

WHEN NOT TO USE STAYMAN

A876
QJ6
Q92
AK8

J4
K1072
10854
762

932
A95
K73
Q1043

N	E	S	W	KQ105
1N	P	2C	P	843
2S	P	4S	P	AJ6
P	P			J95

On this auction, East led a trump. Declarer tried but could only manage to take 9 tricks even though the D finesse worked. However NS did not own the D 10 so had to lose 1 Diamond, 2 Hearts and one Club.

Down one.

After the hand was over, NS realized that while they could not make 4S, they could have made 3NT. So, they pondered, what went wrong.

Just because you have a tool in your shed, it doesn't mean that you have to use it - no matter what. South used Stayman just because he owned a 4 card major. He failed to consider that with a perfectly balanced hand and NO ruffing values (short suits) that it would be easier to make 9 tricks in 3NT than 10 tricks in a major.

RULE: Do not use Stayman when you have a 4-3-3-3 hand. We are programmed to always want to play a hand in a major when we have an 8 card fit. We can draw trump and still have one trump left in declarer's hand and one in dummy. These trumps can then be scored separately by means of ruffing (trumping), allowing declarer to win one more trick in the major than he could in No Trump (420 versus 400 on the score sheet).

BUT for this to be able to happen, there must be a short suit somewhere. With no short suit, avoid using Stayman. Responder to a 1NT opener holding 10+ HCP and a 4 card major and 4-3-3-3 should simply bid 3NT. Responder with 9 HCP should raise merely to 2NT: This asks opener if he has 15 to pass and if he has 17 to bid 3NT...With 16, he should decide if he likes his hand: 10's and 9's versus 2's and 3's. Possession of a 5 card suit would also be a reason to accept the invitation and bid 3NT. There is one other factor: He should check to see who he is playing against. If they look like gentle souls, he should bid 3NT !

Responder to a 1NT opener with 4-3-3-3 and exactly 8 HCP should pass. It will be right most of the time.

REBIDS BY THE RESPONDER
by Max Hardy

1.

Q93
K1064
8754
J3

2.

Q3
K10764
Q9872
8

3.

Q3
J874
95
KJ873

4.

8
AQJ97654
86
K104

5.

J8
AQ1074
KQ6
J104

6.

108
KQ95
AQ104
852

7.

KJ84
Q1073
5
J763

8.

Q3
KJ10964
AJ5
K4

**In all of these cases,
your partner opened 1C.
You responded 1H.
Opener has rebid 1S.
What is your rebid as
responder?**

ANSWERS

1. Pass. You know that you have reached a 4-3 fit, but with your meagre values, you don't want to get any higher. 1S will be as good a contract as any.

2. 1NT. Not the description you would like to make, but no other call will show your limited values. You cannot rebid hearts with only 5 (on this auction) and you do not have enough points to bid 2D.

3. 2C. This shows your minimum response (6-9 points) and only 4 hearts with longer clubs.

4. 4H. Your heart suit is self-sufficient and your 10 HCP grow up to be enough for game when you factor in your seven card suit.

5. 2D. This is 4th suit forcing. It says nothing about the Diamond suit but makes the auction forcing to game. With your game-going values, you really want to know if partner has a three card fit for your five card suit.

6. 2NT. You have game invitational values (11-12 HCP) and you have a stopper in Diamonds.

7. 2S, A courtesy raise since your minimum is maximum and you do have 4 card support. Responder should never raise opener's second suit holding only 3 card support.

8. 2D. once again, this is 4th suit forcing (the convention). You know that game should be reached but do not know what game. You cannot bid 3H as that would only be invitational. NEW suits are forcing...OLD suits are NOT forcing.

ED. NOTE: Do make sure you learn Fourth Suit Forcing (the convention). It is so important.

