

Bidding with 5/4 or 5/5 in the Majors after 1NT Opener

With 5/4 in the Majors:

0-7 HCP:

- Transfer to your 5-card suit and then pass. **Give up on finding the 4/4 fit.**

8-9 HCP:

- Start with Stayman
- If partner bids a major, raise it to the 3-level to show an invitational hand (be sure to re-evaluate your hand when you find the fit!) Example: 1NT – 2C – 2H – 3H (you have either 4 or 5 Hearts and have found a fit)
- If partner bids 2D, bid your 5-card major at the 2 level. Example: 1NT – 2C – 2D – 2S (shows 5 Spades and 4 Hearts invitational) **NOTE: this will end up with you playing the contract from the weaker side if you find a fit.**

10+ HCP:

- Start with Stayman
- If partner bids a major, raise it to game. Or, if you are really strong, you can bid Gerber to look for slam.
- If partner bids 2D, use Smolen (i.e., bid your 4-card major at the 3 level). Example: 1NT – 2C – 2D – 3H (promises a game going hand with 5 Spades and 4 Hearts)

With 5/5 in the Majors:

0-7 HCP:

- Transfer to your best 5-card Major and pass.

8-9 HCP:

- Transfer to Hearts and then bid 2 Spades. Example: 1NT – 2D (Transfer) – 2H – 2S (promises 5/5 in the Majors invitational.)

10+ HCP:

- Transfer to Spades and then bid 3 Hearts. Example: 1NT – 2H (Transfer) – 2S – 3H (promises 5/5 in the Majors game forcing.) Partner cannot pass, so you still have the ability to look for slam if you are really strong.

NOTE: This system works with Garbage Stayman, but it does not work if you play Crawling Stayman.

If you want to play Crawling Stayman, you can make the following modifications:

With 5/4 in the Majors:

8-9 HCP:

- Start with Stayman if you have 5 Spades and 4 Hearts
- If partner bids a major, raise it to the 3-level to show an invitational hand (be sure to re-evaluate your hand when you find the fit!) Example: 1NT – 2C – 2H – 3H (you have 4 Hearts and have found a fit)

- If partner bids 2D, bid your 5-card Spade suit at the 2 level. Example: 1NT – 2C – 2D – 2S (shows 5 Spades and 4 Hearts invitational) **NOTE: this will end up with you playing the contract from the weaker side if you find a fit.**
- If you have 5 Hearts and 4 Spades, transfer to Hearts and then bid 2S showing 5 Hearts and 4 Spades invitational. **NOTE: You can no longer use this bid to show 5/5 Majors invitational.**

With 5/5 in the Majors:

8-9 HCP:

- Transfer to Spades and then bid 3 Hearts. Example: 1NT – 2H (Transfer) – 2S – 3H (promises 5/5 in the Majors invitational) **NOTE: This assumes partner will have at least one 3-card Major.**

10+ HCP:

- Transfer to Hearts and then bid 3 Spades. Example: 1NT – 2D (Transfer) – 2H – 3S (promises 5/5 in the Majors game forcing) This gives you the ability to go on to slam if you are really strong because partner cannot pass. (You could also bid 1NT – 2H (Transfer) – 2S – 4H to show 5/5 Majors game forcing with no slam interest.)

NOTE: Some people use 3H to show 5/5 invitational and 3S to show 5/5 game forcing. Example: 1NT – 3H (5/5 in the Majors invitational) and 1NT – 3S (5/5 in the Majors game forcing)

If you want to play Garbage Stayman with 5/4 weak hands instead of just transferring to your 5-card major and passing, you can make the following modifications (**you cannot play Crawling Stayman with this option:**)

With 5/4 in the Majors:

0-7 HCP:

- Start with Stayman. If partner bids 2D, bid your 5-card major to play. Example: 1NT – 2C – 2D – 2S (to play). Opener should pass.

8-9 HCP:

- With 5 Hearts and 4 Spades, transfer to Hearts and then bid 2S.
- **If you have 5 Spades and 4 Hearts, transfer to Spades and then bid 3H. NOTE: this might get you too high if partner has 2 Spades and 3 Hearts and not enough to accept your invitation. You can no longer use this bid to show 5/5 Majors invitational.**

With 5/5 in the Majors:

8-9 HCP:

- Bid 3 Hearts. Example: 1NT – 3H (5/5 in the Majors invitational)

10+ HCP:

- Bid 3 Spades. Example: 1NT – 3S (5/5 in the Majors game forcing) This gives you the ability to go on to slam if you are really strong because partner cannot pass.