

## Garbage Stayman

We have seen that opening One No Trump whenever you can is a long-term winning strategy. The reason is that your partner knows such a lot about your hand, they will usually be able to guide you to the best contract for your side.

An unspoken corollary of that is that once you open One No Trump – although you have the best hand of the two of you – your *partner* is in control. Really all you do after that is answer questions that responder asks. (Do you have a four card major, are you a maximum, do you like this major.....and so forth).

There is a neat, little trick we can utilise as responder in some situations where we have very weak hands. This is a convention known as “Garbage Stayman” (there are other names, but that’s the best!)

### Quick Revision.....What’s Stayman

Stayman is a convention we can use in response to our partner opening One No Trump. It is a way of finding our 4-4 major fits when we are interested in game. Typically it shows Nine or more High Card Points (at least an invitational hand) and says “I have a four card major, do you?”

Opener will then either bid Two Hearts or Two spades (if they have one or more four or five card majors). Alternatively, they will bid Two Diamonds (to say “No, I have no four card major).

### Lying to your partner!

Because we are in charge of the auction when our partner opens one no trump, we can utilise a little trick of this bidding convention. We can launch into a stayman sequence (our partner thinking we have at least an invitational hand) and then we can sabotage it by **passing** unexpectedly!

Why would we do this? The answer is when we have certain very poor hands that will likely play badly in One No Trump but will play okay in any of the answers our partner might give. In other words with weak (garbage!) hands focussed on the minors and diamonds.

Here is the perfect example of a hand where we might utilise garbage stayman. Our partner opens One No Trump and we are looking at:

♠ 5432  
♥ 5432  
♦ 65432  
♣ void

How many tricks are we going to contribute in One No Trump?.....Zero. It’s impossible for us to ever win a trick. Our partner has to make seven tricks and they are completely on their own. Imagine you instead bid stayman – your partner will answer assuming you are looking for game and you will then pass! If they bid Two hearts, you have a 44 heart fit. If they bid Two Spades, you have a 44 Spade fit. And if they bid Two Diamonds to say they have no four card major? They have at least two Diamonds (and probably more, since they don’t have the majors) so you will almost always have a fit then anyway! They then get to play the hand and your hand will be worth **something** (you can at least ruff a couple of clubs!)

Let’s look at some sample hands where you might or might not use this (rare!) tactic:

♠ JT62  
♥ 9863  
♦ T863  
♣ 6

♠ QT5  
♥ T764  
♦ 98652  
♣ J

♠ 32  
♥ T986  
♦ 98532  
♣ J5

♠ QJ9  
♥ JT93  
♦ K8742  
♣ 4