SIGNALLING by EDDIE KANTAR MODERN BRIDGE DEFENSE

When partner leads an ace in a supported suit and sets up a number of winners in dummy

At times you support partner with 3 or 4 small and partner leads the Ace hoping you have a bit more. Sometimes the dummy will turn up with the KQx(x). Not good. Declarer is sure to use either one or both of dummy's honours for discards. Clearly partner is going to have to shift at trick two, but to what? Not to worry 'to what'. You are going to tell partner 'to what'. Your first play in this situation is suit preference, not attitude. Partner already knows your attitude: you hate the lead.

				Q75					
				KQ8					
				642					
				7642					
J								64	
AJ7653								1094	
K105								AJ86	
Q109								J853	
W	N	E	S		AK109832				
					2				
1H	P	2H	4S		Q93				
P	P	P			AK				

You are East. Partner leads the H Ace and given dummy's Heart strength, it is impossible that you could want a Heart continuation. Your spot card should be a suit preference signal. If you are on your toes, you will play the H 10, suit preference for Diamonds, the higher ranking of the two left-over suits (excluding trump). Partner will switch to a low Diamond

(bottom of something). You will win the Ace and return a Diamond to defeat the contract one trick before declarer can rev up his motor.

Had you NOT supported partner, it would be too dangerous to play the H 10, as partner would read it as showing a singleton or a doubleton. Better to play low and hope for the best. However, once partner knows you have length (because you supported her) and cannot realistically want a continuation, the suit preference signal stands out like a sore thumb.

THE RUFFING FINESSE

When you have a singleton opposite something like AQJ, in a suit contract, it is usually wrong to finesse. Your singleton is not a loser and you may now convert it into a loser if you lose to the King.

Consider the following hand:

		A954		
		106		
		AQJ109		
		J8		
8			J7	
KQJ9			87532	
752			K864	
K7432			65	
		KQ10632		
N	S	A4		OPENING LEAD:
1D	1S	3		Heart KING
2S	4NT	AQ109		
5H	6S			

Meet Randy Baron

Randy is a fun-loving delightful man. He was the owner of Baron Barclay Bridge Supplies for many years and handed over the reins to the current owner, Jim Maier, many years ago. They are the largest suppliers of bridge books and products in the world.

Randy now takes groups around the world playing bridge.

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Here are some of his many rules guaranteed to make you a better player!

1. Play only with partners you like and enjoy playing with. Of course, this is very simple advice, but if you look around your club or tournament, there are many

people who ignore this at their peril. Who needs the aggravation when you play with someone who isn't compatible with you? I realize we all want to win as much as possible, but choose someone to sit across from you who allows you to be yourself.

2. Consent to play only conventions you are totally comfortable with. Stayman and Blackwood are the only conventions that are absolutely necessary for most players (I'll add in Jacoby Transfers and Negative Doubles as close behind). The important point is that if you place a new convention on your card, make sure you understand it and have discussed it at length with your partner. Many players think it makes them look "cool" or experienced to have all the new bids as part of their arsenal. Sure, many of the top players use a complex biddings system but they study and practice constantly. If you don't play often or have various partners, Play the KISS method (Keep It Simple, Stupid!)

3. Do not underlead an ace on opening lead **against a suit contract**.

There aren't many rules that are ironclad, those you should follow 100% of the time. I think this is one of them. If you make this play, there are many negative possibilities. It can destroy partnership trust and ruin the defence on the hand. A good plan: If you are defending against a suit contract, with a suit headed by an ace, in most cases it makes sense to lead another suit on opening lead (of course, there are exceptions such as when partner has bid the suit or you decide to make an aggressive lead such as Ax).

Ed. Note to the less experienced: Underleading an Ace means that if you have Diamonds: A742 that you lead the 2. We are recommending that you never lead this suit at all against a suit contract on opening lead. Pick another suit. If the opponents have bid all other suits twice!! and you feel you must lead this suit, then lead the Ace, not a small one but best to not lead this suit at all. Wait until it is led for you.