

## Lesson 2 – Using “StayJac” Responding to 1NT Opening using Stayman & Jacoby

Important: These rules apply when your partner **opened** the bidding with 1NT. This lesson explains how the **responder** should bid.

Responder should count points as HCP (High Card Points) and consider length pts. Count total points and put your hand into one of these three categories:

<b>Points</b>	<b>Game level?</b>
0-7	Partscore only, game level is very unlikely
8-9	Invitational hand, game level is possible if partner has 16-17 HCP
10+	Game level in a major or NT is reachable with 25-26 points; Responder is responsible for communicating the point count; game level in a minor requires 29+ points

The responder to a 1NT opening bid is designated the “*Captain*.” The responder is steering this ship, so to speak. The responder is the one with the most responsibility to ensure the partnership gets to the best level that is attainable.

**Important note:** When you are using Stayman and Jacoby, all the 2-level suit bids are codes. None of them mean the suit bid. I tell my students, “Think of the 1NT opening bid as a fire engine with lights flashing and sirens on. Both of you need to be on high alert to what comes next!”



This lesson may seem somewhat complicated, but as you play more and practice these bids several times, you will find that it becomes much easier. The bids may have to be memorized to start, but you will find they actually make a lot of sense. You are conveying information to each other in the hopes of finding the best contract. By using these two techniques, you are trying to ensure that the stronger hand (Opener with 15-17 HCP) becomes the Declarer and the weaker hand becomes the Dummy hand (exposed to the opponents). Also, by using Stayman, you can find an 8-card fit in trump when you both have 4 of a major.

I have found this to be one of the most difficult system of bids to introduce to beginners. That’s why I recommend learning the “Easy Way” first. However, Stayman and Jacoby are standard bidding conventions which are widely used so it is important for beginners to learn them as soon as possible.

### **Category 1 (0-7 HCP) – keep the bidding low:**

Within this point range, you will almost always **pass**. There is one exception: when you have a 5-card major. Then you should not pass, even with 0 points. As you gain more experience, you will be pleased to know, this rule will not change.

## **Jacoby Transfer (used whenever Responder has 5 or more of a major):**

To use this transfer technique, you must have 5 cards (or more) in a major suit and any number of points, even 0. Yes, **even with 0 points** you will demand that your partner bid in a suit! It is *usually* better to insist on a trump suit than to leave your partner in No Trump when you have a 5-card major. Jacoby Transfer is a **demand bid**. Responder is telling the Opener to bid a major and Opener must do as told!

**With 5+ hearts,** Responder bids **2♦**. Opener immediately says, "Transfer" so everyone knows that this is a transfer bid. As soon as the next player bids or passes, Opener must bid **2♥** (one rank up from Diamonds).

**With 5+ spades,** Responder bids **2♥**. Opener immediately says, "Transfer" and bids **2♠** (one rank up from Hearts) after opponent's turn.

**After transferring, Responder rebids as follows:** (yes, you should memorize this)

Pass with 0-7 points, bid 2NT with 8-9 points, or bid 3NT with 10+ pts.

With the minimum responding hand (0-7 pts), you cannot give your partner any options. You are better off in a trump suit, even if partner has a doubleton in that major. With a medium hand (8-9 pts) or a maximum hand (10+ pts), you can give your partner the option of staying in NT or choosing the major suit.

How does the opener decide? If the opener has only 2 cards in that suit, a NT contract can be a better choice, so s/he can pass. If the opener has 3-4 cards in that major suit, s/he has the choice to bid the suit, since you have shown 5 cards in that suit and s/he will know there is an 8-card fit.

Also, by bidding 2NT, you are showing 8-9 pts, so opener can bring it to game level if s/he has 17 points (maybe even 16, though that can be risky).

By bidding 3NT, you are showing 10+ points and opener can pass or bid **4♥** or **4♠** with 3 or 4 cards in your major suit.

\*Here is one exception when Responder bids **2♦** or **2♥** transferring to a 5-card major: If Opener has the maximum number of points (17) and the maximum number of cards (4) in the same major suit transfer by the Responder, s/he should **super-accept** the transfer and bid **3♠** or **3♥** immediately to show this maximum hand and the 9-card fit in trump. Then Responder can decide whether to bid to game level (**4♠** or **4♥**) or pass. With 9 trump together, you have extra strength, but with few points, it could still be difficult to take 10 tricks. Opener is inviting you to consider game level, but does not know whether you have 0 points or 7 points or more. If Opener does not super-accept immediately, Responder will pass with fewer than 8 points. That could make a big difference. If Responder has a singleton or a void and has points in the higher part of that range (5-7 pts), game level could be there. Judgment is needed.

Jacoby Transfer is used whenever the responder has a 5-card major. The 2<sup>nd</sup> call by responder (Pass, 2NT or 3NT) will show point count.

## **Category 2 (8-9 HCP) – invite to game:**

If your partner opens with 1NT and you have 8 points or more, you should bid. First to consider is bidding a 5-card major using Jacoby Transfer. The bidding for Jacoby transfer is detailed on Page 2.

With a balanced hand and no 4- or 5-card major, bid 2NT.

With a 4-card major, but no 5-card major, you will use Stayman.

