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Contributed September 10, 2005

CHECKBACK STAYMAN BY RESPONDER

Eddie Kantar has pointed out the unplayability of standard bidding after a 1NT rebid by opener:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT?	

Responder may now want to sign off, invite game, or force to game with a suit bid. There are only two levels of bidding available for the three actions, however, and three into two won't go. Kantar's answer was to make all jump rebids by responder invitational. With stronger hands he bids an artificial 2♣ and then makes his forcing bid. Unfortunately he can't sign off in clubs.

Others remedy that drawback by using the lowest unbid minor ("New Minor Forcing") for the artificial bid, permitting responder to sign off in opener's minor suit. He can no longer sign off in the unbid minor, however. Presumably this is a lesser evil. But what if there is no unbid minor?

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT?	

How can responder make a sign-off bid in clubs, an invitational bid in clubs, or a forcing bid in clubs, with only two bids to choose from (2♣ and 3♣)? The same problem arises if responder wants to rebid in diamonds. How to sign off, invite, or force in diamonds?

The use of three-level jumps as invitational has other weaknesses. Suppose the auction goes: 1♣-1♠; 1NT-3♣, with 3♣ invitational, and opener holds ♠-Q32 ♥-AJ5 ♦-K84 ♣-K732. What now? Bid 3♠ and find responder with a weak four-card suit? Besides, 3♠ is forcing, accepting the game invitation. No, opener must pass and perhaps miss a 5-3 spade fit. His problem is worse with a 3-4-3-3 hand. If responder uses "New Minor Forcing" (bidding 2♦ artificially) with five spades and invitational strength, she can't then make an invitational club bid (a 3♣ bid following NMF is forcing to game) if opener lacks spade support. A poor notrump contract may result.

Another situation: You have ♦-K983 ♥-Q1086 ♦-KQJ4 ♣-8 and respond 1♥ to partner's 1♦ opening. After his 1NT rebid you invite with 3♦. He now bids 3NT with ♠-AJ10 ♥-K7 ♦-A7632 ♣-Q75 and has no play, down two. How could he tell that five diamonds would be a better contract? You might have held ♠-8 ♥-Q1086 ♦-KQJ4 ♣-K983, and notrump is the right spot. There ought to be a way to describe these three-suited hands more accurately.

Another: Partner opens 1♣ and you say 1♠ with ♠-A97542 ♥-K983 ♦-7 ♣-85. When he rebids 1NT you must sign off with 2♠, but he could easily have four hearts: ♠-Q ♥-A1075 ♦-KJ5 ♣-KJ432. A heart contract is better, but how do you get there? A 2♥ rebid shows a weak 5-5 in the majors, maybe 6-5, or even 5-4, but not 6-4.

More: You respond 1♠ to a 1♣ opening, holding ♠-AJ75 ♥-62 ♦-863 ♣-KQJ2. When partner rebids 1NT, should you bid 3♣ or 2NT? If he has a minimum 2NT might be better, especially if he has only three clubs. If only we could invite game and show club support without going past the two level.

One more: You have ♠-AJ7632 ♥-A2 ♦-A76 ♣-Q9 and respond 1♠ after partner opens 1♣. When he rebids 1NT, how do you indicate slam interest? Wouldn't it be nice if 3♠ were forcing? Then partner could use Blackwood with ♠-K85 ♥-K76 ♦-K52 ♣-AJ102, and a 4♠ rebid by responder would imply no interest in slam: ♠-J976432 ♥-A2 ♦-A7 ♣-93.

Try this approach as a solution to most such problems:

Opener	Responder
1♣/1♦/1♥	1♦/1♥/1♠
1NT	3♣/3♦/3♥/3♠ - forcing
2♦/2♥/2♠ - weak (except for reverses)	
2♣ - Checkback Stayman	

A 2♣ rebid is Checkback Stayman (Checkback Stayman), forcing and artificial. It usually shows a game try sort of hand, about 11 high card points (HCP). As we shall see, Checkback Stayman may also be used with some weaker or stronger hands.

