

Audrey Grant Bridge Basics III

Popular Conventions

Chapter 4

Slam Bidding

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Slam Bidding

Small Slam – About 33 or more points

Grand Slam – About 37 or more points

Slam Bidding – No Trump

Slam bidding is fairly straightforward in No Trump Contracts. You simply combine the points in both hands.

“The person in the know, goes!”

How would you bid this hand?

Partner
1 NT

RHO
Pass

Responder
?

♠ K J 5
♥ Q 10 7
♦ A K 6 3
♣ A J 9

How High?

Where?

Do the Math!

How would you bid this hand?

Partner
1 NT

RHO
Pass

Responder
6 NT

♠ K J 5
♥ Q 10 7
♦ A K 6 3
♣ A J 9

Bid 6 NT – With 18 HCP's and no four card major suit, go straight to 6 NT.

Do the math; $15+18=33$ or $17+18=35$

How would you bid this hand?

Partner
2 NT

RHO
Pass

Responder
?

♠ A Q 8
♥ K J 10
♦ K Q 9
♣ K 10 5 4

How High?

Where?

Do the Math!

How would you bid this hand?

Partner
2 NT

RHO
Pass

Responder
7 NT

♠ A Q 8
♥ K J 10
♦ K Q 9
♣ K 10 5 4

Bid 7 NT – With 18 HCP's and no four card major suit, go straight to 7 NT.

Do the math; $20+18=38$ or $21+18= 39$

When it is Unclear

What if responder is not sure if there is enough combined strength for slam?

Responder can make an invitational raise by bidding one level beyond game.

This is called a **Quantitative Raise**

How would you bid this hand?

Partner
1 NT

RHO
Pass

Responder
?

♠ Q 10 5
♥ K 7
♦ K J 9 5
♣ A Q J 3

How High?

Where?

Do the Math!

How would you bid this hand?

Partner	RHO	Responder
1 NT	Pass	4 NT

♠ Q 10 5
♥ K 7
♦ K J 9 5
♣ A Q J 3

Bid 4 NT – With 16 HCP's and no four card major suit, make a quantitative raise of 4 NT. This asks partner to bid 6 NT with a maximum hand or to pass with a minimum hand.

Do the math; $16+15=31$ or $16+17=33$

How would you bid this hand?

Opener

♠ K 6
♥ A Q 5
♦ K J 9 7 2
♣ K Q 4

Responder

♠ A Q 8 3
♥ K 7 3
♦ Q 10 4
♣ A 8 3

How High?

Where?

Do the Math!

How would you bid this hand?

♠ K 6
♥ A Q 5
♦ K J 9 7 2
♣ K Q 4

♠ A Q 8 3
♥ K 7 3
♦ Q 10 4
♣ A 8 3

Opener

1 ♦

2 NT

Responder

1 ♠

6 NT

Bid 6 NT – With 15 HCP's and no four card major suit fit , jump to 6 NT

Do the math; $18+15=33$ or $19+15=34$

Suited Contracts

Slam bidding is more challenging in suited contracts than in No Trump contracts.

Opening bids and responses cover a wider range of values.

Also, hand valuation changes since the power of the trump suit brings voids and singletons into play.

How would you bid this hand?

Opener

♠ A J 6 5
♥ Q J 3
♦ 9 5
♣ K Q 7 2

Responder

♠ K Q 10 7 3 2
♥ A
♦ A J 7 3
♣ A 8

How High?

Where?

Do the Math!

How would you bid this hand?

♠ A J 6 5
♥ Q J 3
♦ 9 5
♣ K Q 7 2

Opener

1 ♣

2 ♠

Pass

♠ K Q 10 7 3 2
♥ A
♦ A J 7 3
♣ A 8

Responder

1 ♠

6 ♠

Bid 6 ♠— With 18 HCP's and two length points, responder jumps to 6 spades, after opener shows support for spades.

Do the math; $13+20=33$ or $14+20=34$

Slam – Where?

The partnership usually prioritizes determining **Where** the contract should be played

After determining **Where**, the partnership can next focus on **How High?**

How would you bid this hand?

