

Practice Session for U3ABD18: Slams

Welcome!

Here is a description of all the hands that you could play in today's Practice Session. It includes details like the cards in each hand, how to evaluate each hand (High Card Points, Shortage Points, shape), the "correct" bidding, and lead.

This week you get the chance to win big, by bidding **Slams**. To make a Slam you need to make 12 or 13 tricks; harder than making game, but you get bigger rewards.

Don't feel bad if you bid the hands a bit differently, or ended up in a slightly different contract. Each week there's something new, it will take you a while to get the hang of all of it. Hopefully it's starting to make more sense as the pieces of the puzzle are starting to fit together you can see the bigger picture. But yes, it's getting trickier; more things to remember, more choices to make. More fun to be had, maybe?

We're here to help, share our enthusiasm for this great game. You will make mistakes, but we're always happy to explain or answer questions. Remember, you're playing with people who are just starting out, too. Let's have fun together!

Version 4 of this document corrects an error (**marked in red**). Research has shown that 33 points is enough for a good (92%) chance of making 6NT, not 35 points.

-Ed

Advanced topics

Advanced topics are in green. These are included for completeness; you can ignore them for now or dive in if you want *more*.

Recap

In previous modules you learned how to bid up to Game (3NT, 4H, 4S, 5C or 5D) when you've got 25+ points. Bidding Slams requires even more points (31+), so it doesn't happen so often.

This Week's Lessons – Slams

In this week's module, you learned about:

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

Slams?

A Small Slam is a contract for 12 tricks; a Grand Slam is a contract for all 13 tricks. You need rather 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 (7C/D/H/S), you usually need 35+ points
- To make a Small Slam in No Trumps (6NT), you usually need **33+ points**
- To make a Grand Slam in No Trumps (7NT), you usually need 37+ points

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

Slam Bonuses

A Slam is an ambitious contract, riskier than a Game, but with a bigger score (Bonus) 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 $500 + 750 + 180 = 1430$. If you only bid 4H, you will score $500 + 180 = 680$. But if you make 11 tricks, the result is very different: 6H down one scores minus 100, while 4H plus one scores 650.

Should you bid a slam?

You should bid a slam if you are fairly certain you will make it! Remember that you are usually risking a certain game bonus against a riskier slam bonus. It's mostly about **POINTS** in NT, but in a suit contract 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 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 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 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 hands that can make 12 tricks!

The Blackwood Convention

To ask partner how many Aces they have, bid 4NT during an auction. Their response shows how many:

- 5C = zero or four Aces
- 5D = one Ace
- 5H = two Aces
- 5S = three 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 then rebid 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 rebid 5NT 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.

The Boards

North East South West

2NT	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ KQJT		
	♥ Q64		
	♦ AKQ		
	♣ K75		
♠ 5432		♠ A	
♥ T95		♥ J872	
♦ T93		♦ J754	
♣ T63		♣ J982	
	♠ 9876		
	♥ AK3		
	♦ 862		
	♣ AQ4		

East South West North

2NT	Pass	4NT	Pass
6NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 976		
	♥ 7		
	♦ T87642		
	♣ A83		
♠ J53		♠ AKQ	
♥ A62		♥ K85	
♦ 93		♦ AKQJ	
♣ KQJT9		♣ 765	
	♠ T842		
	♥ QJT943		
	♦ 5		
	♣ 42		

Board: 1 Dealer: North #93

North has 20 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

The 2NT opening bid promises 20-22 HCP in a balanced hand.

South has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so can see a total of 33-35 HCP. 33 points is just enough for a Small Slam in NT, so they bid 6NT without hesitation.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

33 HCP is usually enough for a Small Slam in No Trumps, it's not certain. Missing 7 points, the opening lead could even be the Ace from AK, taking you down immediately. Life, eh?

Board: 2 Dealer: East #377

East has 22 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

The 2NT opening bid promises 20-22 HCP in a balanced hand.

West has 11 HCP and a balanced hand with a nice solid Club suit.

They can see a total of 31-33 HCP. Partner needs to have the maximum points for their bid (22 HCP) to total the 33 points needed for 6NT, so they bid 4NT. This 4NT bid is a **Quantitative Raise**, not Blackwood. It's a Slam Invitation, asking partner to bid 6NT if they have 22 points.

