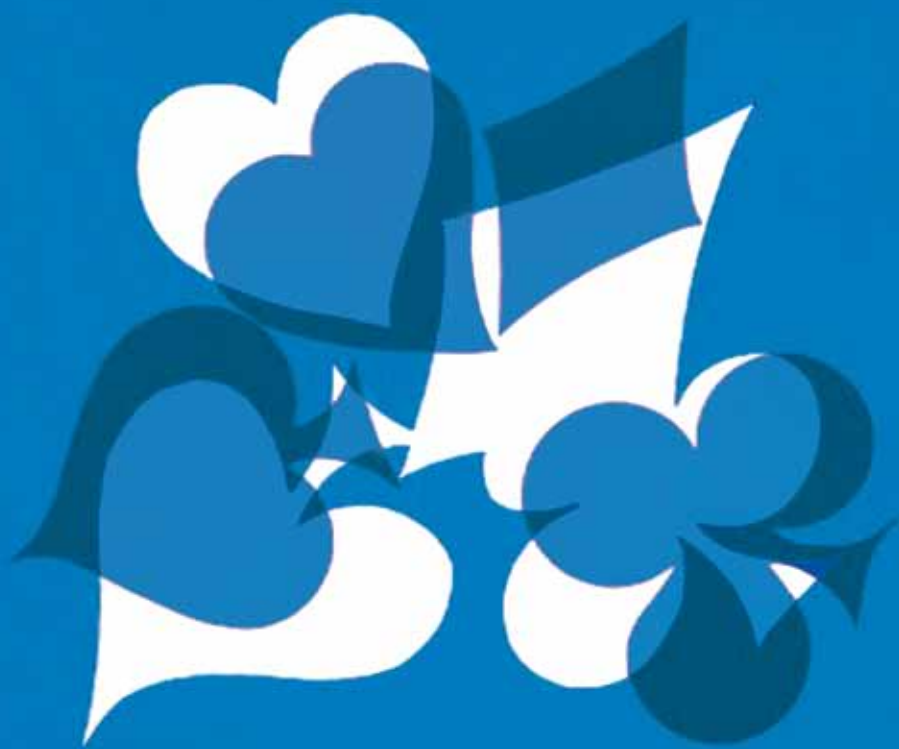


WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

SMOLEN

Patty Tucker



An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press

Text © 2014 Patty Tucker

All rights reserved.

Honors Books is an imprint of Master Point Press. All contents, editing and design (excluding cover design) are the sole responsibility of the author.

Master Point Press
331 Douglas Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5M 1H2 (416) 781-0351
Email: info@masterpointpress.com
www.masterpointpress.com
www.bridgeblogging.com
www.teachbridge.com
www.ebooksbridge.com

ISBN: 978-1-77140-509-6 (PDF)
978-1-77140-659-8 (EPUB)
978-1-77140-821-9 (MOBI)

Editing: Patty Tucker, Shaleen Baze and Frances Davis
Layout: Natalie Hynson
Cover Design: Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

eBooklets on Conventions After a Notrump Opening

Stayman

Jacoby Transfers

Texas Transfer

Smolen

Four-Suit Transfers

Three-level Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid

Three Spades over 2NT

Lebensohl

These booklets may be purchased as a single volume in digital or paper format under the title *Competitive Bidding*, one of eight books in Patty Tucker's Winning Bridge Conventions Series.

WINNING BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

SMOLEN

Patty Tucker



An Honors eBooklet from Master Point Press

Introduction

There are several different conventions that you can play in response to a one notrump opening bid or overcall. Conventions that will allow you to show:

- Weaker hands;
- Stronger high card point hands;
- More distributional hands;
- Hands with a four-card major;
- Hands with a five-card or longer major; and
- Hands with a six-card or longer minor.

There are tools that allow you to force the notrump opening bidder to become declarer, thus allowing responder to more fully describe their hand and conceal the stronger hand. They allow the opening lead to be made by the opening notrump bidder's left-hand opponent, in and of itself, a valuable advantage.

Some of those conventions and tools are discussed fully in this book. As you might expect, they are the conventions and tools I have found most useful.

Always remember that every time you add a convention you expect to lose some other bid AND that the additional conventions that you choose to adopt influence the rules of other conventions. You might ask, "Why would I do that? Why should I lose a

natural bid, to add an artificial bid?” The answer is simple...because it is valuable. As you work your way through this book you will find that the rules of the simplest and most common conventions – Stayman and Jacoby Transfers – will be adjusted as you add other conventions.

For example:

If you choose to adopt Smolen, then responder’s rebid after the initial Stayman bid, when he holds a five-card and a four-card major suit changes; or

If you choose to adopt Texas Transfers, then responder’s rebid after the initial Jacoby Transfer shows a different strength of hand; or

If you choose to adopt Four-Suit Transfers, then responder’s rebid after the initial Stayman bid will change on one specific type of hand.

As you add conventions to your toolbox, you and partner will need to decide which “tools” work best for you. What bids you are both willing to “lose” in order to better describe your hand when you decide to adopt different conventions.

I’ve included the conventions that I believe are worth the extra effort to learn and are worth the few bids that are lost.

Smolen

Smolen

When notrump is opened (or overcalled) it is important to find a 4/4 major fit if possible. As we all know a 4/4 fit plays at least one trick better than a 5/3 or 6/2 fit and sometimes even better than a 6/3 fit.

Smolen was invented by Mike Smolen and is a bid designed to allow you to investigate a 4/4 fit by bidding Stayman and, when a 4/4 fit is unavailable, to allow you and partner to still play your 5/3 or 6/2 fit with the NT opener as declarer. The conventions “Stayman” and “Jacoby Transfer” are still used after you add Smolen to your tool box.

