

Cue-bidding: Getting to
good slams with minimal
HCPs

Do slams require lots of high-card points?

- With balanced hands, you want 32+ HCPs?
- But with shortage/controls/double fits, it might be less
- What you actually want is a good chance (> 50 percent) of taking 12 tricks

How to bid slams with minimal HCPs

Try to picture partner's hand from the bidding, how play might go, and whether 12 tricks is possible.

If possible, after agreeing a trump suit, use cue-bidding to show 1st/2nd round control

What's 1st/2nd round control

First round control is an Ace, or a void. Second round control is a king or a singleton

It's crucial to bid up-the-line. If you 'skip-over' a bid, that denies 1st and 2nd round control

Cue-bidding: Just for game-forcing auctions

- After 2 club opening bids, once a trump suit agreed
- After 1M-3M (where 3M shows 10+ HCPs)
- After 2-over-1 Game Force
- After 1C and a positive response in Precision
- After a transfer and super-accept

Cue-bidding: Example 1

N	North
♠	AKQ865
♥	AK54
♦	A
♣	A2
S	South
♠	J1073
♥	9
♦	QJ542
♣	J105

Bidding will go: 2C by North, 2D by South, 2S by North, 3S by South (setting trumps as spades), 4C by North, 4H by South. North now knows South has a void or singleton in hearts, offering a way to dispose of the 5 and 4 of hearts by ruffing. So North bids 6S.

Cue-bidding: Example2

N	North
♠	AJ9
♥	AKQ832
♦	43
♣	A2
S	South
♠	KQ2
♥	J1094
♦	J1095
♣	QJ

North bids 1H, and South bids 3H to show trump support and a 10-11 HCPs (3D if you play Bergen raises). North thinks slam might be on (it's possible, by maybe not likely). North cue-bids 3 spades. As South cannot CB 4C or 4D, they bid 4H. North passes, knowing there's 3 losing tricks in the minors

Let's practice

Cue-bidding and Blackwood

Cue-bidding and Blackwood are complimentary

N	North
♠	KQJ762
♥	A5
♦	KQJ2
♣	A
S	South
♠	A854
♥	K43
♦	754
♣	872

Bidding could go 2C by N, 2D by South, 2S by N, 3S by S, 4C by N, 4H by S. Now 6 is on if South has the Ace of S, so N bids 4NT, and gets to 6S.

Hands 17-20

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=17&v=-&d=nn=s2kqh789akqdajcaq&e=s9th46d58tkqc35tk&s=s67ah35jtd279c689&w=s3458jh2d346c247j&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=2cp2dp2hp3hp3sp4hPPP>

East will lead K of diamonds. North can make 12 trick by drawing trumps, cashing spade winners, and putting East in with J of diamonds. The either play a club, or give a ruff and discard.

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=18&v=n&d=en=sjth4jtd3679tc4qj&e=s278akqh5akd8kqj&s=s6h789d245ac257ak&w=s3459h236qc3689t&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=2cp2dp2sp3sp4cp4dp6sPPP>

Once West shows 1st or 2nd round control in spades, East can confidently bid 6S. 13 tricks available in a cross-ruff.

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=19&v=e&d=sn=s256h3479d8ktjc26&e=s389qh26tdqc389qj&s=sakh58akqjd59ac47&w=s47jtd23467c5akt&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=2cp2dp2hp3hp3sp4dp4hPPP>

When N bids 4D, denying 1st and 2nd round club control, South can safely stop in game. Before finessing (either way), cash a top diamond, and the queen appears.

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=20&v=b&d=wn=s35h68kqjd567c359&e=s468th37d9ac267aq&s=s79h49atd2348c4jt&w=s2kqjah25dkqjtc8k&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=1sp3sp4cp4dp4sPPP>

When E bids 4C, W knows slam is a possibility. But bidding 4S denies a heart control, so the partnership stops in game.

Boards 21-14

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=21&d=n&v=nn=s57kqjthkqjtd7aca&e=h3467ad56kqtc67j&s=s23ad238jc23458t&w=s4689h2589d49c9kq&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=2cp2dp2sp3sp4cp4hp4np5cp6sppp>

Let's suppose North tries for 6 spades (they may not – it's a difficult decision). They can make 12 tricks with a ruffing finesse of hearts.

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=22&v=e&d=en=s4589kh9d4qjtc346&e=sah58kqjtd259akca&s=s367jh27d678c89kq&w=s2qth346ad3c257jt&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=2cp2dp2hp3hp3sp4dp4np5cp7hppp>

East knows West CB must be a singleton/void. This offers three ruffing opportunities (assume 5-3 or 4-4 diamonds if void), or setting up long suit if singleton with ruffs (assume diamond 4-3 break).

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=23&d=s&v=bn=s579th235kd23c36a&e=s46jh479d679c245t&s=s8khadaqjkc789kqj&w=s23aqh68qjtd458t&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=2cp2dp3cp4cp4dp4hp4np5cp6cppp>

With the lead coming up to declarer, they will not lose two spades – and one can go on the king of hearts, described in the bidding.

<https://www.bridgebase.com/tools/handviewer.html?b=24&v=-&d=wn=s6h578kqd57qtc678&e=s25ah246td3c249qt&s=s78th39jd24jc5akj&w=s349kqjhad689akc3&b=1&d=n&v=-&a=2cp2dp2sp3sp4cp4dp4np5cp6sppp>

Declarer must start ruffing diamonds immediately, and ruff the 4th diamond high. Heart ruffs must be used to get back to hand.