East has the required 22 points, so raises 4NT to 6NT without hesitation.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

33 HCP is usually enough for a Small Slam in No Trumps, but it's not certain. Missing 7 points, the opening lead could even be the Ace from AK, taking you down immediately. Fingers crossed.

Most of the time, the 4NT bid is Blackwood, a convention asking for Aces, but not if it is bid in immediate response to a 1NT or 2NT opening bid, like here.

South West North East

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ QT32		
	♥ 75		
	♦ T532		
	♣ QJT		
♠ 74		♠ 865	
♥ QJT		♥ K98632	
♦ J987		♦ Q	
♣ 9652		♣ K84	
	♠ AKJ9		
	♥ A4		
	♦ AK64		
	♣ A73		

Board: 3 Dealer: South #2997

South has 23 HCP and a balanced hand. Slightly too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP), they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

North has 5 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

South bids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

North has 5 HCP and a 4-card Major, so bids 3C (Stayman) to check for a 4-4 fit.

South has a 4-card Spade suit, so responds with 3S.

North raises partner to 4S as they've established a 4-4 fit in Spades.

West North East South

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ T63		
	♥ 85		
	♦ 52		
	♣ AQT863		
♠ AKQ		♠ 87	
♥ KQT4		♥ AJ6	
♦ AK6		♦ J743	
♣ K92		♣ J754	
	♠ J9542		
	♥ 9732		
	♦ QT98		
	♣		

Board: 4 Dealer: West #2297

West has 24 HCP and a balanced hand. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP), they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

East has 7 HCP, not quite enough for a positive response, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

West bids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

East doesn't have a 5-card suit to bid, or a 4-card Major to investigate with Stayman. They do have 7 HCP, more than enough to raise to 3NT.

North East South West

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ KQ5		
	♥ AK2		
	♦ AKT4		
	♣ AK6		
♠ JT98		♠ A743	
♥ J96		♥ QT53	
♦ Q82		♦ J	
♣ J94		♣ Q873	
	♠ 62		
	♥ 874		
	♦ 97653		
	♣ T52		

Board: 5 Dealer: North #2464

North has 26 HCP and a balanced hand. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP), they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

South has 0 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

North bids 3NT to show their point count and balanced hand.

The 3NT rebid after a 2C opening shows 25-28 HCP and a balanced hand..

South has nothing else to say and passes..

East South West North

2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass
 2NT Pass 3NT Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ A86
 ♥ KJ4
 ♦ T752
 ♣ J97

♠ 952
 ♥ AQ6
 ♦ 8643
 ♣ 654

♠ KQ
 ♥ T853
 ♦ AKQ9
 ♣ AKQ

♠ JT743
 ♥ 972
 ♦ J
 ♣ T832

South West North East

2NT Pass 7NT Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ JT3
 ♥ AQT
 ♦ KQJ82
 ♣ K2

♠ 987
 ♥ 95
 ♦ T9765
 ♣ 653

♠ 6542
 ♥ 86432
 ♦
 ♣ QJT9

♠ AKQ
 ♥ KJ7
 ♦ A43
 ♣ A874

West North East South

2NT Pass 6NT Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ T97
 ♥ Q976432
 ♦ T2
 ♣ 2

♠ AKQ
 ♥ KJ5
 ♦ AK953
 ♣ T6

♠ 864
 ♥ AT
 ♦ J4
 ♣ AKJ543

♠ J532
 ♥ 8
 ♦ Q876
 ♣ Q987

Board: 6 Dealer: East #2932

East has 23 HCP and a balanced hand. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP), they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

West has 6 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

East bids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

West doesn't have a 5-card suit to bid, or a 4-card Major to investigate with Stayman. They do have 6 HCP, more than enough to raise to 3NT.

Board: 7 Dealer: South #463

South has 21 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

The 2NT opening bid promises 20-22 HCP in a balanced hand.

North has 16 HCP and a balanced hand, so they can see a total of 36-38 HCP. 37 points is enough for a Grand Slam in NT, so their decision to bid 7NT without any further investigation is a little rash.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

37 HCP is usually enough for a Grand Slam in No Trumps. With only 36 points for certain, they could be missing an Ace. It makes sense to ask for Aces first, to check first.

Over 2NT, you could use 4C, the Gerber convention, to ask for Aces, but we recommend beginners to avoid Gerber, it can get confusing.

