Lesson Summary for U3ABDa18:Slams

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Welcome!

To help clarify some points in this week's lesson, we're giving you this Lesson Summary. It describes the same topics from a slightly different angle and is more portable than videos. We've also included some additional detail where it seems needed.

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Advanced topics & background information

Anything in green is background information or more advanced than you need right now. But if you're keen, it's worth knowing.

Weekly Summary

Here's a brief overview of the course so far, week by week:

1. Open a 12-14 point balanced hand with 1NT. If you don't have a 5+ major, pass or raise to 2NT or 3NT depending on your points
2. Respond to partner's 1NT opening bid if you have a 5+ major by using a Red Suit Transfer, then pass or rebid according to your length and strength
3. Open a 12-19 point unbalanced hand with one of your longest suit: 1C, 1D, 1H or 1S. Respond to partner's bid according to your points and shape: support a major if you have 4+, bid your own suit or 1NT or pass
4. Open a 15-19 point balanced hand with one of a suit, planning to rebid 1NT (15-16 points), 2NT (17-18 points) or 3NT (19 points). But if partner raises your suit or bids a suit that's a fit you may change your plan – especially if it's a major
5. Open a 12-19 point unbalanced hand with one of your longest suit and:
   With a 6-card suit, plan to bid it again (twice).
   With a 5-card suit, plan to bid your second (4+) suit **if you can**.
   With 12-15 points, your second bid should not be a jump or reverse.
   With 16-19 points, your second bid should be a jump or reverse.
   I say **plan** because partner might pass, or raise your first suit, or bid your second suit, or bid NT giving a point count, or change suit with a jump to show length and strength.
6. When partner opens one of a suit and rebids a second suit without jumping or reversing (showing 12-15 points), you have 4 main options:
   ONE: With an 8-card fit in either suit: raise that suit
   TWO: Without a fit, but stops in the unbid suits: bid NT
   THREE: Without a fit or stops, but your own 6-card suit: bid your suit again
   FOUR: Without a fit, stops or 6-card suit: make a preference bid, choose the better fit
   Base your response (pass, raise, jump raise or game) on total points, assuming partner has 12
7. When partner opens 1NT and you have a 4-card major (or two) and 11+ HCP, bid 2C (Stayman) to ask them to bid their 4-card major or 2D response if they don't have one. With a 4:4 fit, bid a Game Invitation or Game, based on total points; with no fit, bid 2NT or 3NT based on total points. Assume partner has 12.
8. Overcalling (1): When an opponent opens one-of-a-suit:
   With 8-15 points, a 5-card suit and (ideally) 2 Honours, make a **Suit Overcall** at the one-level. To overcall at the two-level, you need 11-15 points. These are constructive bids, aiming to make a contract. With fewer points but a longer suit you can make a **Jump Overcall**, an obstructive bid aiming to stop your opponents.

   If partner overcalls, raise to the **LEVEL OF FIT** regardless of your points!
   With 3 trumps, raise to 2 (5+3 = 8). With 4 trumps, raise to 3 (5+4 = 9). With 5 trumps, raise to 4 (5+5 = 10).
   You CAN bid your own 5+ suit, but this isn't forcing. If you're strong, **Jump** to force partner to bid.

9. Overcalling (2):
   With 16+ points and a stop in the opponent suit: **Overcall with 1NT or Double Then Bid 2NT or 3NT**
   With 12+ HCP and 3-card support for the unbid suits: **Double for Takeout**
   With 16+ HCP and a long suit, double and then bid your suit: **Double Then Bid** (a strong overcall)

10. Overcalling (3):
    If your opponent opens 1NT:
    - With 0-10 HCP: PASS
    - With 11-15 HCP and a good 5+ card suit: overcall
    - With 11-15 HCP but no good 5+ card suit: PASS
    - With 16+ HCP: **ALWAYS Double For Penalties**

    If partner's 1NT is doubled:
    - With 0-10 points: RESCUE 1NT Doubled into your 5-card suit if you have one, PASS if you don't
    - With 11+ points: REDOUBLE to reassure partner and score even more

    If partner doubles 1NT, it's for penalties:
    - With 0-4 points: RESCUE the Double into your 5-card suit if you have one, PASS if you don't
    - With 5+ points: PASS

    If your opponents bid up to the 3-level or higher, you can Double for Penalties

    If your opponents open a Weak Two or a 3-level pre-empt, you can Double for Takeout
    If your opponents open a 4-level pre-empt, you can Double for Penalties
    But we haven't taught you about Weak Twos or pre-empts yet!