Opener

♠ K Q 7 6 5
♥ Q 3
♦ A J 4 3
♣ 9 5

Responder

♠ A 4
♥ A
♦ K Q 10 7 5
♣ A J 6 4 2

How High?

Where?

Do the Math!

How would you bid this hand?

♠ K Q 7 6 5
♥ Q 3
♦ A J 4 3
♣ 9 5

Opener

1 ♠

3 ♦

Pass

♠ A 4
♥ A
♦ K Q 10 7 5
♣ A J 6 4 2

Responder

2 ♦

6 ♦

Bid 6 ♦ – With 18 HCP's and two length points, responder jumps to 6 diamonds, after opener shows support for diamonds.

Do the math; 13+20=33 or 14+20= 34

The Blackwood Convention

Guidelines for small slams (33 points) and Grand slams (37 points) work well in No Trump hands

There are additional considerations in suited contracts.

We count both length points and dummy points in suited contracts, so the opponents may have enough high cards to take the first two tricks.

How would you bid this hand?

Opener

♠ A Q J
♥ Q 10 7 3
♦ 4
♣ K Q J 10 8

Responder

♠ K 4
♥ K J 9 6 5 4
♦ A K Q J
♣ 9

How High?

Where?

Do the Math!

How would you bid this hand?

Opener

1 ♣

3 ♥

Pass

♠ A Q J

♥ Q 10 7 3

♦ 4

♣ K Q J 10 8

Responder

1 ♥

6 ♥

♠ K 4

♥ K J 9 6 5 4

♦ A K Q J

♣ 9

Bid 6 ♥ – With 15 HCP's and three dummy points, opener jumps to 3 hearts. With 17 HCP's and 2 length points, responder bids 6 ♥.

Do the math; $17+19=36$ or $18+19=37$

However, defenders hold two aces and can defeat the contract!!

An important consideration of slam bidding is that the partnership has enough stoppers to prevent the opponents from taking the first two tricks.

The partnership could be missing two Aces.

The partnership could be missing the Ace/King in a suit.

Blackwood Convention

The Blackwood Convention was developed in the 1930's to determine the number of Aces held by the partnership.

Once the partnership has agreed on a contract, a bid of **4 No Trump asks for Aces.**

Responses to 4 NT Blackwood

5 clubs shows 0 or 4

5 diamonds shows 1

5 hearts shows 2

5 spades shows 3

Roman Key Card Blackwood

Roman Key Card Blackwood is a variation of the Blackwood convention which provides additional information to the declarer/responder.

Two Types: 30-14 or 14-30

Overwhelming majority of players now use either 30-14 or 14-30

Key Card Blackwood

There are five (5) Key Cards in Key card blackwood

5 Key Cards – 4 Aces and the King of Trump

Responses to 4 NT Roman Key Card (30-14)

5 clubs shows 3 or 0 (30)

5 diamonds shows 1 or 4 (14)

5 hearts shows 2 or 5 key cards

5 spades shows 2 or 5 key cards plus the queen of trump

Note: in 14-30 clubs and diamonds are reversed

Roman Key Card Blackwood

The purpose of the Blackwood convention is not to help you find slams, but to help you avoid bidding bad slams!

Cannot be missing two aces

Roman Key Card Blackwood is a way of verifying that you have the Aces that you need.

Roman Key Card Blackwood

Elements Required to Bid and Make a Slam

**Controls – Cannot have two quick losers in a suit
(cannot be missing the Ace/King in a suit)**

**This topic requires Control Bidding – we will
cover this later in this lecture**

Blackwood / Roman Key Card

The player bidding Blackwood/ Roman Key card assumes captaincy of the partnership.

To use either convention, the captain must be sure:

- 1) A trump suit has been agreed**
- 2) There is likely to be enough combined strength for slam**
- 3) The partnership has first or second round control in all suits**

All you need to know is number of Aces or Kings

How would you bid this hand?

Using the Roman Key Card Blackwood (30-14)

♠ A Q J
♥ Q 10 7 3
♦ 4
♣ K Q J 10 8

♠ K 4
♥ K J 9 6 5 4
♦ A K Q J
♣ 9

How would you bid this hand?