Sadly, North can't use Blackwood straight off, as a 4NT response to 2NT is a Quantitative Raise; the solution is to make a forcing bid (bid a suit) first, then bid 4NT so partner sees it as Blackwood. In this case, North could bid 3D, which South will treat as a Transfer to Hearts (!), then bid 4NT to ask for Aces, and finally bid 6NT or 7NT if you have all four Aces. Yep, a bit scary.

I hardly ever bid a Grand Slam!

Board: 8 Dealer: West #1933

West has 20 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

The 2NT opening bid promises 20-22 HCP in a balanced hand.

East has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so can see a total of 33-35 HCP. 33 points is just enough for a Small Slam in NT, so they bid 6NT without hesitation.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

33 HCP is usually enough for a Small Slam in No Trumps, but it's not certain. Missing 7 points, the opening lead could even be the Ace from AK, taking you down immediately. Life, eh?

North East South West

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ AK5		
	♥ AKQ85		
	♦ AQ4		
	♣ Q6		
♠ T973		♠ QJ8	
♥ J4		♥ T7	
♦ K865		♦ 973	
♣ T75		♣ AKJ93	
	♠ 642		
	♥ 9632		
	♦ JT2		
	♣ 842		

Board: 9 Dealer: North #485

North has 24 HCP and a balanced hand with a good 5-card Major. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP) or 1H opening, they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

South has 1 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

North bids 2H to show their 5-card suit.

South only has 1 HCP but does have 4-card support for partner's Hearts. They don't have any other values to show, so they bid game, 4 Hearts.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South's 4H bid feels a bit heavy-handed; the 2C opening bid is a game force, so a 3H response would give partner a bit more space for any other bids they want to make – they aren't going to miss game Still, no harm done.

East South West North

2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 7653		
	♥ T94		
	♦ K86		
	♣ J65		
♠ 82		♠ AKQJ	
♥ K865		♥ AQJ72	
♦ 742		♦ AQ9	
♣ A984		♣ T	
	♠ T94		
	♥ 3		
	♦ JT53		
	♣ KQ732		

Board: 10 Dealer: East #550

East has 23 HCP and a 5-card Heart suit. Too strong for a 1H opening, they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

West has 7 HCP, so could make the negative response, 2D (0-7 HCP), but chooses the positive response because they have an Ace and a King; a good 7 points.

The 2NT response to the 2C opening bid promises 8+ HCP (or an Ace and a King) and no 5-card suit. A positive response indicates a Slam is likely.

East bids 3H to show their 5-card suit.

West has good 4-card support for partner's suit, so raises them to 4H. This raise of opener's suit promises 3-card support.

East can see at least 31 HCP, at least 8 Hearts, and can (perhaps) add two points for their Club Singleton. With 33 points, they're fairly confident about bidding a small slam, 6H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

West's 2NT response to the 2C opening bid is as taught by NFB, but it's another "exception" that you have to bear in mind; a bit like opening a weak hand under the Rule of 20, partner may be a bit misled by it.

South West North East

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ T875		
	♥ Q8		
	♦ T42		
	♣ AQ64		
♠ 964		♠ 2	
♥ 9543		♥ 76	
♦ J76		♦ KQ9853	
♣ 532		♣ KJ87	
	♠ AKQJ3		
	♥ AKJT2		
	♦ A		
	♣ T9		

Board: 11 Dealer: South #990

South has 22 HCP and two 5-card Majors. Too strong for a 1H or 1S opening bid, they open 2C. This is a very strong hand, it won't take much more to make a Slam.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

North has 8 HCP, so should make a positive response of 2NT (showing 8+ points and no 5-card suit), but choose to make the negative response of 2D. Hmm.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

South has two 5-card majors and plans to show both, so bids 2S first to leave more bidding room. This 2-level rebid shows a 5-card suit and 21+ HCP. The Game Force is still in place.

North has 4-card support for partner's spades, so raises to 3S. This raise shows 3+ trumps and 3-7 HCP.

South could bid 4H now to show that they're two-suited, but they're so strong they just need to know if partner has the Ace of Clubs, to decide if they can bid a slam. They bid 4NT, Blackwood, to check.

North has a single Ace, so responds 5D to show it.

