

FOREWORD BY EDDIE KANTAR

25

BRIDGE CONVENTIONS

YOU

SHOULD KNOW

BARBARA SEAGRAM & MARC SMITH





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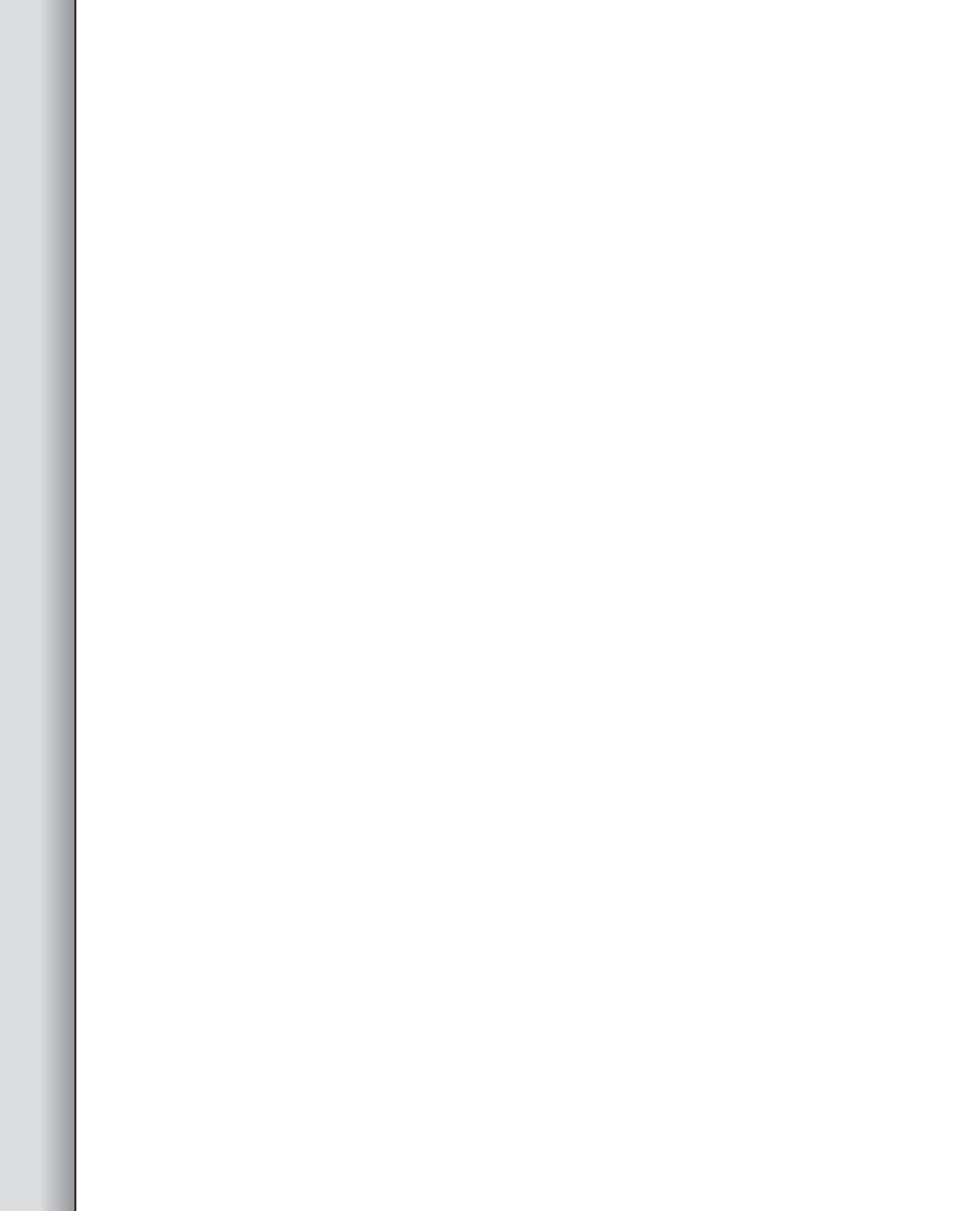
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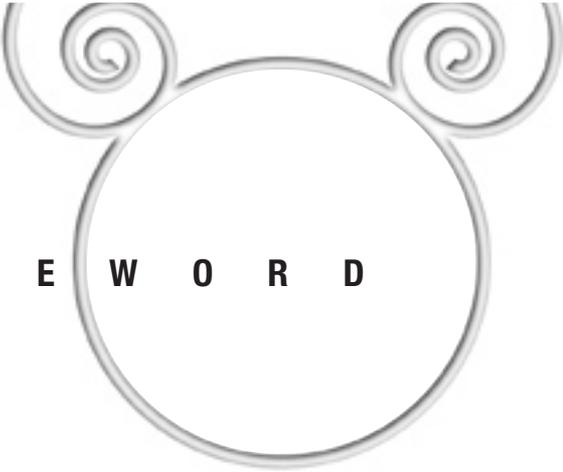
To my wonderful husband, Alex Kornel — my partner in life, in business, and at the table — with all my love.