Warning: DO NOT USE CHECKBACK STAYMAN IF A REVERSE OR OTHER NATURAL BID WILL SUFFICE!

Partner will assume you do not have a good natural call when you use Checkback Stayman, and will therefore exclude certain holdings when he tries to picture your hand. Suppose you have ♠-43 ♥-AJ97 ♦-AK1083 ♣-J4. After answering 1♦ to partner's 1♣ opening, your next call when he rebids 1NT is 2♥--a good descriptive forcing reverse, implying five diamonds and four hearts. Checkback Stayman would be unnecessary and incorrect.

One advantage of playing Checkback Stayman is that opener can bypass a four-card major suit, e.g., rebidding 1NT after opening 1♣ with a 4-3-3-3 hand such as ♠-Q1076 ♥-J103 ♦-AJ9 ♣-AQ8 and receiving a red suit response. Even if a 4-4 fit is missed, such hands often play just as well in notrump if responder is also balanced. If she is unbalanced, she may be able to use Checkback Stayman to "check back" for spades. Besides, you don't want responder to make a club preference with a hand such as ♠-842 ♥-A987 ♦-32 ♣-K973, as she would after a 1♠ rebid. Nor do you want her competing to 3♣, or jumping to 3♣ invitationaly, with four-card support. In fact, we can make this a rule: After opening 1♣, a new suit bid at the one level implies more than three clubs.

Responses to Checkback Stayman

Now, how do you respond to Checkback Stayman? In one of just three ways:

- Show three-card support for partner's major.
- Lacking that, show an unbid major or rebid a five-card heart suit (Not spades? No. How can you rebid 1NT after opening 1♠?).
- Otherwise bid 2♦.

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♥	- four hearts, denies three spades
2♠	- spade support, may have four hearts
2♦	- denies spade support or four hearts

Responder's Next Bid

If responder does not pass opener's response to Checkback Stayman, her next bid has one of the following meanings:

- A bid of 3♣ is a signoff:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦	1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣
2♦	3♣	Any	3♣

Opener usually passes, but in the first auction he could now bid 3♦ with something like ♠ A43 ♥-K76 ♦-9862 ♣-AQ5. In the second auction responder has a weak hand, maybe 4-6 in the black suits, and opener must pass.

A 2NT bid, artificial, shows clubs and a game-invitational hand:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥	1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣
2♦	2NT	2♦	2NT

In both cases responder is showing clubs and a game-invitational hand, probably unbalanced. If opener bids 3♣, declining the invitation, responder will pass. If opener bids anything else, he is accepting the game try. Occasionally opener will pass the 2NT bid, with a minimum hand and strength in the "unbid" suits.

The 2NT bid is invitational in clubs when made immediately after the 2♣ call, but:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2♠	2NT is a natural bid

(I'll explain this auction later.)

-- A bid of 3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ is invitational, not forcing:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♠	3♦/3♥/3♠ are all invitational

Opener is unlikely to pass 3♥ in this particular sequence, however. To do so he would have a weak hand with four hearts and a poor fit: ♠-J76 ♥-8652 ♦-KJ10 ♣-AKQ.

Look at this sequence:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♥	3♦

The 3♦ bid is invitational and denies five hearts. Opener must not go back to hearts unless he has a good hand and wants to be in game. With five hearts responder must bid 3♥ instead of 3♦ for her game try. The principle is this:

WHEN OPENER SHOWS SUPPORT FOR RESPONDER'S MAJOR,
RESPONDER'S BID OF A MINOR SUIT OR NOTRUMP DENIES
HAVING FIVE CARDS IN THE MAJOR.

-- A heart raise at the two level is invitational, implying three-card support:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥

Responder has J10x or better in hearts. With four hearts she would usually invite with a 3♥ bid, but 2♥ may be preferred when the hand is marginal for a game invitation. Opener must pass 2♥ with a minimum hand, perhaps playing a 4-3 fit. With more than a minimum he can bid 2♠, 2NT, or 3♥ (all invitational); 3♣, 3♦, or 3♠ (all forcing); 3NT; or 4♥. Of course the spade raises show only good doubleton support, since opener has denied holding three spades.