South can see at least 10 tricks in hand, probably 11, and partner has shown the missing Ace for another trick, so South can bid the 6S Small Slam with reasonable confidence.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

North's 2D negative response is baffling. They have 8 HCP, so should respond 2NT. With a positive response, South might have investigated a Grand Slam. If you check the hands, they can make 7S despite only having 30 HCP – but probably shouldn't bid it!

West North East South

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 832		
	♥ T		
	♦ T8654		
	♣ KT92		
♠ KQJT6		♠ A974	
♥ AKQ72		♥ 853	
♦ K		♦ Q92	
♣ AQ		♣ J76	
	♠ 5		
	♥ J964		
	♦ AJ73		
	♣ 8543		

Board: 12 Dealer: West #2576

West has 25 HCP and two 5-card Majors. Too strong for an opening bid of 1H or 1S, they open 2C. This is a very strong hand, it won't take much more to make a Slam.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

East has 7 HCP, so must make the negative response of 2D. The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

West has two 5-card majors and plans to show both, so bids 2S first to leave more bidding room.

This 2-level rebid shows a 5-card suit and 21+ HCP. The Game Force is still in place.

East has 4-card support for partner's spades, so raises to 3S. This raise shows 3+ trumps and 3-7 HCP.

South could bid 4H now to show that they're two-suited, but they're so strong that they really just need to know if partner has at least one Ace, to decide if they can bid a slam. They bid 4NT, Blackwood, to check.

East has a single Ace, so responds 5D to show it.

West can see at least 11 tricks in hand, and partner has shown the missing Ace for another trick, so South can bid the 6S Small Slam with reasonable confidence. They know they're missing an Ace, so a

Grand Slam would be very unwise!

North East South West

2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass
 2NT Pass 3♣ Pass
 3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ AKQ32
 ♥ K4
 ♦ A85
 ♣ AK6

♠ 764
 ♥ T52
 ♦ 643
 ♣ J932

♠ 9
 ♥ AQ96
 ♦ KQT97
 ♣ Q75

♠ JT85
 ♥ J873
 ♦ J2
 ♣ T84

Board: 13 Dealer: North #3335

North has 23 HCP and a balanced hand with a 5-card Major. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP) or 1S, they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

South has 3 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

North bids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

South has 3 HCP so decides to bid on. They don't have a 5-card suit to bid, but do have two 4-card Majors, so use Stayman to look for a fit.

This 3C (Stayman) bid in response to 2NT shows 3+ HCP and at least one 4-card Major.

North bids 3S to show they have at least 4 Spades (and not 4 Hearts).

With a 4-4 fit in Spades, South raises to game

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

North's rebid could have been 2S rather than 2NT, but 2NT is safer as it cancels the Game Force – just in case partner has nothing. However, if they had bid 2S then they (not South) would be Declarer in 4S, and the weaker hand would be Dummy – which is always preferable.

East South West North

2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass
 2NT Pass 3♦ Pass
 3♥ Pass 4♥ Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ K98743
 ♥ J3
 ♦ 97
 ♣ QT8

♠ A5
 ♥ T87642
 ♦
 ♣ J9642

♠ JT
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ AKQJ5
 ♣ AK75

♠ Q62
 ♥ A95
 ♦ T86432
 ♣ 3

Board: 14 Dealer: East #3351

East has 23 HCP and a semi-balanced hand with a 5-card Major. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP) or 1D, they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

West has 5 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

East rebids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

West has more than 2 HCP so decides to bid on; they have a poor 6-card Heart suit and a void, so Hearts seem like a much better contract than NT. Their 3D bid is a transfer request to Hearts.

East bids 3H as requested.

West could pass 3H, but they can see at least 6+2 Hearts and at least 5+23 HCP, so they're happy to bid 4H.

South West North East

2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ J942
♥ 65
♦ QT53
♣ 873

♠ A3
♥ T7
♦ 9872
♣ KQT94

♠ KQT6
♥ AQ32
♦ AKJ
♣ AJ

♠ 875
♥ KJ984
♦ 64
♣ 652

West North East South

1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ QJT
♥ A9
♦ T8762
♣ T63

♠ A863
♥ KQJT87
♦ Q
♣ AK

♠ 975
♥ 632
♦ K9543
♣ 74

♠ K42
♥ 54
♦ AJ
♣ QJ9852

Board: 15 Dealer: South #3356

South has 24 HCP and a balanced hand. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP), they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

North has less than 8 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

South bids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

North has 3 HCP so decides to bid on. They don't have a 5-card suit to bid, but do have a 4-card Spade suit, so use Stayman to look for a fit.