Barbara

To the most important people in my life: my wife Charlotte, my dog Georgio, and all the bridge partners who have patiently suffered my idiosyncracies over the years.

Marc





F O R E W O R D

I have just read a good bridge book, a very good bridge book — the one you have in your hands. I don't know whether everyone who writes a foreword reads the book as thoroughly as I have this one, but I did, and you have a treat in store for yourself.

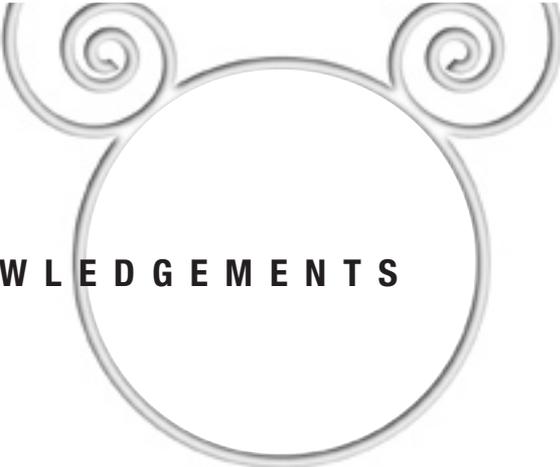
You are about to familiarize yourself with twenty-five of the most popular and useful bidding conventions described succinctly, simply, and clearly — very clearly. Barbara Seagram and Marc Smith, a Canadian and a Brit, an unlikely pairing, have come up with a winner.

My gut feeling is that a reader who knows nothing or next to nothing about the convention being explained will leave the chapter thinking he or she can play the convention. It doesn't get any better than that.

In addition to the clarity of the explanations, and to my mind the most important feature of the book, a review-type quiz follows each chapter which further hammers home the important concepts. The summary of the main points contained in the chapter, which is laid out neatly before each quiz, is the icing on the cake.

I'm a bridge teacher and I'm going to recommend this book to my students. What more can I say other than that by hook or by crook you should make sure your partner also has a copy of this book? It still takes two to tango.

Eddie Kantar



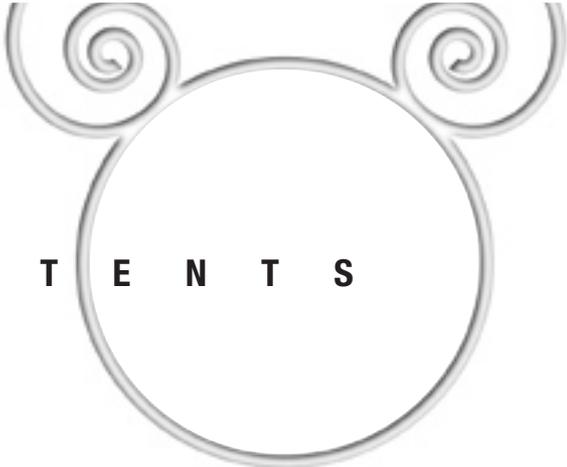
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to an incredible teacher, Michael Davey, who taught me to love this game; to my dear friend and mentor, Eddie Kantar, whose books, friendship and humor have inspired my teaching for twenty years; to Alan LeBendig, the kindest and best friend ever, who is always there to give advice, wisdom and support; and to a great lady, Kate Buckman, who started the Kate Buckman Bridge Studio in Toronto in 1958 and who invited me to work for her in 1975; Kate taught me the magic of running a bridge club. My sincere thanks to all the thousands of students and members of our Studio who have taught me to learn and who have been so supportive over all the years. And last but not least, my thanks to our editor, Ray Lee, who made this book possible.

Barbara Seagram

I'd like to thank Eddie Kantar for his kind words in the Foreword, and for his many helpful suggestions on the manuscript. Eddie's comments were particularly useful in regard to the example hands, a number of which were improved considerably as a result of his input.