If opener bids 2♠ in response to 2♣, preventing responder from showing three-card support for hearts at the two level, the heart support can be shown indirectly if responder has only four spades and also has a minor suit:

Opener	Responder	
1♥	1♠	
1NT	2♣	
2♠	2NT/3♦	(3♥ requires four hearts)

Both 2NT and 3♦, showing clubs and diamonds respectively, also promise three-card heart support. This is not merely conventional--it is logical. Responder must have only four spades, right? And her minor can't be five cards long, or she would have bid it first. So her two suits are 4-4. Why is she using Checkback Stayman? She must have three-card support for hearts. Opener can now place the contract by passing or bidding, playing responder for J10x or better in hearts. He must bid 4♥ if he wants to be in that game, because responder usually passes 3♥.

Responder is limited to three-card heart support in the last auction, and neither 2NT or 3♦ is forcing. The 3♦ bid is pretty safe, since opener must have either a good hand or four diamonds if he lacks a five-card heart suit. With 3-4-3-3 or 3-4-2-4 shape he would be unlikely to open 1♥ with a minimum hand. If he has only four hearts in a weak hand, his shape is probably 3-4-4-2, so 3♦ will be a satisfactory contract (better than 2NT, considering the doubleton club in both hands) if opener doesn't want to play in hearts.

Checkback Stayman should not be used with an invitational 4-3-3-3 hand. Just raise to 2NT instead of trying to show the heart support. If opener were to show three-card spade support in response to Checkback Stayman, responder would have to continue with 3♥, which shows four-card support. A game-going hand can use Checkback Stayman safely with 4-3-3-3, but it is better to just bid 3NT with a square hand.

What does responder have in this auction?

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♥

Answer: A weak hand with five spades and three weak hearts, unbalanced: ♠-Q8743 ♥-986 ♦-3♣-K853. With four spades or better hearts, responder should bid 2♥ instead of 1♠.

-- A new suit at the two level is forcing. There are three basic situations:

1) A 1♦ responder bids a major after using Checkback Stayman. Let's start with 2♠:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠

The 2♠ bid is forcing. Opener has denied holding four spades, so responder can only be bidding 2♠ on the way to describing her hand. She may have 4-1-5-3 distribution, for instance. Opener must bid 2NT as a mark-time bid, letting responder get on with the bidding.

When the 1♦ responder bids 2♥ after using Checkback Stayman, opener bids 2♠ with a double spade stopper, otherwise 2NT:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♦
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2♠ shows a double stopper	
2NT otherwise	

Opener's 2♦ bid denied four hearts or four spades. His 2♠ bid shows good strength in spades, without which he must bid 2NT. Responder might have ♠-J ♥-A1097 ♦-KJ875 ♣-Q93. When opener bids 2♠ over 2♥, responder can bid 2NT (instead of 3♣) to invite game.

2) A 1♠ responder bids 2♥ after using Checkback Stayman:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥

The 2♥ bid shows four hearts only, since responder would jump to 3♥ (invitational) with five. Opener must now bid 2♠. His 2♦ response denied a holding of four hearts or three spades, so responder must only be trying to describe her hand fully. Perhaps she has a weak hand with six spades and four hearts, using the 2♥ bid as a device to get back to spades (2♠ over 2♦ would show five spades, not six). She might have ♠-AJ874 ♥-K652 ♦-J9 ♣-Q8, planning to bid a natural and invitational 2NT after the forced 2♠ bid. She could not bid 2NT over 2♦ because that would show clubs, remember?

3) A 1♥ responder bids 2♠ after using Checkback Stayman. This is the only time that opener is allowed to show the quality of his hand after a two-level suit rebid by responder:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♦/2♥	2♠

When opener bids 2♥ he could have four spades, since he must show heart support as a first priority. If so, he can now raise spades (jumping with a maximum). Otherwise, or if he bids 2♦, he now bids 2NT with a minimum, which responder may pass, or something at the three level (perhaps 3NT) with a good hand.

