

STAYMAN AUCTIONS

Barbara Seagram & Linda Lee



PRACTICE YOUR BIDDING

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PRACTICE YOUR BIDDING

The PRACTICE YOUR BIDDING Series

Jacoby 2NT Stayman Auctions
Roman Keycard Blackwood Jacoby Transfers
Splinter Bids Four-Suit Transfers
Practice Your Slam Bidding (CD-ROM)
Practice Your NT Bidding (CD-ROM)

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STAYMAN
AUCTIONS



section 1

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The purpose of this book is to help you and your partner practice Stayman auctions and better understand how they are used. The book has been designed so that it can be used either on your own or working with a partner. But while you will certainly get a lot out of it alone, it is especially good to use this book with your favorite partner to make sure that you are both on the same wavelength.

The first section of the book provides a refresher on the Stayman convention and Stayman auctions. It provides examples but no exercises. Don't worry, you will get plenty of chance to practice in the rest of the book. Since the meanings of certain Stayman sequences depend on the rest of your bidding system, we have assumed that you are playing Jacoby Transfers, Gerber, and Roman Keycard Blackwood (all these are explained in detail in other books in this series). While we have not used this approach in this book, you might be playing Four-way Transfers, which allow you to transfer to minors as well as majors (again, there is a separate book in this series on the topic). We will try to indicate some key areas that might be affected by this choice. For more explanations, and as a source of other helpful conventions, you can also refer to *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know*, by Barbara Seagram & Marc Smith, and *25 More Bridge Conventions You Should Know*, by Barbara Seagram & David Bird.

The last section of the book, 'Practice Hands', contains a set of forty pairs of North and South hands. You can print them out and use them for a partner to practice bidding (don't try to do more than ten at one sitting - that's more than enough to think and talk about at one time). We have provided space beside each hand to write down your auction; we suggest that you do this so

you can refer to it when you are looking at the answers. You can also do this solo if you like: look at each hand in turn and write down the bid you would make at each step of the auction. Getting to the right spot is not the only goal; bidding the hand in the best way is another goal, so even if you see both hands you will still need to work out the correct auction. When you have finished bidding the hands, look at the sample auctions and final contracts provided. This book uses Standard American bidding in the sample auctions. There may be more than one way to bid the hand, so don't worry if you don't duplicate our sequence exactly. Focus in particular on your use of Stayman, if it is appropriate, and the auction that follows, and make sure that you get that right.

There is an earlier section of the book, entitled 'Working Alone', which contains the same practice deals. In this section, we show you just one of the hands and ask you a series of questions about how to bid it as the auction develops. Working through these exercises will teach you a lot more about the convention, so even if you go through the practice deals with a partner, we suggest you go through the questions and try to answer them. This will help you to make sure that you understand the convention thoroughly.

A final warning: don't expect to be perfect. Some of these hands are hard. So if you are doing better at the end of the book than at the beginning, you are doing very well indeed.

section THE STAYMAN CONVENTION



1NT Auctions

When your partner opens the bidding with 1NT, you are usually the captain of the ship when it comes to the rest of the auction. You have been put in charge because you know so much about partner's hand. You know that he has a balanced hand and that his point range is 15-17 (or 16-18 or whatever your agreed notrump range happens to be). This means that by asking partner a few questions you can often determine the right contract. Over the years a number of special conventions have been developed that allow you to do just this. For the purposes of this book, we are going to assume that you play some of the most popular conventions in addition to Stayman, although it is perfectly possible to use Stayman without playing any other conventions. Even if you have a different set of understandings, Stayman will still work in much the same way, but some of the follow-on auctions will have different implications.

In all of the examples we are assuming that you are playing a 15-17 notrump opening. However, the Stayman convention will work just as well if you are playing a different point range; just adjust the range of the responses accordingly.

Why Use Stayman?

Suppose you have a hand like this:

♠ J743 ♥ 32 ♦ AKQ ♣ J542

And partner opens 1NT. If you simply bid 3NT on this hand, the opponents could easily take the first five heart tricks. However, if your partner has four spades, these will fit well with your four spades, and you will be able to control the hand better, since you will be able to ruff their heart winners after the first two rounds. When you have an eight-card fit, the major-suit game is a much safer and more desirable contract than 3NT.

How Stayman Works

When partner opens the bidding with 1NT, Stayman is a conventional bid of 2♣ that asks partner if he has a four-card major. It says nothing about clubs at all. You use the Stayman convention to locate an eight-card major-suit fit: that is its only purpose.

| Partner | You |
|----------------|------------|
| 1NT | 2♣ |

Partner now responds as follows:

- 2♦ – no four-card (or five-card) major
- 2♥ – four hearts (he may have four spades as well)
- 2♠ – four spades (and no four-card heart suit)

Notice that with both majors partner bids 2♥, his lower ranking major. As a result 2♠ denies a four-card heart suit. Notice also that partner has no choices – he responds with one of these bids based solely on his distribution. (Some people invert the responses and bid 2♠ with both majors, so that bidding 2♥ *denies* four spades. This will work just as well. Just make sure that you and partner are on the same wavelength.)

When Should You Use Stayman?

Stayman shows an invitational hand or better. If your notrump range is 15-17 then you should have at least 8 HCP to use Stayman. (There is one exception that we will discuss later.) You should also have a short suit, since if your hand is 4-3-3-3 this hand will likely play best in notrump – remember, partner also has a balanced hand. You should have at least one major that is exactly four cards long. (Most of the time you will start

SOUTH HANDS

Hand 36 - Dealer South

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-------|
| ♠ A K 7 4 | YOUR AUCTION | |
| ♥ K J 10 | NORTH | SOUTH |
| ♦ A 9 8 4 | | |
| ♣ J 2 | | |

Hand 37 - Dealer North

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------|-------|
| ♠ A J 10 9 | YOUR AUCTION | |
| ♥ 8 | NORTH | SOUTH |
| ♦ K Q 10 9 8 7 | | |
| ♣ Q 2 | | |

Hand 38 - Dealer South

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-------|
| ♠ A Q J | YOUR AUCTION | |
| ♥ Q J 10 | NORTH | SOUTH |
| ♦ K 10 8 3 2 | | |
| ♣ A 10 | | |

Hand 39 - Dealer North

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-------|
| ♠ K Q 9 6 | YOUR AUCTION | |
| ♥ K Q 4 | NORTH | SOUTH |
| ♦ 10 4 | | |
| ♣ A K 3 2 | | |

Hand 40 - Dealer South

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------|-------|
| ♠ A K 5 | YOUR AUCTION | |
| ♥ Q 9 8 | NORTH | SOUTH |
| ♦ A 10 9 8 3 | | |
| ♣ K 2 | | |

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more books in this
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Practice Your Notrump Bidding

PRACTICE YOUR BIDDING

STAYMAN AUCTIONS

With this handy little book, you can

- Learn a new convention, or extend your knowledge of it
- Learn and practice by yourself using the unique quiz format
- Practice with your partner using the specially selected example hands, and compare your results with the recommended auctions



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