



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(137) Kansas City Stayman

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Level: 4

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General

When we open Notrump and partner bids Stayman 2♣, or any artificial bid for that matter, the opponents will sometimes make a lead-directing double. Our discussion will be about how to use this lead-directing double to our advantage – to help us since we know we will likely be receiving a ♣ (or the artificially bid suit) lead.

Note: This convention (treatment) does not really have a name; We have just given it a name that some friends refer to it as of Kansas City Stayman.

Opener's Rebid

Our general approach to this auction will be that Opener will answer Stayman by making the bid they were planning to if they have a ♣ stopper, and pass if they do not have a ♣ stopper. Here are the rebid details:

- Pass No ♣ Stopper
- XX 5+♣, an offer to play 2♣ redoubled
- 2♦ no 4-card Major and a ♣ stopper
- 2♥ 4+♥ and a ♣ stopper
- 2♠ 4+♠ and a ♣ stopper

If Opener shows a stopper, then Responder can bid on normally – looking for a Major suit fit or knowing they can play 3NT if they have no Major suit fit (since Opener has promised a ♣ Stopper).

Responder's Follow-up Bids After Opener Passes

When Opener passes the opponent's lead-directing double around to Responder (denying a stopper in ♣) then Responder's normal action is to make a redouble to ask Opener to answer Stayman anyway.

Responder will continue to look for a 4-4 Major suit fit (some 8-card Major suit fit), and if they do not have one and they do not have a ♣ stopper, then Responder can continue to even look for a 4-3 Major suit fit if they have enough values for game.

If Responder has a positional stopper in ♣ (like AQ or Kx), Responder's hand will want to be declarer. Thus, they can just bid their 4-card Major (2♥ or 2♠) and Opener can raise with a fit. This 2M rebid by Responder is forcing for at least one round (showing at least 8+ points).

Note: Some partnerships play this 2-Major rebid by Responder as game forcing to simplify the follow-up bidding.

Transfer Option

Some players also choose to play in a way that makes it so that Responder is always the declarer once the Opener passes, showing no ♣ stopper. When you have this agreement, Responder always makes a redouble and then the Opener shows their 4-card Major with a transfer bid (♦ showing ♥, ♥ showing ♠, ♠ showing no Major). This is not always the best idea because we do not always want Responder to be the declarer if we have a 4-4 Major suit fit.

Conclusion

When the opponents double Stayman, they help their side get off to the opening lead they want, but they also help us know what lead is likely coming. Having good agreements to help us find a ♣ stopper and declare the hand from the proper side (Opener or Responder) is a good way to make their lead-directing double work against the opponents.