

Smolen

Major Suit Transfer Option after a Negative Response to Stayman

Presented by Mike Savage

Smolen was created to enable responder to a **1NT** opening—holding five-four in the majors and values for game—to still transfer into the no-trump opener’s hand even after using Stayman. **Smolen** is only played at the three-level as you must have game forcing values to use it. Here is how it works: after a **1NT** opening and a negative (**2D**) response to Stayman, responder makes a game-forcing jump to three of his *shorter* (four-card) major, promising five cards in the *other* major. Opener can be declarer in four of responder’s five-card major (by accepting the transfer option) when he *has* a three-card fit or in **3NT** when he doesn’t.

Playing Texas Transfers, if responder has a six-card major and a four-card major with values for game, he should bid Stayman over **1NT**, and over a negative (**2D**) response, he can still effect the transfer by jumping to **4D** with a six-card heart suit and **4H** with a six-card spade suit.

Smolen can also be used over **2NT** or **2C**, followed by a **2NT** rebid. Again, after standard Stayman and a negative response (now **3D**), responder simply bids three of his *shorter* major, promising at least five cards in the *other* major. The responses are just the same as the basic responses over **1NT**, shown above. With six-four in the majors, responder bids Stayman and over the negative response (**3D**), he bids three of his *four*-card major. If partner bids **3NT**, showing only two cards in responder’s six-card major, responder can still force opener to declare in his major by bidding **4D**, using it as an artificial bid, forcing opener to bid four of responder’s known longer major.

Basic Standard Structure:

1NT-2C-2D: **3H** = Shows five spades and four hearts with at least values for game.

3S = Shows five hearts and four spades with at least values for game.

Responses over either bid:

3NT = Denies three-card support for responder’s longer major.

4C = Gerber.

Bid of responder’s longer major (3S or 4H) = Shows 3-card support.

4D or 4H = **Texas Transfer** into the designated six-card major.

2NT-3C-3D: **3H** = Shows five or more spades and four hearts with at least values for game.

3S = Shows five or more hearts and four spades with at least values for game.

Responses over either bid:

3NT = Denies 3-card support for responder’s longer major.

4C = Gerber.

4D = Forces opener to bid four of responder’s longer major.

Bid of responder’s longer major (3S or 4H) = Shows 3-card support.

Optional Suggestions:

1. When playing **Smolen**, after **1NT-2D-3H/3S**: when opener has a 3-card fit in responder’s longer major, you could play **4C** by opener as an artificial bid showing a maximum and a good fit.
2. After **1NT-2C-2D-3H/3S-3NT**: you can play **4C** and **4D** as shown above or you could just play **4C** and **4D** as natural bids. If you like transfers, you could still play **4C** as Gerber but use **4D** to show *clubs*, **4H** to show *diamonds*. Either way, bidding the next higher suit would be Six Key Roman Key-card (for responder’s 5-card major and 4-card minor) while **4NT** would be to play.