### **Stayman Convention:**

***You must have 8+ HCP to use Stayman. Do not use with 0-7 pts.***

With 8 points or more and a 4-card major, you should explore the possibility that your partner might also have a 4-card major (8 cards together).

Bid **2♣** (Stayman). This is an artificial bid (code) and does not mean Clubs.

You are asking this question: "Do you have a 4-card major? If so, what is it?"

When you use Stayman, Opener knows that you have a 4-card major, but does not know in which suit. In fact, you may have 4 cards in both majors.

Opener will answer as follows:

**2♦** means "I do not have a 4-card major." This bid does not mean diamonds.

**2♠** means "I have 4 cards in spades and I do not have 4 cards in hearts."

**2♥** means "I have 4 cards in hearts and I may also have 4 cards in spades."

The next bidding sequences require analytical thinking.

Responder knows whether their 4-card majors are a match (8 cards together). If so, you have found your trump fit. With a fit, your next bid will be a pass or a raise in that suit to the 3 or 4 level depending on how many points you have.

If Opener does not have a 4-card major (i.e., responds **2♦**) or Opener's major is different from Responder's (therefore, you have not found an 8-card fit in a trump suit), then Responder's next bid is **2NT**. Opener then has the option of bidding 3NT with 17 pts. If Opener has 4 of both majors, and bids **2♥**, and Responder changes the bid to 2NT (showing 8-9 pts), Opener then knows that Responder must have 4 spades or would not have used Stayman. Opener also has the option of bidding **3♠** or **4♠**. Opener knows the Responder's point count and must figure it out.

Jacoby Transfer can also be used with 8-9 points (see Page 2). Transfer your partner (Opener) into your 5-card major, then bid 2NT. You are now giving your partner your point range of 8-9 and the Opener has these options.

With only 2 cards in your major and 15-16 pts, Opener will pass.

With only 2 cards in your major and 17 pts, Opener will raise it to 3NT.

With 3-4 cards in your major and 15-16 pts, Opener will raise it to 3 or 4 of the major. Judgment is required to decide which level.

With 3-4 cards in your major and 17 pts, Opener will raise it to 4 of the major.

Don't worry if you find this complicated at first. It will all make sense eventually.

Reminder: Game in No Trump, Hearts or Spades requires **25+ points**.

**Summary:****Minimum Responding Hand (0-7 pts) – Jacoby transfer or pass.**

Opener	Responder's Hand	Responder's Bid	Opener's Rebid
<b>1NT</b>	0-7 pts, no 5-card major	Pass	
	5-card major in Hearts	<b>2♦</b> (Jacoby)	Transfer to <b>2♥</b>
	5-card major in Spades	<b>2♥</b> (Jacoby)	Transfer to <b>2♠</b>

Responder will then pass. Final contract is 1NT, 2♥ or 2♠.

**Medium Responding Hand (8-9 pts) – Jacoby transfer or Stayman.**

Opener	Responder's Medium Hand	Responder's Bid	Opener's Rebid
<b>1NT</b>	No 4- or 5-card major	<b>2NT</b>	15-16 pts – Pass 17 pts – Bid 3NT
	5-card major in Hearts	<b>2♦</b> (Jacoby)	Transfer to <b>2♥</b>
	5-card major in Spades	<b>2♥</b> (Jacoby)	Transfer to <b>2♠</b>
	4-card major	<b>2♣</b> (Stayman)	With no 4-card major, bid <b>2♦</b> With 4 spades, bid <b>2♠</b> (denying 4 hearts) With 4 hearts, bid <b>2♥</b> (could also have 4 spades)

Responder will continue the bidding to show 8-9 pts, as follows:

If using Jacoby transfer, bid 2NT next.

If using Stayman, bid 3♥ or 3♠ to show a fit in the major suit or 2NT to show no fit.

Opener should take the bidding to game with 17 pts.

(With 15 pts, game is not advised. With 16 pts, game is not assured. Therefore, unless Opener has 17 pts, Opener should usually pass.)

**Category 3 (10+ HCP) – take it to game:**

Opener	Responder's Hand	Responder's Bid	Opener's Rebid
<b>1NT</b>	No 4- or 5-card major	<b>3NT</b>	Pass
	5-card major in Hearts	<b>2♦</b> (Jacoby)	Transfer to <b>2♥</b>
	5-card major in Spades	<b>2♥</b> (Jacoby)	Transfer to <b>2♠</b>
	4-card major	<b>2♣</b> (Stayman)	With no 4-card major, bid <b>2♦</b> With 4 spades, bid <b>2♠</b> (denying 4 hearts) With 4 hearts, bid <b>2♥</b> (could also have 4 spades)

Responder will continue the bidding to show 10+ pts, as follows:

If using Jacoby transfer, bid 3NT next.

If using Stayman, bid 4♥ or 4♠ to show a fit in the major suit or 3NT to show no fit.

**If you have 8+ HCP, a long suit in a minor (6+ cards), and no 4-card major, consider a bid of 3♦ or 3♣ in response to 1NT. You cannot bid at the 2 level because all 2 level response bids are codes. Opener then has the option to change it to 3NT with stoppers in all other suits. If Opener has only 2 cards in the minor, sometimes that can be difficult. Opener will then have to make a judgment call.**