

# Slam Bidding

More information: <https://bridge.careytutor.com>

# Objective for Slam Bidding Mini-Lesson

- Main objectives:
  - Learn how to explore slam potential
- Secondary objectives:
  - Direct bidding of slams
  - Gerber
  - Blackwood

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  - RKC Blackwood
  - Control-showing cue bids
  - Grand Slam Force and Pick-a-slam
  - DOPI and DEPO

# Bridge Probabilities

## As beginners:

- 65% of hands end in a **part score**.
- 25% of hands end in a **game**.
- 5% of hands fail to make any contract.
- **5% of hands could make a slam.**

## As experienced players:

- 40% of hands end in a **part score**.
- 45 – 50% of hands end in a **game**.
- 5% of hands fail to make any contract.
- **5 – 10% of hands could make a slam.**

# Count Your Points!

26 – 29 – 33 – 37

- If you and your partner total 33 or more combined high card points
  - Bid the small slam!
- If you and your partner total 37 or more combined high card points
  - Bid the grand slam!

“The one who knows, goes.”

# Direct Bidding of Slam in No Trump

1NT or 2NT – pass – 7NT

Woo hoo! We've got 37+ high card points!

1NT or 2NT – pass – 6NT

Woo hoo! We've got 33+ high card points!

1NT or 2NT – pass – 4NT

Hmmm. We've got 31+ high card points, so bid 6NT with a maximum (17 or 21 high card points).

# 1NT – 7NT Example

♠AJ2    ♥K75    ♦KQ43    ♣Q52

North

West

East

South

♠KQ5    ♥AJ3    ♦AT    ♣AKJT4

# 1NT – 6NT Example

♠AJ2    ♥K75    ♦KQ43    ♣Q52

North

West

East

South

♠KQ5    ♥A83    ♦AT    ♣AJT74

# 1NT – 4NT Example

♠AJ2    ♥K75    ♦KQ43    ♣Q52

North

West

East

South

♠KQ5    ♥A83    ♦AT    ♣KT764

# Slam Scenarios in No Trump

- Over 1NT opening
  - 1NT – 4NT → opener rebids 6NT with maximum (17 high card points)
  - 1NT → responder bids 6NT with 17+
  - 1NT → responder bids 7NT with 22+
- Over 2NT opening
  - 2NT – 4NT → opener bids 6NT with max (21 high card points)
  - 2NT → responder bids 6NT with 13+
  - 2NT → responder bids 7NT with 17+
- Over 2C opening
  - 2C – 2D – 2NT → responder bids 4NT (9+ high card points) or 6NT (11+) or 7NT (15+)
  - 2C – 2D – 3NT → responder bids 4NT (6+) or 6NT (8+) or 7NT (12+)
- After 1 m/M – 3NT
  - Opener rebids 4NT → responder bids 6NT with max (15+ high card points)
  - Opener bids 6NT immediately with 19+
- After 1 m/M – 1 m/M – 2NT (showing 18 – 19 high card points)
  - Responder bids 6NT with 14+ high card points or 7NT with 19+

# Gerber Convention

- The **Gerber Convention** is used only when uncertain about the number of aces held by the opponents.
- Over 1NT or 2NT, an immediate 4C bid by responder is **Gerber**.
- The 4C bid is **artificial**: it means nothing about clubs.
- Instead, the artificial 4C bid requests the number of partner's aces.

# Gerber Convention – Showing # of Aces

- Opener artificially rebids “up the line” to show the number of aces
  - 4D – 0 or 4 aces (determine from context)
  - 4H – 1 ace
  - 4S – 2 aces
  - 4NT – 3 aces

# Gerber Convention – Responses

- After the number of aces are reported, responder may:
  - Sign off at 4NT if missing 2 aces; or
  - Sign off by bidding a non-club suit if missing 2 aces; or
  - Bid 6 in a suit, 6NT, 7 in a suit, or 7NT with sufficient aces