In addition to a 5-4 hand, this sequence is also used when responder has 4-4 in the majors. She can't do the same sort of thing after a 1♠ response, which is one reason why 1♥ is the preferred response to a minor opening when holding both majors.

When a responder who uses Checkback Stayman bids two suits, then bids notrump or raises opener, she is making a game try. When she bids all three suits other than the one opened, she is forcing to game:

Opener	Responder	Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠	1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣	1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥	2♦	2♠
2♠	2NT/3♣	2NT	3♦

The 1♠ responder has only invited game with her last bid, so opener passes with a minimum. The 1♥ responder, who has also bid spades and diamonds, has made a game force, perhaps with a 4-5-4-0 hand (but could be 4-4-4-1). The 3♦ bid is natural, not "Fourth Suit Artificial," a convention that does not apply in Checkback Stayman sequences.

-- A rebid of a major suit at the two level shows a weak hand and a five-card suit, with trump support for opener's minor, or a minor suit on the side, or both:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠

With nothing but six spades and a weak hand, responder would have bid 2♠ over 1NT. With six spades and four hearts, she would have bid 2♥ over 2♦, forcing opener to bid 2♠. The 2♠ bid therefore shows five spades, and opener can pass with a good doubleton (J10 or better) in spades. Otherwise he must bid 2NT with two or three clubs (at least three, in this case), and 3♣ with four or more. Responder will then place the contract in either clubs or diamonds.

Occasionally it will be impossible for opener to have less than four clubs:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♠

Opener has denied holding four hearts or three spades, so he has eight cards in the minors and could hardly have opened a three-card club suit. In this situation a 2NT bid would show four clubs and a 3♣ bid would show five. There is one other such case:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥

Responder has five hearts and a weak hand, with diamonds or clubs in reserve. With a weak 4-6 in the majors, responder must bid 2♥, not 2♣, over 1NT. Again, opener must have at least four clubs, so a 2NT bid would show four, a 3♣ bid five. What would a 2♠ bid by opener mean at this point? "I have three strong spades and the minimum number of clubs--four." Responder can then

bid 2NT with ♠-10 ♥-J9872 ♦-AJ87 ♣-Q65. Opener will not take the 2NT bid as invitational, since the 2♥ bid denies interest in game. Opener's hand: ♠-KQ9 ♥-65 ♦-KQ83 ♣-KJ72.

If opener has ♠-A32 ♥-65 ♦-KQ83 ♣-KJ72, he bids 2NT over 2♥, showing four clubs. Then responder, knowing opener is 4-4 in the minor suits, would place the contract by bidding 3♦. Finally, if the 8♦ were the 8♣, opener would bid 3♣ over 2♥ and responder would pass.

In the following auction responder has ♠-Q9873 ♥-7 ♦-K108 ♣-A965:

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♥	2♠
3♣	Pass

Opener must have a hand like: ♠-K ♥-Q863 ♦-AQJ7 ♣-K1032, since his 3♣ bid shows four clubs. Responder therefore passes.

This procedure of bidding 2NT or 3♣ (sometimes 2♠) to indicate the number of clubs held applies only when responder has shown a weak hand by rebidding her major after using Checkback Stayman.

A jump to 3NT after opener shows support for responder's major suit implies four cards in the other major or (if the opening was 1♥) support for opener's hearts:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♠	3NT

Responder must have four hearts, so opener can bid 4♥ if he has a heart suit.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♠	3NT

Responder must have three-card heart support to be using Checkback Stayman, since she apparently has only four spades: ♠-KQ73 ♥-Q103 ♦-AK4 ♣-542. Opener can now bid 4♥ with a hand such as ♠-J54 ♥-KJ762 ♦-QJ5 ♣-AJ.