11. With 20-22 HCP and a balanced hand: **OPEN 2NT**. This bid is NOT forcing.
    Responding to 2NT:
    - With 0-3 HCP: pass (or transfer to a 6-card major and pass)
    - With 4+ HCP and a major: use Stayman or a Red Suit Transfer to try for a fit
    - With 4+ HCP and no major: 3NT.

    With a really strong hand: **OPEN 2C**. This is a Game Force, mostly:
    - With 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand: open 2C and rebid 2NT
    - With 25-28 HCP and a balanced hand: open 2C and rebid 3NT
    - With 21+ HCP and a good 5+ Major: open 2C and rebid 2H/2S
    - With a hand that will make 9+ tricks in a Major or Minor: open 2C and rebid your suit
    - With 21-22 HCP and a good 5+ Minor: **OPEN 1C/D**. You need partner's help to make Game!

    Responding to 2C:
    - With 0-1 HCP, bid TWO negative responses: 2D and then 2NT
    - With 2-7 HCP, bid ONE negative response: 2D and then anything other than 2NT
    - With 8+ HCP, bid a positive response: bid a 5-card suit or 2NT if you have none

    The 2D negative response indicates that Slam is unlikely but Game is still probable; a second negative response (2NT) indicates that Game might not be possible - opener will decide.

    Exceptions to the Game Force:
    - Responder can pass after 2C 2D 2NT if they have just 0-1 HCP
    - Opener can tell partner to stop bidding by rebidding their suit after two negative responses (2D and then 2NT) if they needed more points for game. For example: 2C 2D 2H 2S 3S or 2C 2D 3C 3NT 4C.

12. With a **combined** point count of 31+, you may be able to make a Slam:
    - With 31+ you may be strong enough for 6C, 6D, 6H or 6S
    - With 35+ you may be strong enough for 7C, 7D, 7H or 7S
    - With 33+ you may be strong enough for 6NT
    - With 37+ you may be strong enough for 7NT

    But you also need **controls**, Aces or Voids. Use 4NT (Blackwood) to ask for Aces.
    The responses are: **5C** = 0 or 4 Aces; **5D** = 1 Ace; **5H** = 2 Aces; **5S** = 3 Aces

This Week's Lessons: Slams

Last week you learned how to open STRONG hands (with 20+ HCP) with 2C or 2NT - and bid up to Game. This week you learned how to keep going with a really strong hand, all the way up to a Small Slam or Grand Slam.

You learned about:

- Small Slams and Grand Slams
- The Blackwood Convention
- The Invitational 4NT (Quantitative Raise)

Small Slam, Grand Slam

A Small Slam is a contract for 12 tricks; a Grand Slam is a contract for all 13 tricks. You need more points for a Slam:

- To make a Small Slam in a suit (6C/D/H/S), you usually need 31+ points
- To make a Grand Slam in a suit (6C/D/H/S), you usually need 35+ points
- To make 6NT, you usually need 33+ points
- To make 7NT, you usually need 37+ points

In a suit contract, you expect to make extra tricks from trumping, so don't need quite so many points.
With a really long suit, you can make a Slam with fewer points.

