

Puppet Stayman following a 1N Opening

Based on an article by Justin Lall: <https://justinlall.com/2011/09/07/puppet-stayman-after-a-1n-opener/>

The general agreement

1N	3♣	
3♦		No 5-card major (does not deny a 4-card major)
3♥		Shows five ♥s
3♠		Shows five ♠s

- 1) 3♣ is a game force, and may be the start of a slam try
- 2) Opener's responses to 3♣ are limited to 3♦, 3♥ and 3♠
- 3) Responder is not 4=4 or 5-4 in the majors; with those, responder starts with 2♣
- 4) Responder is not 4-3-3-3 (usually); with that shape, responder bids 3N or tries for 6N
- 5) Responder may be
 - a) 5-3-3-2 with a 5-card minor, at least one major-suit fragment, and a worthless doubleton
 - b) 4-3=4-2 with a 4-card major, a 4-card minor, and a worthless doubleton

Opener has a 5-card major

When opener's 5-card major matches responder's 3-card or 4-card suit, responder must signal slam intentions by cue bidding the other major, or indicate only a mild slam try by suggesting a sign-off:

1N	3♣		1N	3♣	
3♥	3♠	Strong slam try	3♠	4♥	Strong slam try(**)
	4♥	Mild slam try		4♠	Mild slam try

(**) The strong try in ♠s consumes an entire level, so *JL* suggests an inversion to alleviate the problem.

When opener's 5-card major does not match responder's, responder may attempt to subside in 3N or continue a slam try by showing a 5-card minor:

1N	3♣		1N	3♣	
3♥	3N	3=2=4=4	3♠	3N	2=3=4=4
	4♣	3=2=3=5		4♣	2=3=3=5
	4♦	3=2=5=3		4♦	2=3=5=3

Opener can cooperate with a minor suit slam try by employing Kickback; with no fit, opener may retreat to 4N with a minimum opening or otherwise attempt to reach slam.

(**) *JL* suggests using 4♣ to signal a strong slam try in ♠s, with 4♦ and 4♥ as slam tries in the minors.

Opener denies a 5-card major

When opener denies a 5-card major, there is still a possibility of finding a 4-4 major suit fit. Responder may continue with 3♥ or 3♠ to show 4 cards in the other major, bid 3N to show only a mild slam try, or show a 5-card minor:

1N	3♣	
3♦	3♥	Shows 4 ♠s
	3♠	Shows 4 ♥s
	3N	Mild slam try with no 4-card major and no 5-card minor: usually 3-2=4=4
	4♣	slam try in ♣, any 5-3-3-2 with 5 ♣s
	4♦	slam try in ♦, any 5-3-3-2 with 5 ♦s

When the 4-4 major suit fit is found, opener may attempt to sign off by immediately bidding 4, employ Kickback with a maximum fit, or cue bid to otherwise continue the slam try:

1N 3♣

3♦ 3♥

4♠ Minimum, ♠ agreed

4N Kickback, ♠ agreed

1N 3♣

3♦ 3♠

4♥ Minimum, ♥ agreed

4♣ Kickback, ♥ agreed

Other bids below 4 of the shown major should agree the shown major and initiate cue bidding.

When there is no major suit fit, opener rebids 3N which responder may pass. Now responder's 4 of a minor shows 4 cards in that suit and a 4-3=4-2 distribution; with a 4-card major and 5-card minor game-force, responder would have started with a regular 2♣ Stayman bid.

1N 3♣

3♦ 3♥

3N pass

4♣ 4=3=2=4 slam try

4♦ 4=3=4=2 slam try

1N 3♣

3♦ 3♠

3N pass

4♣ 3=4=2=4 slam try

4♦ 3=4=4=2 slam try

Opener can cooperate with the minor suit slam try via Kickback, or discourage by rebidding 4N.