With Checkback Stayman opener can bypass a four-card major with a notrumpish hand. After opening 1♣ with ♠-A754 ♥-KJ8 ♦-932 ♣-KQ4, he can rebid 1NT after a 1♦ or 1♥ response. If responder has an unbalanced hand with four spades she will usually be able to check back with a 2♣ bid, or reverse into spades. With ♠-J632 ♥-AQ ♦-KQJ6 ♣-J86, she has no need to check for spades with such a beautiful hand for notrump. She will raise to 3NT, avoiding the bad spade game that most partnerships will find.

Opener should not bypass a four-card spade suit after a 1♥ response unless he has three hearts. There are many weak hands with which responder, holding five hearts and a singleton, will use Checkback Stayman. She is counting on a 2♦ or 2♥ bid from opener, and 2♠ would get the bidding too high. Knowing that opener must bid 2♥ over Checkback Stayman with three hearts and four spades, her assumption is a safe one.

If you must rebid 1NT after a 1♥ response, holding four spades and a doubleton heart, make sure the doubleton is very strong: ♠-5432 ♥-KJ ♦-AQJ ♣-K1098. Then you can bid 2♥ if responder rebids 2♣. Don't bid 2♦, which denies four spades.

After responding 1♥ to 1♦ with ♠-9 ♥-A10763 ♦-Q975 ♣-J32, do not bid 2♦ when opener rebids 1NT. A 2♦ preference denies five hearts, with which a 2♣ bid is safe (opener will bid 2♦ or 2♥, not 2♠). With three hearts opener no longer has to guess whether to pass a 2♦ preference or show the heart support.

Suppose responder to a 1♥ opening has a weak hand with spades and diamonds:

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♦

A slight problem here is that responder, lacking the strength for an original 2♦ response, could have six diamonds and only four spades. If opener has 3-3 in those suits he will prefer spades, so responder may have to go on to 3♦, which opener must pass. Could responder have a weak hand with 4-5 in spades-diamonds? No. With such a hand responder should just pass 1NT. If responder is 4-5 in spades-diamonds, her distribution will be 4-2-5-2 or 4-1-5-3, suitable for a 1NT contract.

Checkback Stayman applies when 1NT is opener's third bid. There is only one such sequence:

Opener	Responder	
1♣	1♦	
1♥	1♠	(natural)
1NT	2♣	is Checkback Stayman

All subsequent bids have the same meaning as previously described. A 2♥ bid by opener would show five hearts, which is not impossible, or a strong four: ♠-KJ ♥-97632 ♦-Q3 ♣-AKJ3 or ♠-J5 ♥-AK105 ♦-876 ♣-A653. Responder can now raise hearts with three-card support. By the way, the 1♠ bid is not a good spot for "Fourth Suit Artificial," because 1♠ is too valuable as a natural bid. Using 2♠ for FSA here is similar to using 2♥ for FSA in the sequence 1♣-1♦; 1♠-2♥, so why not?

The 2NT bid to show clubs is often useful with a 4-4-4-1 hand. Partner opens 1♦, you bid 1♥ with ♠-Q ♥-KQ52 ♦-K652 ♣-Q987, and he rebids 1NT. Your Checkback Stayman call now fetches a 2♦ bid. The best move now is not a 3♦ raise, the natural inclination, but 2NT (showing clubs). Partner will assume you have a two-suited hand with hearts and clubs, and will usually bid 3NT or 3♣. If he bids 3♣, you bid 3♦, completing the picture of your hand. He might pass 2NT, but that's all right--he must have good spades to do so. If he happens to bid 3♦ over 2NT

(showing five diamonds and accepting the game try), you will raise. He must have a good hand with weak spades, so five diamonds should be playable. He might have ♠-643 ♦-A4 ♣-AJ432 ♣-AJ3.

Checkback Stayman is not normally used with 4-4-3-2 hands, but there are exceptions:

-- With two strong four-card suits, one of which is partner's suit, and little strength outside, Checkback Stayman may be preferable to a notrump raise: ♠-KQJ3 ♥-87 ♦-AJ102 ♣-943. Partner opens 1♦ and you respond 1♠. After his 1NT rebid you can bid 2♣, intending to follow with a diamond raise. This course is safer than a raise of 1NT to 2NT.