♠ A Q J
♥ Q 10 7 3
♦ 4
♣ K Q J 10 8

♠ K 4
♥ K J 9 6 5 4
♦ A K Q J
♣ 9

Opener

1 ♣

3 ♥

5 ♦

Pass

Responder

1 ♥

4 NT

5 ♥

Missing two Aces, responder stops at 5 hearts.

How would you bid this hand?

Using the Roman Key Card Blackwood (30-14)

♠ A Q J
♥ Q 10 7 3
♦ 4
♣ A Q 10 8 2

♠ K 4
♥ K J 9 6 5 4
♦ A K Q J
♣ 9

How would you bid this hand?

♠ A Q J
♥ Q 10 7 3
♦ 4
♣ A Q 10 8 2

♠ K 4
♥ K J 9 6 5 4
♦ A K Q J
♣ 9

Opener

1 ♣

3 ♥

5 ♠

Pass

Responder

1 ♥

4 NT

6 ♥

Responder's 5 spade bid shows 2 key cards and the queen of trump. Missing only one Ace, and having second round control of the remaining 3 suits, responder bids the slam in hearts.

Play Hand #13

Play Hand #14

Roman Key Card (30-14) Blackwood Convention Asking for Kings

When the partnership has all the Aces and enough combined strength to consider a grand slam, 5 NT can be used as an extension of the Blackwood Convention to check for Kings.

Blackwood Convention - Replies to 5 NT

There are 3 Kings

You do not count the King of Trump as it was included in the 4 NT Roman Key Card bid.

6 ♣ shows zero kings

6 ♦ shows one king

6 ♥ shows two kings

6 ♠ shows three kings

How would you bid this Hand

Using the Roman Key Card

Blackwood (30-14)

♠ A K Q 8 6 5

♥ K Q 10 4

♦ A K

♣ A

♠ 10 7 4 2

♥ A 5

♦ 7 6 4

♣ K 7 6 2

Bid This Hand

♠ A K Q 8 6 5
♥ K Q 10 4
♦ A K
♣ A

♠ 10 7 4 2
♥ A 5
♦ 7 6 4
♣ K 7 6 2

Opener

2 ♣

2 ♠

4 NT

5 NT

7 ♠

Responder

2 ♦

3 ♠

5 ♦

6 ♦

Pass

Missing no aces or kings, responder bids the grand slam in spades.

When Blackwood Does Not Work

Blackwood was designed to keep the partnership out of poor slams rather than get the partnership to good slams.

Blackwood is only useful in determining the number of aces the partnership holds, not which aces. It is not suitable for all situations.

The partnership must first determine it has enough combined strength to belong in the slam zone.

When Blackwood Does Not Work

♠
♥ A K 10 7 6 3
♦ K Q J
♣ K Q J 4

Opener

1 ♥
?

♠ A K 8
♥ Q J 5 2
♦ 7 6 4
♣ 3 2

Responder

3 ♥

Opener sees the possibility of slam but asking for aces (Blackwood) will not help. Opener needs to know the specific Ace that partner holds to bid this slam.

The Blackwood Convention is not effective when holding a void in a suit.

What to do when holding a Void?

Control Bidding or Cuebidding is a technique for showing partner control in a suit. This can be either a void or an Ace

A bid of a new suit once the partnership has agreed on a trump suit shows a control in the suit.

You generally bid **“up the ladder”** (next highest suit) in which you hold a control.

Bypassing a suit denies a control.

Control Bidding

A bid of a new suit once the partnership has agreed on a trump suit shows a control in the suit.

**You generally bid “up the ladder”
(next highest suit) in which you hold a control.**

Bypassing a suit denies a control.

Control Bidding

♠
♥ A K 10 7 6 3
♦ K Q J
♣ K Q J 4

Opener

1 ♥
3 ♠

♠ A K 8
♥ Q J 5 2
♦ 7 6 4
♣ 3 2

Responder

3 ♥
4 ♥

Opening bidder sees the possibility of slam if partner holds either the Ace of Clubs or Diamonds. In order to find out if partner has either control, opener bids 3 spades which starts the control bidding process. Responder, holding neither the Ace of clubs or diamonds, now bids 4 hearts which denies either of these aces.