# 1NT – 4C Example

♠ AJ8 ♥ AJ2 ♦ T5 ♣ KQ853  
North

West

East

South

♠ 4 ♥ KQ7 ♦ KQJ8763 ♣ A4

# Gerber Convention – Showing # of Kings

- What if you find your partnership has all 4 aces and perhaps a grand slam is possible?
- Respond may **ask for kings by bidding 5C.**
  - 5D – 0 or 4 kings (determine from context)
  - 5H – 1 king
  - 5S – 2 kings
  - 5NT – 3 kings

# Slam Bidding with a Trump Suit

- After a partnership has determine a trump fit, they may jump to slam with 33 or 37 total points (small slam or grand slam).
  - Example: 1H – pass – 1S – pass – 3S – pass – 6S
  - 3S shows 16 – 18 total points; 6S shows that partner has 17+.
  - 6S also probably shows an ace or void in three suits. Why?
- Oops – what if the opponents turn up with two aces?
  - Unless you're lucky, they'll play their aces and the slam will fail.

# Standard Blackwood Convention

- The **Blackwood Convention** is used only when uncertain about the number of aces held by the opponents.
- Do not use Blackwood when:
  - a) You have a void or
  - b) You need to know specific aces
- After finding a trump fit, a **4NT bid** by either partner is **Blackwood**.
- The 4NT bid is **artificial**: it means nothing about playing in No Trump.
- Instead, the artificial 4NT bid requests the number of partner's aces.

# Blackwood Convention – Showing # of Aces

- Opener artificially rebids “up the line” to show the number of aces
  - 5C – 0 or 4 aces (determine from context)
  - 5D – 1 ace
  - 5H – 2 aces
  - 5S – 3 aces

# Blackwood Convention – Responses

- After the number of aces are reported, responder may:
  - Sign off at the lowest level in their agreed trump suit if missing 2 aces; or
  - Bid 6 in the agreed suit or 7 in the agreed suit with sufficient aces

# 1H – 3H – 4NT Example

♠ AQ8 ♥ AKQ762 ♦ 2 ♣ KJ5

North

West

East

South

♠ K64 ♥ J83 ♦ K73 ♣ A942

# Blackwood Convention – Showing # of Kings

- What if you find your partnership has all 4 aces and perhaps a grand slam is possible?
- Respond may ask for the number of kings **by bidding 5NT**.
  - 6C – 0 or 4 kings (determine from context)
  - 6D – 1 king
  - 6H – 2 kings
  - 6S – 3 kings

# Roman Keycard (RKC) Blackwood

- After a pair has agreed on a trump suit, a 4NT bid asks for keycards:
  - Example: 1H – 4H (13 – 15 total points) – 4NT asks for keycards.
  - Keycards include the 4 aces plus the K (and possibly Q) of trumps.
- Why ask for keycards?
  - Whenever you need to know whether you'll lose the first two tricks in a slam
- How is this different from standard Blackwood?
  - Knowing about the trump king (and possibly the queen) is valuable information.

# Roman Keycard (RKC) Blackwood

- Either opener or responder can initiate RKC Blackwood by **bidding 4NT**. Respond as follows:
  - 5C – 1 or 4 keycards
  - 5D – 3 or 0 keycards
  - 5H – 2 keycards, but no Q of trumps
  - 5S – 2 keycards, including the Q of trumps.
- This is the “1430” version; others play “0314”.
- The 4NT bidder may also ask for kings using 5NT. Bid up the line.

# Control-Showing Cue Bids

- This approach is useful when you need to know about specific controls.
  - A first round “control” is defined as an ace or void.
  - A second round “control” is defined as a king or singleton.
- A control-showing cue bid is made only after a trump suit is agreed and there is potential for slam.
  - In the basic approach, the first bid in a new suit shows a first-level control.
- After the trump suit is known, a non-jump bid in a new suit at the 4 level is a cue bid.
  - Example: 1S – 3S – 4C shows a 1<sup>st</sup>-level control in clubs
  - Exception: 1H – 3H – 3S shows a 1<sup>st</sup>-level control in spades

# Responses to Control-Showing Cue Bids

- A bid of a new, non-trump suit shows a 1st-level control in that suit.
- A lowest-possible bid in the trump suit shows no controls (sign-off).
- Bid “up the line” – bid the lowest suit in which you hold a control.
- Skipping over a suit denies a control in that suit.
  - Example: 1H – 3H – 4D shows a diamond control but denies a 1<sup>st</sup>-level club control.
- A rebid of a previously cue-bid suit shows a 2<sup>nd</sup>-level control.
  - Example: 1H – 3H – 3S – 4C – 4S shows 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-level control in spades.