-- Checkback Stayman can be used with a 4-4-3-2 hand of invitational strength if it includes good three-card support for opener's hearts (J10x or better) or if the two four-card suits are majors and the original response is 1♥. Checkback Stayman doesn't work if the response is 1♠, so responder must just raise to 2NT in that case.

-- When responder is strong enough for game opposite a minimum, she can use Checkback Stayman to check for an unbid major, even with 4-4-3-2 distribution: ♠-AQ104 ♥-972 ♦-AKJ10 ♣-J3. Partner opens 1♣, you say 1♦, and he rebids 1NT. It is permissible to bid 2♣, just in case opener has bypassed a four-card spade suit. If opener does not bid 2♠, you jump to 3NT. With a weaker hand, however (♠-AQ103 ♥-854 ♦-KJ82 ♣-75), a 1♦ responder to a 1♣ opening can only raise 1NT to 2NT, because Checkback Stayman doesn't work. That is one reason for bidding 1♠ instead of 1♦ with this sort of hand.

Checkback Stayman is not generally used with a 4-4-4-1 hand when the singleton is in opener's suit, unless responder has a game-going hand or has responded 1♥ with both majors. Otherwise Checkback Stayman either wouldn't work or would serve no purpose.

An invitational hand with 5-3-3-2 distribution should just raise notrump, even with a five-card major. Partner opens 1♦ and you respond 1♥ with ♠-A3 ♥-Q10964 ♦-Q76 ♣-K83. After his 1NT rebid you should raise to 2NT rather than bid 2♣. You have a balanced hand, partner has not raised hearts, so respect his judgment and raise notrump. Besides, he can bid 3♥ over 2NT if he wants to. If you use Checkback Stayman and opener bids 2♦, you cannot raise to 2NT (since a 2NT bid now would show clubs). With a game-going hand the 2♣ bid is safe, but it is usually better to just raise notrump with 5-3-3-2 hands.

(Actually it would be possible to use Checkback Stayman with the hand given, planning to bid 2♠(!) if opener bids 2♦. This sequence allows opener to show hand quality, and he can't have the four spades that a raise would require. If the five-card suit is spades, however, there is no safe way to check for spade support with an invitational hand.)

I said earlier that responder should not use Checkback Stayman "if a reverse or other natural bid will suffice." There are some situations where a reverse won't "suffice." Suppose you have ♠-A1093 ♥-KJ873 ♦-Q96 ♣-4 and partner opens 1♦, you say 1♥, and he rebids 1NT. What now? Reverse with a 2♠ bid or use Checkback Stayman? Answer: Bid 2♣ with this sort of hand, planning to show spades next, then follow with an invitation- al diamond raise if partner doesn't fit one of the majors. With a game-going hand (add a queen) you can bid 2♠ over 1NT, reversing, then raise diamonds. You can treat this as a forcing sequence if you don't already, because Checkback Stayman is available for invitational strength hands. The reverse sequence does not "suffice" to show both invitational and game-going hands of this type.

When a passed hand jumps to the three level after opener's 1NT rebid, opener may choose to pass the supposed force if the jump is a raise of his suit or a jump in the same suit:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

North opened with ♠-86 ♥-10964 ♦-KQ4 ♣-AQJ3. Naturally the 3♣ bid shows a great hand despite the original pass, since an invitational (Checkback Stayman) sequence is available. South's hand: ♠-AK75 ♥-4 ♦-875 ♣-K9874. Perhaps North should keep going with a 3♦ bid, getting the partnership to a mediocre 5♣ game.

When the jump is in a new suit, however, opener may not pass:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♥ - Forcing			

If opener can only bid 3♠ (poor hand, poor fit) now, responder may pass. Opener can raise hearts with only three trumps, since responder must have at least 5-5, probably better, in the majors. "Probably better" because responder could use a Checkback Stayman sequence to invite game with 5-5 in the majors.