Control Bidding - Bid this Hand

♠
♥ A K 10 7 6 3
♦ K Q J
♣ K Q J 4

♠ K 8 5
♥ Q J 5 2
♦ A 8 7 6
♣ 3 2

Control Bidding

♠
♥ A K 10 7 6 3
♦ K Q J
♣ K Q J 4

♠ K 8 5
♥ Q J 5 2
♦ A 8 7 6
♣ 3 2

Opener

1 ♥
3 ♠
6 ♥

Responder

3 ♥
4 ♦
Pass

In this example, opener starts the control bidding process by bidding 3 spades. When partner bids 4 diamonds, showing the diamond ace, opener is happy to bid the 6 heart contract.

Control Bidding or Cue Bidding

Requires practice by the partnership.

The Gerber Convention - Asking for Aces

After a bid of 1 NT or 2 NT, a jump to 4 NT shows a quantitative raise and not the Blackwood convention.

To handle this situation, a bid of 4 Clubs is called the Gerber Convention and is Ace Asking similar to Blackwood.

Replies to Gerber 4 ♣

4 ♦ shows zero or all four aces

4 ♥ shows one ace

4 ♠ shows two aces

4 NT shows three aces

Replies to Gerber 5 ♣

5 ♦ shows 0 kings

5 ♥ shows 1 king

5 ♠ shows 2 kings

5 NT shows 3 kings

6 ♣ shows 4 kings

The Gerber Convention Bid This Hand

♠ A 8

♥ K Q J 8

♦ J 9 6 2

♣ K Q 9

♠ K Q J 9 7 5 2

♥ 4

♦ K Q 7

♣ A 6

The Gerber Convention

Bid this Hand

♠ A 8
♥ K Q J 8
♦ J 9 6 2
♣ K Q 9

♠ K Q J 9 7 5 2
♥ 4
♦ K Q 7
♣ A 6

Opener
1 NT
4 ♥
Pass

Responder
4 ♣
4 ♠

In this example, responder knows slam is possible if opening 1 NT bidder has two aces. A bid of 4 NT would be a quantitative raise in this sequence. So, responder bids 4 Clubs (Gerber) and finds that opener has only 1 Ace. Responder then places the contract in 4 spades.

The Gerber Convention

Bid this Hand

♠ A 8

♥ A J 8 7

♦ J 9 6 2

♣ K Q 9

♠ K Q J 9 7 5 2

♥ 4

♦ K Q 7

♣ A 6

The Gerber Convention

Bid this Hand

♠ A 8
♥ A J 8 7
♦ J 9 6 2
♣ K Q 9

Opener
1 NT
4 ♠
Pass

♠ K Q J 9 7 5 2
♥ 4
♦ K Q 7
♣ A 6

Responder
4 ♣
6 ♠

In this example, responder knows slam is possible if opening 1 NT bidder has two aces. A bid of 4 NT would be a quantitative raise in this sequence. So, responder bids 4 Clubs (Gerber) and finds that opener has 2 Aces. Responder then places the contract in 6 spades.

The Gerber Convention

Bid this Hand

♠ A J 6
♥ J 4
♦ A K J 5 4
♣ Q J 10

♠ 5
♥ A K Q 10 7 6
♦ Q 7 3
♣ K 4 2

The Gerber Convention

Bid this Hand

♠ A J 6
♥ J 4
♦ A K J 5 4
♣ Q J 10

Opener

1 ♦

2 NT

4 ♠

Pass

♠ 5
♥ A K Q 10 7 6
♦ Q 7 3
♣ K 4 2

Responder

1 ♥

4 ♣

6 ♥

In this example, after opener rebids 2 NT showing 18-19 points, a jump to 4 NT would be quantitative so responder uses the Gerber convention to ask for Aces. When opener shows two aces, responder confidently places the contract in 6 hearts.

Play Hand #15

Play Hand #16