(54)
	3NT	Spade singleton - 13(45)

## Competition

### Competition over Stayman

1NT	(P)	2C	(Dbl)
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Over a double, opener passes without a club stop and makes his normal response with a club stop. A redouble shows 5+ clubs and suggests playing in 2C-XX.

If opener passes, then responder can restart Stayman by redoubling.

Over a suit bid, double is takeout. Bidding a major directly shows a 5-card suit.

### Competition over red-suit transfer

If the transfer is doubled, then opener passes with two-card support, bids the transfer suit with 3-card support, and breaks with 4-card support. A redouble shows 5+ in the doubled suit and suggests playing the redoubled contract.

Over a suit bid, double is takeout.

### Competition over 2S range enquiry

If the 2S enquiry is doubled, then:

1NT	(P)	2S	(Dbl)
Pass			Nothing to say, typically no or poor spade stop
Redouble			5+ spades and interest in playing 2S-XX
2NT			Minimum, good spade stop
3C			Maximum, good spade stop