Slam Bonuses

A Slam is an ambitious contract, riskier than a Game, but with a bigger score if you make it. If you don't make it, you don't get your Game bonus. If you do make it, you get your Game Bonus and your Slam Bonus too! It's a gamble. Just like Game Bonuses, Slam Bonuses vary with your vulnerability:

	Game Bonus	+ Small Slam Bonus	+ Grand Slam Bonus
Non-vulnerable	300	500	1000
Vulnerable	500	750	1500

So, for example, if you bid 6H and make 12 tricks, Vulnerable, you will score 180 + 500 + 750 = 1430. If you only bid 4H, you will score 180 + 500. But if you make 11 tricks, the result is very different: 6H down one scores minus 100, while 4H plus one scores 650.

When should you bid a slam?

You should bid a slam if you are fairly certain you will make it! Remember that you are risking a certain game bonus against a riskier slam bonus. It's mostly about **POINTS** in NT, but in a suit it can also be about length and **SHORTAGES**.

It is a lot easier to bid a slam when one of you has opened with a powerful opening bid like 2C or 2NT, because that means a predictable pile of points, but you also have rebids that show strong hands, such as jumps and reverses (bidding above the barrier).

So... check your points as the bidding progresses choose your suit or NT and bid a slam if you're strong enough – and brave enough!

Anything else?

OK, you have powerful hands that can make 12 or 13 tricks, but is there a risk that the opponents will make two tricks first, scuppering your contract before you get going? You need **CONTROLS**. In NT, it's just about Aces and Kings; in a Suit contract, Aces and Kings are still good, but voids and singletons are just as good as Aces and Kings, as you can trump those short suits.

I'm going to concentrate on Small Slams, because they are far more common. In a Small Slam you need to win twelve tricks and lose no more than one.

To put it simply, you must have Controls in all four suits as well as 12 tricks. A **First Round Control** is an Ace (in a NT or suit contract) or a Void (in a suit contract). A **Second Round Control** is a King (in a NT or suit contract) or a Singleton (in a suit contract). Although an unsupported King (e.g. K64) is a poor second round control if you aren't Declarer; KQ is fine. (If you're Declarer, and the opening lead is your weak suit, an opponent won't be able to play their Ace on your King, removing your control.)

For a Small Slam you need First Round Controls in 3 suits and a Second Round Control in the fourth suit.

So, if you have three Aces and a King in your hand, that's the Controls sorted, at least. More often than not you won't, so there is a convention for asking your partner if they have any Aces (and even Kings), the **Blackwood Convention**. But remember that just having Controls is not enough; you still need to make 12 tricks!

The Blackwood Convention

To ask partner how many Aces they have, bid 4NT once you're sure of the denomination (suit or NT). Their response shows how many Aces they have:

5C = 0 or 4 Aces	5H = 2 Aces
5D = 1 Ace	5S = 3 Aces

Blackwood does NOT tell you which suit the Aces are in, and does NOT show voids. But it helps.

CAUTIONS:

- Do NOT open 4NT and expect it to be interpreted as Blackwood. If you're that strong, open 2C and rebid your suit or 2NT before you bid 4NT.
- Do NOT respond 4NT immediately if partner opens 1NT or 2NT, as this is not Blackwood, it's a **Quantitative Raise** (described below). You must play for time, make an ***extemporizing*** forcing bid first (2C, 2D or 2H will do – the Stayman and Transfer conventional bids). Ignore partner's response (!) and bid 4NT. They will then treat 4NT as Blackwood, and you can bid on.
- If you're aiming for a Slam in Clubs or Diamonds, you may not be able to use Blackwood, because partner's response may not show enough Aces for a Slam, but force you to bid it! For example: if you're aiming for 6C but need two Aces and partner responds 5D, showing one, you will still have to bid 6C, missing an Ace.

If you're strong enough to bid a Grand Slam, you can bid 5NT (after using 4NT) to ask for Kings; the responses are similar as for 4NT (6C=zero or four 4 Kings, 6D=one King, and so on).

The Invitational 4NT (Quantitative Raise)

if partner opens 1NT or 2NT, an immediate response of 4NT is not Blackwood, it's a Quantitative Raise, inviting partner to raise to 6NT if they have the maximum points for their bid – or pass if they don't.