

Conventions 210, with Pamela Granovetter
Lesson One

<p>SAMPLE First 3 pages of 10 pages</p>

Instead of making this class a description of ultra-complicated "expert" conventions, I decided to introduce conventions and treatments that are not too fancy, but which are very useful and practical. (Although we did throw in a few exotic ones just for fun.) Two different partnership agreements or conventions will be discussed in most classes (except the "Trent weak two-bid," which takes up three lessons). Everyone is welcome to write in with questions or comments, and we will try to address problem areas that have come up for you in real life.

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Before we begin the new conventions, I'd like to devote a session to slam bidding after notrump opening bids. There seems to be a lot of confusion in this area, and it's common for new partnerships to agree to play Stayman, Smolen, transfers, and Texas without discussing any details. Inevitably, misunderstandings pop up.

Hand #1

Stayman - The Rest of the Story

Your partner opens the bidding with one notrump (15 to a bad 18) and you hold:

K 8 3 2
A 4
A J T 3
K 6 4

Partner	You
1 NT	2 C
2 S	?

Do you have any idea what to bid next?

In real life, the player with this hand bid 4C, meaning it as Gerber. His partner thought it was a singleton and got very excited with:

A 7 5 4
 K Q J
 K Q 4
 J 3 2

He checked for key-cards, found out you had three without the queen of spades, and screeched to a halt in five spades. The good news is that they led a heart instead of a club, but the bad news was that the spades broke 4-1. The whole hand:

	K 8 3 2	
	A 4	
	A J T 3	
	K 6 4	
6		Q J T 9
T 9 7 3 2		8 6 5
8 6 5 2		9 7
A 8 7		Q T 9 5

A 7 5 4
 K Q J
 K Q 4
 J 3 2

We can't really say that North-South were unlucky because they already needed some luck to make FOUR spades (i.e., the spades break 3-2 and they don't take the first three tricks).

Is there any way North South can make a slam investigation without going past game?

There is! After Stayman and the response of a major by the opening notrump bidder, THREE OF THE OTHER MAJOR SHOWS SLAM INTEREST IN OPENER'S MAJOR.

Opener	Responder
1 NT	2 C
2 H	3 S = slam interest in hearts, usually a balanced hand
1 NT	2 C
2 S	3 H = slam interest in spades, usually a balanced hand

In our example on the previous page, the opening bidder, with his 4-3-3-3 minimum hand, has no interest in slam. But suppose the hands are:

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K 8 3 2
A 4
A J T 3
K 6 4

A Q J 5
J 3 2
K Q 6 5
A 2

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This time the opener has a maximum in point count, great trumps and a doubleton. The bidding goes:

Opener	Responder
1 NT	2 C
2 S	3 H = slam try in spades, usually balanced
4 C	4 NT = controls everywhere, so he takes over
5 S*	6 S

*two key cards plus the queen of trump

Since Responder can set trump by bidding 3 of the other major, there is no confusion about:

Opener	Responder
1 NT	2 C
2 S	4 NT

This is clearly quantitative (with four hearts).

These "other major" bids also apply after a 2NT opening:

Opener	Responder
2 NT	3 C
3 H	3 S = hearts, slam try
2 NT	3 C
3 S	4 H = spades, slam try
2 NT	3 C
3H/3S	4 NT = quantitative