Micro Bridge Lesson 9

Puppet Stayman

Rationale

♠AQ643
♥AQ5
♦AQ3
♣KJ

This is a very good hand. However, its trick-taking ability is quite limited. It doesn't expect to take more tricks in spades than in No Trumps. For this reason, experienced players prefer to treat it as a "balanced" hand rather than a "spade" hand.

Allowing balanced hands with a five card major to be included in the very big NT bids is a good solution. If you play Benjamin Twos, all of these might include a five card major:-

21 – 22 HCP balanced	Open 2NT
23 – 24 HCP balanced	Open 2C and rebid 2NT
25 – 26 HCP balanced	Open 2D and rebid 2NT

Our treatment in these notes will deal with an opening 2NT. To discover the nature of the 2NT, we use a system of bids called **Puppet Stayman**.
It is currently the most favoured system with experienced players.

• Here are the responses to a 2NT (21–22) opening:-

3C	Puppet Stayman –see later
3D	transfer to 3H. If opener holds 3 hearts, he confirms the fit immediately by bidding 4H, not 3H.
3H	transfer to 3S as above
3S	shows 5 spades & exactly 4 hearts. Forcing
3NT	to play
4C	Gerber
4D	natural and forcing
4M	to play with 6 card major but prefer to use transfer system then raise.
4NT	Quantitative
5m	to play

•After 2NT, 3C says "Do you have a five card major?"

3D	no 5 card major but at least one 4 card major"
3H	have 5 hearts
3S	have 5 spades
3NT	have no 5 or 4 card major

• After 2NT – 3C and rebid of 3D, responder bids the major he DOESN"T have! or 3NT saying he's not interested in 4 card majors or 4D saying he has BOTH four card majors. Opener picks.

The aim of this unusual sequence is to keep the strong hand off the table.

• Try bidding these hands. Dealer West

♠AQ5	♠K9872	2NT	3H![1]
♥AQ643	♥87	4S[2]	4NT[3]
♦AQ3	♦K72	5C[4]	5H[5]
♣KT	♣A72	5NT[6]	6S

[1]Transfer to spades [2]confirms 3 card support.
[3]RKC Blackwood [4]3 or 0 keycards
[5]Asks for SQ [6]yes, have it.

Notice that 6NT requires the heart finesse for 12. In 6S, declarer ruffs a club to make 12 if spades behave. If they don't, we may still make 12 on heart finesse. If West doesn't hold SQ, 5S is enough since we are a little light on for HCP.

♠AQ	♠K9872	2NT	3H![1]
♥AQ6	♥T9873	3S![2]	4H[3]
♦AQ653	♦72	pass	
♣KT5	♣2		

[1]This is a standard transfer sequence, showing the higher suit first.
[2]shows doubleton only
[3]showing 2nd 5 card suit and is "to play".

♠AQ3	♠K9872	2NT	3S![1]
♥AQ63	♥T987	4H[2]	all pass
♦AQ6	♦72		
♣KT5	♣72		

[1]shows 5S & 4H
[2]places the contract in the superior 4-4 fit rather than the 5-3 spade fit. Mind you, 4H is no picnic either.

♠AQ54	♠K987	2NT	3C![1]
♥AQ6	♥87	3D![2]	3H![3]
♦AQ43	♦872	4S[4]	all pass
♣KT	♣A72		

[1]Puppet Stayman "Do you have a 5 card major?"
[2]"No, but I have at least one 4 card major"
[3] "This is the major I DON'T have"
[4] Places the contract, making strong hand declarer.

♠AQ54	♠K987	2NT	3C![1]
♥AQ6	♥K873	3D![2]	4D[3]
♦AQ43	♦87	4S[4]	4NT[5]
♣KT	♣A72	5C[5]	5D[5]
		5S[5]	6S

[1]Puppet Stayman. "Do you have a 5 card major?"
[2]"No, but I have at least one 4 card major"
[3] "I have both 4 card majors. Which do you have?"
[4]opener's major
[5] Responder is not finished. RKC in spades. Without SQ, 5S will be enough.

♠AQ542	♠6	2NT	4D[1]
♥AQ6	♥73	4S[2]	4NT[3]
♦AQ	♦K9872	5C[4]	6C[5]
♣KT6	♣AQ752	all pass	

[1]Natural and forcing
[2]Have to bid something – doubleton diamond.
[3]RKC Blackwood – in spades!
[4]3 or 0 keycards. We may be out of our depth!
[5] This bid is a little scary!

♠A4	♠KQT73	2NT	3H![1]
♥AK732	♥864	3NT	pass
♦A94	♦32		
♣AQ2	♣863		

[1]With 5-3 in the majors, we have to abandon the 3 card suit. Notice that we miss the superior 4H contract and play in 3NT.
Going via 3C on this hand gives too much torture. If there is no 5-3 heart fit, responder will be unable to convince opener that he holds a 5 card spade suit.