Marc Smith



C O N T E N T S

Section 1 Learn these first

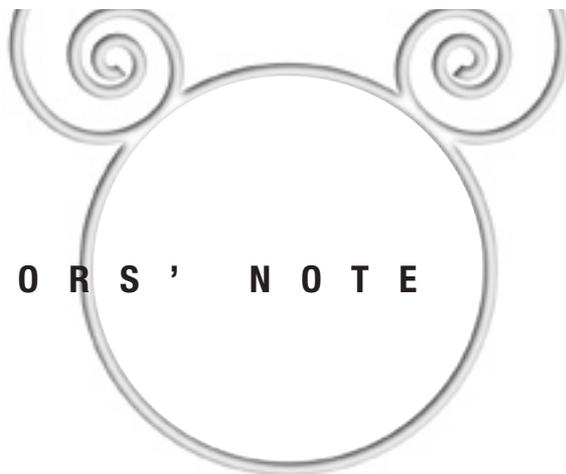
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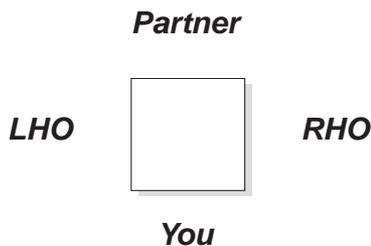
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A U T H O R S ' N O T E

In the course of this book, we frequently refer to ‘points’. If you are bidding notrump, then this means high-card points (HCP) since you cannot count distribution for notrump purposes. However, when bidding suits, ‘points’ means total points (HCP + distributional points) unless we specifically say ‘HCP’.

The opposition are referred to as LHO (left-hand opponent) and RHO (right-hand opponent). When partner opens the bidding, RHO bids next, then you, followed by LHO, and then partner again. If in doubt, refer to this diagram:



Throughout this book, you will see the terms ‘natural’ and ‘artificial’. Describing a bid as natural means that, for instance, if you bid spades, it shows spades. An artificial (or conventional) bid, on the other hand, is quite different. For example, you might make a conventional club bid, and doing so may say nothing about your club holding. Your bid could show both majors, or ask your partner a question about his hand, or mean something else entirely, but it does not necessarily show the suit you have actually bid — hence the term ‘artificial’.

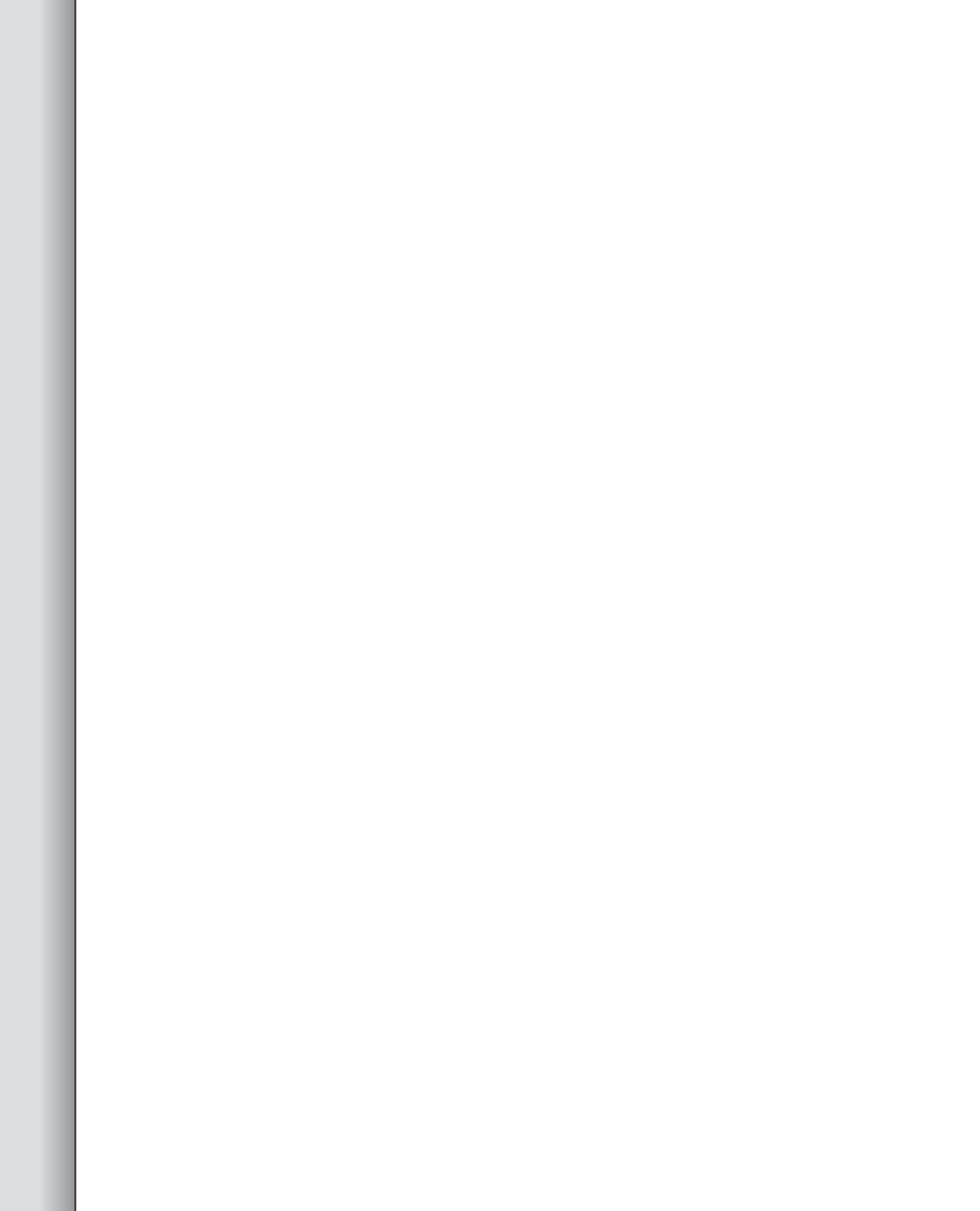
Finally, we apologize to the politically correct amongst you for using the male pronoun exclusively throughout the book, for convenience. At all times you can assume that ‘he’ means ‘he or she’.