This 3C (Stayman) bid in response to 2NT shows 3+ HCP and at least one 4-card Major.

South bids 3H to show they have 4 Hearts.

With no fit established in Spades, North bids 3NT.

South could pass, but now knows that North has at least 4 Spades (or they would not have used Stayman), and they have 4 Spades, so bids 4S confident of a 4-4 fit.

4H or 4S usually plays better than 3NT, if you have a 4-4 fit.

Board: 16 Dealer: West #3056

West has 19 HCP and a good 6-card Major, so opens with 1H, planning to show their strength with their rebid.

A 1-level suit bid promises 12-19 HCP and a 4-card suit.

East has 11 HCP and 6-card Club suit, so they respond with 2C.

This change of suit at the 2-level shows 9+ HCP and a 5-card suit. It's forcing for 1 round.

West responds with 2S, a Reverse or "Bid above the barrier". A Reverse (bidding a second suit that's ranked higher than your first) shows 16-19 HCP and a 4-card second suit.

Both partners can see that they've got enough points for game now – and maybe a Small Slam.

East has already shown their points, so rebids 3C to show they've got six Clubs.

West bids 3H to show they have at least five Hearts, probably six.

East could in principle bid 3NT as they have a stop in the unbid suit, but chooses to raise partner's Hearts instead, as they can see 7-8.

West can see they have 8+ Hearts and 28+ HCP. They've got 8 obvious tricks in Hearts, with partner's help they're strong enough to try for a Small Slam. They bid 4NT, Blackwood, to check they're not missing two Aces.

East has a single Ace, so responds with 5D. West knows they're missing just one Ace, so can bid 6H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

The general advice is that you need 31+ HCP to make a Small Slam in a suit. West bid the Slam even though they're only sure of 28 HCP; their strong Heart suit, good support for partner's Club suit, and abundant controls all improved their odds, but it was still a bit risky.

North East South West

1NT	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ KQ6		
	♥ K52		
	♦ KJ95		
	♣ 942		
♠ T742		♠ J853	
♥ 9843		♥ QJT6	
♦ QT876		♦	
♣		♣ JT875	
	♠ A9		
	♥ A7		
	♦ A432		
	♣ AKQ63		

Board: 17 Dealer: North #1627

North has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT.
 The 1NT opening bid promises 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.
 South has 21 HCP, a semi-balanced hand, and all four Aces. With 33-35 HCP, 6NT looks like the right contract.
 6NT usually needs 33+ HCP.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If you look at the hands, you can see 6NT won't be easy, as the Clubs split badly, as do the Diamonds. It looks like the key is to finesse the Diamonds three times.

East South West North

2NT	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ QT86		
	♥ 6432		
	♦ 7		
	♣ 7543		
♠ KJ4		♠ A53	
♥ KQ		♥ AJ7	
♦ QJ83		♦ A652	
♣ QT86		♣ AKJ	
	♠ 972		
	♥ T985		
	♦ KT94		
	♣ 92		

Board: 18 Dealer: East #1965

East has 21 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.
 The 2NT opening bid promises 20-22 HCP and a balanced hand.
 West has 14 HCP and a balanced hand. They can see that their partnership has 34-36 HCP. If partner has the minimum 20 HCP, the opposition only have 6 HCP, so you can't be missing two aces, and 6NT looks like the right contract.
 6NT usually needs 33+ HCP.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

There are few guarantees. If East has 20 HCP, you could go down quite quickly. For example: if South leads a low Spade and North has the Ace and Queen of Spades over Dummy's King, North makes two tricks at the outset.

Sometimes you need some luck.

South West North East

1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	6NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ 865		
	♥ AJ94		
	♦ KQ3		
	♣ AQ5		
♠ Q974		♠ JT2	
♥ T5		♥ Q872	
♦ T98542		♦ 6	
♣ 6		♣ J9432	
	♠ AK3		
	♥ K63		
	♦ AJ7		
	♣ KT87		

Board: 19 Dealer: South #1901

South has 18 HCP and a balanced hand. They open 1C planning to rebid 2NT to show their points and distribution.
 An opening bid of 1C promises 4 clubs and 12-19 HCP.
 North has 16 HCP and a balanced hand, so knows that game is on and slam is possible. They bid their longest suit, 1H.
 A change of suit at the one level promises 6-15+ HCP and a 4-card suit. It is forcing for one round – so North will get another bid to show their strength.

