

WHEN TO USE PUPPET STAYMAN

With a good 5-card major (two of the top three honors [AKQ], or three of the top five honors [AKQJ10]) and 15-17 HCP, opener should bid the major suit rather than open 1NT.

With a poor 5-card major and 15-17 HCP, opener should open 1NT. The problem now is to determine when you and partner have a 5-3 fit in the major suit. Puppet Stayman is a convention that can be used to find such a fit.

To use Puppet Stayman, responder must have 10+ HCP and at least one 3- or 4-card major. (With a 5-card major responder will transfer into the major suit.) This bid should be alerted as Puppet Stayman and is game-forcing. Without a 3- or 4-card major and 10+ HCP, responder bids 3NT.

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Shows</i>
1NT	3♣!	3♦!	No 5-card major, at least one 4-card major
		3♥!	5 hearts
		3♠!	5 spades
		3NT!	No 4- or 5-card major

Responder now completely describes his hand in the next bid.

<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Shows</i>
1NT 3♦!	3♣! 3♥!/3♠!	Opener shows at least one 4-card major; responder shows 4 spades/4 hearts; (responder bids the other major so opener can remain declarer with a 4-4 fit in the major; responder holds fewer than 4 cards in the other major)
1NT 3♦!	3♣! 4♦!	Responder shows 4 hearts and 4 spades; allows opener to remain declarer in the 4-4 major, regardless of which it is
1NT 3♦!	3♣! 3NT!	Opener shows at least one 4-card major; responder has no 4-card major
1NT 3♥!/3♠!	3♣! 3NT!	Responder shows 3 spades and 2 or fewer hearts/3 hearts and 2 or fewer spades; (no 5-3 fit in the major)
1NT 3♥!/3♠!	3♣! 4♥!/4♠!	Opener shows 5 hearts/5 spades; Responder raises, showing 3+ hearts/3+ spades

Puppet Stayman can also be used over a 2NT opening. The bidding sequences are the same as above except responder needs only 5+ HCP to bid 3♣!.

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