When the Opponents Intervene with a Bid

Checkback Stayman is used even when the opening bid is overcalled or doubled at the one level:

North	East	South	West
1♣	1♥/Dbl	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣ is Checkback Stayman	

All further bids by either partner retain the usual meanings, except that a natural bid in an opposing suit can show either four cards or a strong three. For instance, after the heart overcall, a 2♥ response by North would show four hearts with at least one honor or three good hearts (e.g., KJx), (while denying three-card spade support).

Checkback Stayman does not apply if the 1NT bid is doubled, however. The bidding reverts to standard bidding in that case:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Dbl	2♣ - signoff	

If there is an opposing bid following the 2♣ bid that initiates Checkback Stayman, all doubles are for business, and all bids are natural:

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	2♥	Dbl - business	

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	2♥
Pass	Pass	Dbl - business	
		2NT - natural	
		3♣ - may not be weak	

When an Artificial Bid Gets Doubled

When an opponent doubles an artificial bid, including the Checkback Stayman 2♣ bid, any elaborate scheme for always showing stopper(s) or lack of stopper in the doubled suit would get in the way of Checkback Stayman bidding sequences, so we just use common sense. Immediate bids continue the Checkback Stayman sequence, while reopening bids revert to natural bidding.

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Dbl
		Pass - can support a club contract	
		2♦ - conventional response, poor clubs	
		2♥/2♠ - says nothing about clubs	
		Rdbl - good clubs, good hand	

The pass or redouble tends to deny five hearts or three spades. "Good clubs" means club strength, at least a double stopper, not necessarily with four-card length. The 2♥ and 2♠ bids do not deny good clubs, however (but 2♦ does).

South	West	North	East
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Dbl	Pass - playable diamonds	
		Rdbl - good diamonds, good hand	
		2♥/2♠/2NT/3♣ - normal rebids	

The normal rebids say nothing about diamonds. North could have good diamonds and just not want to complicate things by passing or redoubling.

If the double of an artificial bid gets passed around, a redouble suggests that the doubled contract may be playable, and may be the highest scoring (or only) game. Partner can pass if he agrees. Otherwise the bidding proceeds naturally, with no artificial bids:

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Dbl
Pass	Pass	Rdbl - to play	
		2♦/2♥/2♠/2NT - natural	
		3♦/3♥/3♠ - invitational	

When a Natural Bid Gets Doubled

When a natural bid is doubled, a redouble is to play, a pass is a suggestion (not a command) that the contract may be playable, and a bid just ignores the double, continuing the Checkback Stayman sequence. Partner can do what he wants after a pass: redouble (to play) or continue with natural bidding.

Summary

After a 1NT rebid by opener:

- All three-level suit jumps by responder are forcing.
- Any two-level suit bid other than 2♣ or a reverse is weak.
- To invite game, responder first bids 2♣ (artificial).
- 2♣ followed by 3♣ is a weak signoff, so:
 - 2♣ followed by 2NT is a game-try club bid.

Opener's action after Checkback Stayman:

- Show three-card support for responder's major suit.
- Lacking that, rebid a five-card suit or show an unbid major.
- Lacking either of these, bid 2♦.

When opener shows support for responder's major, responder's next bid of a minor suit or notrump denies five cards in the major.

If responder's next bid after Checkback Stayman is a new suit at the two level, that is a force.

When using Checkback Stayman, if responder shows two suits and then bids notrump or raises opener's suit, she is making a game try. When she bids all three suits other than the one opened, she is forcing to game.

After Checkback Stayman, responder's rebid of her major at the two level shows a five-card suit and a weak hand. Responder must have support for opener's minor, or a minor suit on the side, or both. Opener can pass with a good doubleton in responder's major. Otherwise, he bids 2NT (sometimes 2♠ or 3♣).

When opener shows support for responder's major after Checkback Stayman, responder's jump to 3NT implies four cards in an unbid major, or adequate trump support for opener's hearts.

After a 1NT rebid, a reverse by responder is forcing, and a subsequent raise of opener's suit is also forcing. Use Checkback Stayman with an invitational hand.