

## Slam Bidding

### What do you need to bid a slam:

Generally 31-33 HCPs are needed to bid a small slam.

35-37 HCPs are needed to bid a grand slam.

In no trump, usually the higher point range is needed. However a slam can be made with a lower point count and a long running suit.

A good agreed upon trump suit.

At least 4 of the 5 key cards (4 aces and the K of trumps)

Do not have 2 losers in one of the suits.

### 4NT Ace or Key Card asking conventions:

#### Blackwood

5C 0 or 4 Aces  
5D 1 Ace  
5H 2 Aces  
5S 3 Aces  
5NT 2 Aces + useful void  
6 of a suit below trump suit  
6 of the trump suit

#### Key Card Blackwood

5C 0 or 4 Key Cards (4 aces and K of trumps)  
5D 1 or 5 Key Cards  
5H 2 Key Cards  
5S 3 Key Cards  
5NT 2 Aces + useful void  
1 ace and a void in the suit bid  
1 ace and a void in a suit above the trump suit

#### Roman Key Card Blackwood

5C 0 or 3 Key Cards  
5D 1 or 4 Key Cards  
5H 2 or 5 Key Cards without the Q of trumps  
5S 2 or 5 Key Cards with the Q of trumps

#### 1430

5C 1 or 4 Key Cards  
5D 0 or 3 Key Cards  
5H Same  
5S Same

These conventions are very useful to determine whether you have the necessary controls to bid a slam. If you do not, you can sign off at the 5 level.

Example:

S A K 8 5 4 2	S Q 7 5	West	East
H Q 7 6	H 4	1S	2D
D A 6	D K Q J 5 3	3S	4NT
C A 2	C K Q J 3	5C	6S
		Pass	

		West	East
S A J 8 5 4 2	S Q 7 5	1S	2D
H K J 10	H 4	3S	4NT
D A 6	D K Q J 5 3	5D (1430)	5S
C A 2	C K Q J 3	Pass	

**5NT Asks for Kings:** Do not ask for kings unless you have all the Aces (Key Cards) and are looking for a grand slam. There are 2 possible responses (partnership agreement)

**Number of Kings:** 6C shows 0 or 4 kings, 6D, 1 king; 6H, 2 kings; and 6S, 3 kings. If 4NT asks for key cards, do not show the king of trumps again.

**Specific Kings:** Bid the lowest king in your hand beneath the trump suit. A bid of 6C shows the king of clubs. 6D shows the king of diamonds and denies the king of clubs. Bid 6 of the trump suit if you have no kings or your king is in a suit higher than the trump suit.

Example: Using 1430 and Specific Kings. Your hand:

	Pard	You	Pard	You
S A 10 9 8 6 2	1H	1S	1H	1S
H K 8	3S	4NT	3S	4NT
D A Q J 2	5D	5NT	5D	5NT
C 2	6D	7NT	6C	6S
	Pass		Pass	

**When do you not use Blackwood:**

Do not use Blackwood if you don't know what to do with every possible response. Don't use Blackwood if your hand has:

1. Void suits
2. A suit without first or second round control, or
3. A hand where a possible response could get you too high.

Example: You open 1S with the following hands and partner raises to 3S (limit).

S A K J 7 6 4 2	If you bid 4NT, what do you do if partner shows 1 ace? If his ace is in a minor, slam could be a laydown. If his ace is in hearts, you are down.
H --	
D K 3 2	
C K Q 3	

S A K J 7 6 4 2	Again you don't know what to do if partner shows 1 ace. If he has the diamond ace slam could be there. But if he has the club ace, you could be off 2 diamond tricks.
H A K Q	
D 4 3	
C 5	

## Cue Bidding:

If you have a hand that may make a slam but is not suitable for Blackwood, you can cue bid your controls. You need to have agreed on a trump suit and be in range of a possible slam. Cue bid the lowest control outside of the trump suit.

Examples:

1S 3S A cue bid showing first round control of clubs.  
4C

1S 3S A cue bid showing first round control of diamonds.  
3D Denies first round control of clubs.

1S 2S Not a cue bid. A game try.  
3C

Cue bid the hand that was bad for Blackwood below:

S A K J 7 6 4 2 You open 1S and partner makes a limit bid of 3S. You bid 4H  
H -- showing control of the heart suit and denying first round control  
D K 3 2 of the minors. Partner knows you are looking for control in clubs  
C K Q 3 and diamonds and will bid 5C or 5D to show an ace if he has one.  
If not, he will sign off in 4S.

## Slam bidding over a NT opening:

Over a 1NT or 2NT opening, a bid of 4NT does not ask for key cards. It is a quantitative bid asking opener to go to six with a maximum and pass with a minimum.

You hold:

S K Q 7 Partner opens 1NT (15-17). You have 16 HCP so you have 31 - 33  
H A 4 2 HCP between you. You want to be in 6NT if the total is 33 and  
D Q 10 5 3 don't want to be in slam if partner has 15 HCP. Bid 4NT. Partner  
C A J 8 will pass with a minimum and bid 6NT with a maximum.

## Gerber over NT

A bid of 4C over a NT bid asks for aces. After asking for aces, 5C asks for kings

4D 0 or 4 aces  
4H 1 ace  
4S 2 aces  
4NT 3 aces

5D 0 or 4 kings  
5H 1 king  
5S 2 kings  
5NT 3 kings