Made by responder to a NT opener, Smolen is responder’s second bid, his “rebid”, after opener’s 2♦ response to Stayman. Responder will hold:

- At least 8 points (Assuming that your partnership is playing a strong NT system; if you and partner play a weak NT system you would adjust the points accordingly.); and
- One four-card major and one five-card or longer major.

However, if opener does not have a four-card major, responder (up to now) has been forced to bid their five-card major and often ends up playing the hand instead of the NT opener. It is also sometimes impossible for responder to show slammish hands versus simply game going hands.

Smolen fixes both of these potential problems. Here is how it works. After a Stayman bid and a 2♦ rebid by opener denying a four-card major, responder does not bid his five-card major but instead will bid his four-card major. The **level** at which responder bids describes the strength of his hand.

- The two-level shows 8-9 points.
- The three-level shows 10+ points.

Examples:

<u>Hand 1</u>		<u>Hand 2</u>		<u>Hand 3</u>		<u>Hand 4</u>	
North	South	North	South	North	South	North	South
1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣
2♦	<u>2♠</u>	2♦	<u>3♠</u>	2♦	<u>2♥</u>	2♦	<u>3♥</u>

Hand 1 – 2♠ shows four spades, five hearts and 8-9 points, invitational values.

Hand 2 – 3♠ shows four spades, five hearts and 10+ points, game values or more.

Hand 3 – 2♥ shows four hearts, five spades and 8-9 points, invitational values.

Hand 4 – 3♥ shows four hearts, five spades and 10+ points, game values or more.

You may use this bid after a 1N overcall. You can also use this bid after a 2N opening bid though, obviously, only with a hand willing to play game.

After a 3-level Smolen bid the NT opener will decide whether to play responder's long suit or whether to play 3NT. This decision will be based on whether he has three cards in responder's suit. If he has three cards he will bid 4♥/4♠.

After a 2-level Smolen bid, the NT opener will have two decisions to make. Opener will choose either suit or NT and either game or part-score.

The decision between suit or NT will be based on whether he has three cards in responder's suit. If he has three cards he will bid partner's five-card suit - ♥/♠. If he does not have three cards, he will probably bid NT.

Opener's second decision will be at what level he would like to play. This decision will be based on the strength of his NT opening bid. With 15 points he will likely stay at the part score level - 2NT or 3♥/3♠. With 16-17 points he will likely bid game - 3NT or 4♥/4♠.

Notes:

- Some players only play Smolen at the three-level which shows the values for game or higher and do not play Smolen at the two level showing invitational values. You can choose whether or not to play invitational Smolen by partnership agreement.
- If you choose to play invitational Smolen, you cannot play Stayman with a weak hand. With a hand that has less than invitational values (8 points) with:

The *'Winning Bridge Conventions'* Series

Competitive Doubles	(Print / eBook)
Takeout Doubles	(eBooklet)
Negative Doubles	(eBooklet)
Responsive Doubles and Snapdragon Doubles	(eBooklet)
Balancing Doubles and Re-opening Doubles	(eBooklet)
Support Doubles	(eBooklet)
Maximal Doubles	(eBooklet)
Conventions after a Notrump Opening	(Print / eBook)
Stayman	(eBooklet)
Jacoby Transfers	(eBooklet)
Texas Transfer	(eBooklet)
Smolen	(eBooklet)
Four-Suit Transfers	(eBooklet)
Three-level Responses to a 1NT Opening Bid	(eBooklet)
Three Spades over 2NT	(eBooklet)
Lebensohl	(eBooklet)
Conventions after a Major Suit Opening	(Print / eBook)
Bergen Raises	(eBooklet)
Help Suit Game Tries	(eBooklet)
Splinter Bids	(eBooklet)
1NT Forcing	(eBooklet)
Jacoby 2NT	(eBooklet)
Drury	(eBooklet)

Competitive Bidding	(Print / eBook)
Weak Two Bids	(eBooklet)
Preemptive Bidding	(eBooklet)
Michaels Cuebid	(eBooklet)
Unusual 2NT	(eBooklet)
Sandwich NT	(eBooklet)
Unusual vs. Unusual	(eBooklet)
Cuebidding in Competitive Auctions	(eBooklet)
Good/Bad 2NT	(eBooklet)
Conventions Useful with Strong Hands	(Print / eBook)
2NT Rebid by Opener	(eBooklet)
Jump Shift	(eBooklet)
Reverses	(eBooklet)
Strong 2♣ Convention and 2♦ Waiting	(eBooklet)
Cuebidding Controls	(eBooklet)
Gerber and Blackwood	(eBooklet)
Conventions Useful with 2/1	(Print / eBook)
1NT Forcing	(eBooklet)
Inverted Minors	(eBooklet)
Two-Way Checkback	(eBooklet)
Fourth Suit Forcing	(eBooklet)
2/1 Review Hands	(eBooklet)
Slam Bidding Conventions	(Print / eBook)
Serious 3NT	(eBooklet)
Cuebidding Controls	(eBooklet)
Roman Key Card Blackwood	(eBooklet)
Kickback Key Card	(eBooklet)
Defensive Carding & Opening Leads	(Print / eBook)

Smolen

Bridge students quickly discover that ‘basic’ bidding’ will only get them so far. If they really want to improve, it is necessary to master a certain number of bidding conventions, and be prepared both to play them and play against them. This ebooklet covers the Smolen convention.



PATTY TUCKER (Dunwoody, Georgia)

is an ABTA Master Bridge Teacher and cofounder of Whirlwind Bridge and Atlanta Junior Bridge. Her success at the bridge table culminated in her victory in the 2000 Baldwin Flight A North American Open Pairs with long-time bridge partner Kevin Collins. Patty and Kevin were married in 2006.