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## Puppet Stayman

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This variation of regular **Stayman** is used by the partner of a notrump bidder to locate not only a 4-card major with the notrumper, but also a 5-card major.

I like to use 1NT-3♣ as Puppet. So, I use it only with enough values for game (10+ points for responder). The **Puppet Stayman** user is looking for a 5-3 major-suit fit. So, he will always have at least a 3-card major (maybe a 3-card major and a 4-card major). Never use **Puppet Stayman** with a 5-card major. The responses and follow-ups are shown below.

I don't recommend **Puppet Stayman** on the 2-level (1NT-2♣), because I prefer Garbage/Crawling **Stayman** -- whereby responder can use 2♣ with all junky major-suit hands. I like responder to be able to respond 2♣ with, say, ♠8764♥7652♦J8765♣--. Whatever opener bids, responder passes. (In **Puppet Stayman**, this doesn't quite work).

I also don't like **Puppet Stayman** after a 2NT opener. It doesn't work well when responder is 5-4 in the majors. However, many players don't mind that problem, so they do use Puppet after 2NT. Just make sure you agree with your partner if 2NT-3♣ is **Puppet Stayman** or not.

### Original Puppet

There are several variations/methods of **Puppet Stayman**. Here is one of the original methods (after 1NT-3♣):

3♦=One (or two) 4-card majors

3♥/3♠=5 cards there

3NT=No 4- or 5-card major

After 1NT-3♣-3♦, responder, with 4-3 in the majors, bids the 4-card major he doesn't have and opener acts accordingly.

Example: 1NT-3♣-3♦-3♥=4 spades

Puppet is never used with 4-4 in the majors.

### New and Improved Puppet

Here is a variation that is an improvement to original **Puppet Stayman** (and is part of **LC Standard**):

After 1NT-3♣:

3♦=No 5-card major

3♥/3♠=5 cards there

3NT=Does not exist

Followups to the newer variation:

After 1NT-3♣-3♦:

3♥/3♠=4 cards in the other major

3NT=No 4-card major

To read the excellent explanation of why this way is better (by Justin Lall based on Joe Grue's suggestion), click [here](#).

For either variation, lots of study, practice and concentration are required. If just reading this makes your head spin, then it probably isn't for you.

**Puppet Stayman** should be used normally when looking for a 5-card major (seeking a 5-3 fit).

Responder should not use **Puppet Stayman** with 4-4 in the majors, nor with 4-3-3-3 shape. Usually, responder has 3 cards in one major and a doubleton or singleton somewhere. Here are hands with which I would respond 3♣ (Puppet) to 1NT:

♠K J 2♥6 5♦A Q 8 7♣J 7 6 5 (After 3♠, bid 4♠, otherwise head to 3NT)

♠Q 8 7 6♥A Q 2♦3 2♣K J 7 6 (After 3M raise; after 3♦ bid 3♥ to look for a 4-4 spade fit)