


7. Stayman Hand Grows with a Fit

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<p>♠ A1052 ♥ 10982 ♦ A9 ♣ AQJ</p>	<p>♠ K74 ♥ 64 ♦ J108 ♣ 108754</p>		<p>♠ Q6 ♥ AJ53 ♦ K65 ♣ K962</p>
<p>♠ J983 ♥ KQ7 ♦ Q7432 ♣ 3</p>			
W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♥	P	2NT
P	3♠	P	4♠
All Pass			
---None Vulnerable---			

The Bidding:

North, with 15-17 points and a balanced hand opens 1NT. South, with a 4-card major and 8 points, uses Stayman with the intention of inviting with 2NT if partner bids 2 diamonds or 2 hearts, however, when partner bids spades, a spade game is the place to play.

South's bid of 2NT denies four hearts and shows 8 or 9 high card points; and because Stayman promises a 4-card major, North knows they have a spade fit. North, with a minimum 15 high card points is willing to sign off in 3 spades, however South knowing they have an eight-card fit adds distributional points and raises to game.

Points:

From the bidding East knows the opponents are probably right at 25 points with distribution and suspects West has only 2 (or perhaps a little more) high card points himself.

Opening Lead: 2♣

The lead here is a difficult choice. The lead is going up to North, the strong hand, and partner has no help, so any lead from an honour could cost a trick. Leading a trump is bad because, if not led, the queen of spades could win a finesse or cover the jack. East has to pick something, so he tries a club.

The dummy comes down:

Since East is in front of dummy, he compares every suit holding in the dummy to his own just once at the time when the dummy comes down so he won't pause in the play. It looks like his king of diamonds is good and his jack of hearts is probably not. He also gathers that his partner has two hearts and three spades.

The Play:

Declarer wins the opening lead with the queen of clubs, ruffs a club and finesses spades into East's queen.

East with diamond and heart sure-entries has to continue clubs. The forcing game to make declarer ruff in his long-trump hand could eventually cause him to lose control.

Declarer takes the ace of clubs (pitching a diamond from dummy). Declarer cannot afford to lose two spades so he must get to dummy on a heart. East ducks (timing is important) and the king of hearts wins the trick.

Declarer takes the second finesse of trump and it holds. Declarer could now refuse to draw the last trump to leave a trump in dummy to stop the defense from leading yet another club for fear of a sluff-and-a-ruff, but he draws the king of spades.

Declarer then attacks diamonds while he still has an entry to dummy, the queen of hearts. Defense could have taken the heart entry off of dummy but did not. Declarer plays the ace of diamonds and out a diamond.

East takes the king of diamonds, and since the dummy is out of trump gets out with his last club which declarer ruffs with his last trump. The forcing game would have succeeded if the person with the ace of hearts had a fifth club. Nevertheless, East's smallest club was the fourth best card he led so the contract comes home.

Result: 4 spades makes for +420