

Have Your Cake and Eat It Too

Do you ever have trouble deciding when to use Stayman and when to use the Jacoby transfer? Students have trouble deciding when they are responding with a 4-card **and** a 5-card major. They sometimes ask me, "which convention should I use?" I say, "start with Stayman then show your 5-card major if necessary."

Take a look at this hand:

Dealer: North Vul: None Opening Lead: ♣K	North ♠10832 ♥AKJ63 ♦Q2 ♣64	East ♠K9 ♥972 ♦K853 ♣J953
West ♠J654 ♥Q54 ♦1064 ♣KQ7	South ♠AQ7 ♥108 ♦AJ97 ♣A1082	

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♦ ⁽²⁾
Pass	3♥ ⁽³⁾	Pass	3NT ⁽⁴⁾
All Pass			

- (1) When partner opens 1NT your first job is to count your points. This tells you whether your hand is strong enough to force to game; invite to game; or settle for part score. Since the opening is limited to a 3 point range (15 to 17 points), it's pretty easy to handle the math and make the determination. In the hand above, North has 10 HCP so he must force the auction to game. Normally, the responder assumes the captaincy and places the contract. Yet, sometimes he needs the cooperation and input from the opener. Whenever the responder holds a 4-card major he is going to use Stayman. When he holds a 5-card

major he will transfer into it, **but in the case where he holds both a 4-card and a 5-card major he starts with Stayman.** If opener bids a major he has located an 8 or 9-card fit and bids game in that major.

- (2) South doesn't have a 4-card major and so he shows that by rebidding 2♦. At this point he assumes that North holds one or both 4-card majors.
- (3) Here's where North gets tricky. Since he holds both a 4-card and 5-card major he doesn't place the contract at 3NT as he would with only 4-card majors. He bids his 5-card major next, in case partner holds three cards in the suit. Since North would not have used Stayman with less than 8 points, he must have either an invitational or game going hand. He shows that distinction by bidding either at the invitational 2-level or the forcing 3-level. In this hand, North rebids 3♥ to say, "I have exactly 5 hearts, 4 spades and 10 or more points." This demonstrates the effectiveness of the notrump toolbox. When the opening is 1NT there is usually the correct tool available to get the necessary messages across.
- (4) South doesn't have 3 hearts. If he did he would have rebid 4♥. Therefore, he stops at 3NT, knowing that there isn't an eight card major suit fit. If North was thinking about slam he could continue, but in this deal he passes.

West has a problem with the opening lead. Normally, he would lead low from one of his 4-card suits, but they are the 2 majors that were bid (or implied) by the dummy. It might be right to lead a major anyway, but he chose to make the safe lead of the ♣K, giving nothing away. South ducked and West switched to a spade after seeing dummy's spades were not strong at all. East put up the ♠K, won by South's ♠A. The declarer successfully finessed the ♥Q taking all 5 hearts. He gave up the ♦K, but took 2 diamonds, the ♠A and the ♣A for a total of 10 tricks.

When you hold an invitational or better hand opposite partner's 1NT opening, and you hold 4-5 in the majors, get the best of both worlds by starting with Stayman and rebidding the other suit at the appropriate level,

**depending on partner's answer to the Stayman question.
It's like having your cake and eating it too.**