A decorative horizontal border featuring a central oval containing the number '1'. On either side of the oval are circular icons: a heart on the left and a spade on the right. The background is filled with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns.

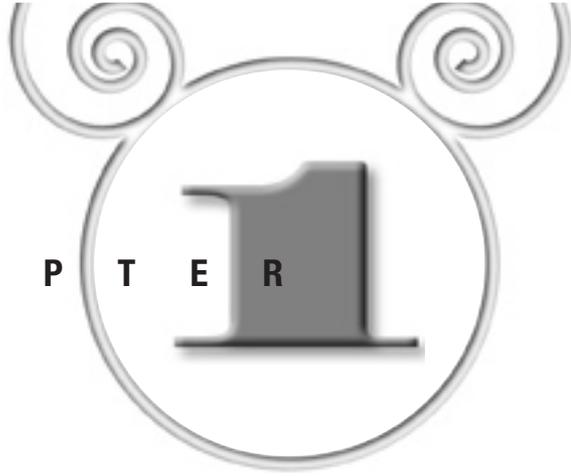
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**LEARN THESE
FIRST**





C H A P T E R



*STAYMAN 2♣ response
to a 1NT opening*

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

♥ **Samuel M. Stayman** (1909-1993) was Life Master #48. He first described the convention that bears his name in 1945 in an article in *The Bridge World*, but it was actually invented by his partner, **George Rapee!** Stayman was world champion three times, and won twenty North American championship titles. The Stayman convention is one of only two (Blackwood being the other) that are used in some form by just about every partnership from beginners to world champions.

The Stayman convention allows you to find 4-4 major suit fits after you or your partner has opened 1NT and helps you to choose the right contract with a five-card major and invitational values. Major suits usually play better than notrump when you have at least an 8-card fit.

Stayman is a 2♣ response to an opening 1NT bid that has nothing to do with clubs, but instead asks opener — ‘Do you have a four-card major?’

Partner	You
1NT	2♣

BY THE WAY

Note that there are two main ways of playing Stayman, and both work equally well provided that both you and partner know which one you are using. If you prefer to play that a 2♥ response shows four hearts and denies four spades, and that 2♠ shows four spades and may also have four hearts, there's nothing wrong with that. In this book, we assume you are playing the set of responses we recommend in the text.



Opener's responses are easy to remember:

- 2♦ 'I have no four-card major'
- 2♥ 'I have four hearts and I may also have four spades'
- 2♠ 'I have four spades but I do not have four hearts'

NO OTHER RESPONSES ARE ALLOWED

When can I use Stayman?

Once you have bid Stayman, you have committed your partnership to getting at least as high as 2NT. Since partner's 2♦ response doesn't promise diamonds, you can't just pass it out of fright! The basic requirements are:

- 8+ high-card points (i.e. at least invitational values)
- at least one four-card major
- a short suit (i.e. you should not use Stayman with 4-3-3-3 shape)

Stayman on game-forcing hands

If you have a hand with enough values to bid game, and one or two 4-card majors, Stayman is an invaluable tool to help you decide on the right contract over partner's 1NT opening. If he responds showing a fit in a four-card major that you own, then you raise to game in that suit. If he responds 2♦ denying a major, you bid 3NT. Whatever happens, you will reach the best game.

With two four-card majors, opener should convert to your known suit if necessary. Suppose his hand is:

♠ A J 6 2 ♥ K Q 5 2 ♦ K Q 5 ♣ 7 3

Partner

1NT

2♥

4♠

You

2♣

3NT

pass

BY THE WAY

This auction illustrates that it is on the second round of bidding that you tell partner which level is appropriate for your combined values. Here, you want to play in game but have no slam interest, so you jump right to game. You should have a hand worth about 11-15 points.