# Uses of 5NT to Explore a Slam

- Jump to 5NT over a 1NT or 2NT opening
- Grand Slam Force – use of 5NT to ask about trump honors
- Pick-a-Slam – use of 5NT to request that partner bid the “best” slam
  - This use is a replacement for the Grand Slam Force.
  - You may use or the other but not both.

# Jump to 5NT over 1NT or 2NT

- A jump to 5NT over 1NT (or 2NT) is invitational.
  - If partner has a maximum (e.g., 17 if they opened 1NT), bid 7NT.
  - Otherwise, bid 6NT.
- Contrast this bid with the sequence 1NT (or 2NT) – 4NT.
  - This bid is also invitational.
  - It asks partner to bid 6NT with a maximum, pass otherwise.

# Grand Slam Force

- Grand Slam Force
  - A direct bid of 5NT over a suit bid (no intervening 4NT bid)
- Asks partner to bid the grand slam in their suit if they hold AK, AQ, or KQ in their trump suit.
  - Otherwise, sign off at 6 of their trump suit.
  - Example: 1H – 5NT – 7H (with AK, AQ, or KQ) or 6H (otherwise)

# Pick-a-Slam

- Used as an alternative to the Grand Slam Force
  - A 5NT bid with no intervening 4NT bid
- The 5NT bid asks partner to pick the “best” slam (based on the bidding).
- Often Pick-a-slam is bid after a 1NT bid:
  - Example: 1NT – 2C (Stayman) – 2H – 5N (asks partner to bid 6H or 6N based on their hand)
- Also can occur after a suit sequence:
  - 1H – 2S (strong, with long spades) – 5NT (asks partner to bid 6H or 6S based on their hand)

# DOPI and DEPO Conventions

- After an intervening bid over the Blackwood 4NT:
  - DOPI implies double = 0 aces, pass = 1 ace (alternative approach for RKC)
  - DEPO implies double = even # of aces, pass = odd # of aces (keycards for RKC)

# DOPI Convention

- Used in a Blackwood sequence (after 4NT asking for number of aces) when the opponents insert a bid.
  - Example: 1S – pass – 3S – 4D – 4NT – 5D (how to bid Blackwood now?)
- DOPI (standard Blackwood)
  - Double shows 0 or 4 aces (as if you'd bid 5C without the intervening bid).
  - Pass shows 1 ace (as if you'd bid 5D without the intervening bid).
  - 1<sup>st</sup> available bid (2 aces) and 2<sup>nd</sup> available bid (3 aces).
  - Example: 1S – pass – 3S – 4D – 4NT – 5D – pass (shows 1 ace)
- DOPI (RKC 1430 Blackwood)
  - Double shows 1 or 4 keycards (as if you'd bid 5C without the intervening bid).
  - Pass shows 0 or 3 keycards (as if you'd bid 5D without the intervening bid).
  - 1<sup>st</sup> available bid (2 keycards) and 2<sup>nd</sup> available bid (2 keycards and the trump queen).
  - Example: 1S – pass – 3S – 4D – 4NT – 5D – 5H (shows 2 keycards and no trump queen)
- Note: partner can pass after your double or double themselves; this is for penalty.

# DEPO Convention

- Used in a Blackwood sequence (after 4NT asking for number of aces) when the opponents insert a higher-level bid.
  - Example: 1S – pass – 3S – 4D – 4NT – 6D (how to bid Blackwood now?)
- DEPO (standard Blackwood)
  - Double shows 0, 2, or 4 aces (or keycards if playing RKC Blackwood).
  - Pass shows 1 or 3 aces (or keycards if playing RKC Blackwood).
- Note: partner can pass after your double; this is for penalty.

# Summary

- Direct slam bidding
- Gerber
- Standard
- RKC Blackwood
- Control-showing cue bids
- Grand Slam Force and Pick-a-slam
- DOPI and DEPO