South's 2NT jump rebid shows 17-18 HCP and a balanced hand.
 North now knows they have 33-34 HCP, enough for a Small Slam.
 Since both hands are balanced, 6NT is the best contract.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

There are few guarantees. If South has 17 HCP, you could go down quite quickly, as you could be missing AK in a suit. But most people would just bid 6NT and hope.

Sometimes you need some luck.

West North East South

1♣ Pass 1♥ Pass

2NT Pass 6NT Pass

Pass Pass

♠ JT8
♥ Q9864
♦ T864
♣ 2

♠ AQ6
♥ 73
♦ KQJ
♣ KQJ53

♠ K74
♥ AKJT5
♦ A75
♣ T7

♠ 9532
♥ 2
♦ 932
♣ A9864

Board: 20 Dealer: West #1478

West has 18 HCP and a balanced hand with a 5-card Club suit. They open 1C planning to rebid 2NT to show their points and distribution.

An opening bid of 1C promises 4 clubs and 12-19 HCP.

East has 15 HCP and a balanced hand with a 5-card Heart suit, so knows that game is on and slam is possible. They bid their longest suit, 1H.

A change of suit at the one level promises 6-15+ HCP and a 4-card suit. It is forcing for one round – so East will get another bid to show their strength.

West’s 2NT jump rebid shows 17-18 HCP and a balanced hand.

North now knows they have 32-33 HCP, enough for a Small Slam. Since both hands are balanced, 6NT is the best contract.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

This contract is quite risky, as you could be missing an Ace and a King or even two Aces - if South has 17 HCP.

Sometimes you need some luck.

East could use Blackwood to check rather than jumping to 6NT. (4NT is Blackwood, not a quantitative raise, as neither partner opened in NT). But there’s a catch: if partner replies 5C (no Aces) you are missing two Aces and want to sign off in 5NT, but 5NT after a Blackwood 4NT is asking for Kings - not a natural bid.

There are two possible solutions, either of which should be agreed before you start playing. This is RARE and ADVANCED stuff, feel free to skip it!

- EITHER agreed that the bid of a new suit after any response to 4NT is not natural, it tells partner to bid 5NT. Partner knows that you can’t be suggesting a new suit at the 5-level!
- OR agree that after a 5C response to 4NT, a bid of 5NT is NOT asking for Kings and must be passed. (This is slightly restrictive, if you have all 4 Aces, you might want to ask for Kings, but have to start off asking for Aces with 4NT.)

Summary

Synopsis				
		Bidding Sequence	Hand #	Declarer / Defender
1	N	2NT, 6NT	93	Dec
2	E	2NT, 4NT, 6NT	377	Dec
3	S	2C, 2D, 2NT, 3C, 3S, 4S	2997	Dec
4	W	2C, 2D, 2NT, 3NT	2297	Dec
5	N	2C, 2D, 3NT	2464	Dec
6	E	2C, 2D, 2NT, 3NT	2932	Dec
7	S	2NT, 7NT	463	Dec
8	W	2NT, 6NT	1933	Dec
9	N	2C, 2D, 2H, 4H	485	Dec
10	E	2C, 2NT, 3H, 4H, 6H	550	Dec
11	S	2C, 2D, 2S, 3S, 4NT, 5D, 6S	990	Dec
12	W	2C, 2D, 2S, 3S, 4NT, 5D, 6S	2576	Dec
13	N	2C, 2D, 2NT, 3C, 3S, 4S	3335	Dec
14	E	2C, 2D, 2NT, 3D, 3H, 4H	3351	Dec
15	S	2C, 2D, 2NT, 3C, 3H, 3NT, 4S	3356	Dec
16	W	1H, 2C, 2S, 3C, 3H, 4H, 4NT, 5D, 6H	3056	Dec
17	N	1NT, 6NT	1627	Dec
18	E	2NT, 6NT	1965	Dec
19	S	1C, 1H, 2NT, 6NT	1901	Dec
20	W	1C, 1H, 2NT, 6NT	1478	Dec