



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(316) Responding to 1NT with a 2-Suited Hand: Both Majors**

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Level: 2

Robert S. Todd

[robert@advinbridge.com](mailto:robert@advinbridge.com)

#### **General**

When partner opens the bidding 1NT and we have length in both Majors, we want to search for a fit. Depending on our values, we will use different tools to explore for a fit. The more values we have, the more bidding space we can use to search for this fit. With fewer values, we must attempt to locate our fit while keeping the auction at a relatively low level. Let's look at how to use our tools to handle these hands with length in both Majors.

#### **Hands with 5/4 in the Majors**

With a weak hand (less than invitational values) and 5/4 in the Major suits, we must decide if we should treat the hand as a 1-suiter (and transfer to our 5-card Major) or a 2-suiter (and use Drop Dead Stayman to attempt to locate our best fit).

##### *Example 1*

♠ KJT75

♥ 9843

♦ J32

♣ 7

1NT    2♥\*

2♠    Pass

Here we treat our hand as a 1-suiter, transfer to ♠, and leave partner to play there.

##### *Example 2*

♠ 87542

♥ KQJ4

♦ 763

♣ 6

1NT    2♣

2♦    2♥\*

Here we treat our hand as a 2-suiter and bid Stayman. Unfortunately, partner does not have a 4-card Major, so we ask them to choose their better Major by using Drop Dead Stayman, 2♥\*.



With an invitational hand that is 5/4 in the Majors, we attempt to search for a fit while keeping the auction as low as possible.

*Example 3*

♠ QT43  
♥ KQT63  
♦ 54  
♣ 83  
1NT    2♦\*  
2♥    2♠

This auction shows a 5-card ♥ suit and 4-card ♠ suit, with invitational values. It is non-forcing; partner can pass, raise ♠, support ♥ (at the 3-level or 4-level), or even suggest another place to play, like 2NT or 3NT.

*Example 4*

♠ KJ843  
♥ K954  
♦ 53  
♣ JT  
1NT    2♣  
2♦    2♠

Here we use Stayman to see if we can find a 4-4 ♥ fit (or a 5-4 ♠ fit). When that fails, we bid our ♠ suit, showing a 5-card ♠ suit and invitational values. This is non-forcing; partner can pass, raise ♠, or bid notrump.

With game forcing values and this 5/4 shape in the Major suits, we start by using Stayman (to attempt to locate a 4-4 or 5-4 fit) and if that fails, we then jump to show our values and 5-card suit. Playing standard bidding, we would jump in our 5-card suit, but this often wrong sides the contact. There is a useful convention here, Smolen, that allows us to right side the contract.

*Example 5*

♠ KQ54  
♥ AJ653  
♦ 653  
♣ 4  
1NT    2♣  
2♦    3♠\* (Smolen)

Here we search for a 4-4 fit by using Stayman, and when that fails we jump to 3♠ to show our 5-card ♥ suit; this is Smolen (if we played standard bidding we would jump to 3♥ to show a 5-card ♥ suit).



Here is how we can bid an even stronger hand with this shape.

*Example 6*

♠ AK843

♥ Q953

♦ AK84

♣ -

1NT    2♣

2♦     3♥\*

3NT    4♦

Here we explore our Major suit fit, showing GF values and 5-4 shape, and when partner says they do not have a fit for either of our suits (by bidding 3NT), we continue to show our shape and interest in slam by bidding 4♦. Opener can now sign off in 4NT if they have a hand with many ♣ values, or they can bid 5♦ or explore for 6♦ with a fit for our third suit and a good hand.

### Hands with 5-5 in the Majors

With a weak hand that is 5-5 in the Majors, we use Drop Dead Stayman to force partner to choose between playing in either 2♥ or 2♠.

*Example 7*

♠ Q9542

♥ J8743

♦ 94

♣ 6

1NT    2♣

2♦     2♥\*

This sequence says "Partner, I want to play in either 2♥ or 2♠, you choose."

With invitational values and 5-5M we bid like we have a 5/4M hand. We treat whichever of our suits is better as our 5-card suit and the other like we have only 4 cards.

*Example 8*

♠ AQ763

♥ Q8754

♦ 7

♣ 93

1NT    2♣

2♦     2♠

Here we treat the hand as if it were 5-4 in the Majors and bid Stayman and then 2♠ if partner does not have a 4-card Major.



*Example 9*

♠ Q8743  
♥ AQ875  
♦ 93  
♣ 5  
1NT    2♦\*  
2♥    2♠

We treat this hand as if it were 4-5 and transfer to ♥ and then rebid 2♠.

**Hands with 6/4 in the Majors**

When we are 6/4 in the Majors, we know that we have a Major suit fit (in our 6-card suit). With a weak hand we will simply choose to play in our known fit.

*Example 10*

♠ JT8743  
♥ QT43  
♦ 8  
♣ 83  
1NT    2♥\*  
2♠    Pass

Here we just transfer to our 6-card Major and pass.

With enough values to explore game then we have space to see what our “best fit” (usually a 4-4 fit) may be. With invitational hands that are 6/4 in the Majors we struggle to show our shape and keep the auction at a reasonable low level. We must choose whether to show the hands as a 1-suiter (with a decent 6-card Major) or a 2-suiter (if our 4-card suit is much stronger than our 6-card suit).

*Example 11*

♠ Q98543  
♥ AJT5  
♦ 83  
♣ 6  
1NT    2♣  
2♦    2♠

Here we treat this hand as 2-suited (like we are 5-4 in the Majors) and bid Stayman followed by 2♠.



*Example 12*

♠ AJT843  
♥ 8653  
♦ Q8  
♣ 3  
1NT    2♥\*  
2♠    3♠

Here we treat this hand as 1-suited and show our 6-card Major and invitational values (not showing our 4-card ♥ suit).

With enough values for game, we do not have to worry about keeping the auction low. We can describe our 6/4 in the Majors hands by using Delayed Texas.

*Example 13*

♠ KQ54  
♥ AJ8743  
♦ 54  
♣ 9  
1NT    2♣  
2♦    4♦\*  
4♥    Pass

Here we bid Stayman to look for a 4-4 ♠ fit. When partner denies a 4-card Major we can still place the contract in 4♥ by transferring to ♥ at the 4-level.

**Conclusion**

As the Responder to a 1NT opening, when we have length in both Major suits, we must attempt to find the best fit. When we hold few values, we must work to keep the auction low. The more values we hold, the less we worry about the level, and the more we turn our focus to using our bidding tools to locate the best fit while attempting to play the contract from the strong side (the 1NT Opener side). Make sure you and partner spend some time fleshing out your bidding tools so the Responder can handle all the hands that have length in both Majors.