

PuPpEt Stayman

A Basic Standard Version and Two Modern Ones

Presented by Mike Savage

2NT – Here’s a standard basic version of Puppet Stayman.

3C = Asks if opener has a five-card major.

3D = Shows no five-card major but has at least one four-card major.

3H/3S = Shows 4 cards in the other major—so the big hand will always be declarer.

3NT = Denies a four-card major and is to play.

4C = Gerber (some partnerships play 4C as 4-4 in the majors with slam interest).

4D = Shows two four-card majors.

3H/3S = Shows five cards in the bid major.

3NT = Denies either a five-card or four-card major.

3D/3H = Jacoby Transfer to hearts/spades.

3S = Minor Suit Stayman.

3NT = To play.

2NT—**Shown here is a more recent version of Puppet Stayman.**

3C = Asks if opener has a five-card major.

3D = No five-card major (regardless if he *has* or doesn't have a four-card major).

3H/3S = Shows four cards in the other major.

3NT = To play.

4C/4D = Shows at least a five-card minor (often longer) with slam interest.

4H/4S = Shows a stiff or void in the bid major with both minors and slam interest.

3H/3S = Shows a five-card major.

4C/4D = Shows at least a five-card minor (often longer) with slam interest.

3NT = Shows a maximum and no four-card major.

3D/3H = Jacoby Transfer to hearts/spades.

3S = Relay to 3NT, to play (After 3NT, your partnership *can* assign meanings to 4C, 4D, 4H & 4S).

3NT = Bid with two four-card majors (some 5-4s) & asks opener to bid a 4-card major or pass.

Playing both of these versions of Puppet Stayman, the downside is you *may* miss 4-4 heart fits when responder has five spades and four hearts. The *advantage* of playing this newer version of Puppet Stayman is that the big hand does not disclose if it has a 4-card major, unless there is a guaranteed 4-4 fit.

With five spades and four hearts, responder has a choice of flawed options. He can bid Stayman (3NT) and perhaps miss a 5-3 spade fit or transfer to spades and then bid 3NT (not showing the heart suit).

Coping with 5-4 in the majors at the 3-level, allows 4C & 4D to be natural bids—after bidding 3C first.

Finally, here’s a simple version of Puppet Stayman (from Romex) that seems the best of the three.

It finds all eight and nine-card major suit fits at the 3-level and allows the 2NT opener to be the declarer.

3C = Asks if opener has either a five-card major or four hearts.

3D = Denies having a five-card major or four hearts.

3H asks if opener has four spades (**3S** shows four spades, **3NT** denies four spades).

3S shows five spades and four hearts (opener bids **3NT** or **4S** with three or four spades).

3NT is to play.

Optional: Reverse 3S & 3NT: **3S** = relay to **3NT** and **3NT** = 5-4 in the majors (so opener plays *any* spade fit).

3H = Shows either four or five hearts.

3S = Asks how many hearts opener has (**3NT** shows four hearts, **4H** shows five hearts).

3S = Shows five spades.

3NT = Shows 4-4 in the majors and responder will pass or correct (transfers can be used).

3D/3H = Transfers to **3H** and **3S**, showing at least a five-card suit.