

SLAM BIDDING IN SUITS: PRINCIPLES

When you are looking for slam in a suit contract, you need:

- 1) a **good trump suit**
- 2) **four of the five key cards** (with only 4, you want **queen of trump also**)
- 3) enough power when both your hand & partner's are balanced. (That means at least 30 HCP if neither of you has a singleton, void, or side 6-card suit.) Slams come from **TRICKS** and **CONTROLS** so long, good suits are extra valuable, and Aces and Kings are more useful than Queens and Jacks.

When you have a “**good fit**,” you can make slam with considerably fewer HCP than the 33 required for NT. Systems such as splinter bids and Jacoby 2NT allow you to discover hands that fit well together (and **bid slams on 25-29 points**, and sometimes even less.). You can also find out when hands fit badly and stop at the 4 level. When one partner has a singleton or a void and the other partner has no wasted values in that suit, it is as if they were playing with a 30 point deck (instead of the usual 40 HCP).

Ace Asking Bids include regular Blackwood and Roman Key Card Blackwood. (Most people use Gerber only with no trump bidding.) **To use Blackwood properly, the 4NT bidder should have first round control (the Ace) or second-round control (the King or a singleton) in each of the unbid suits.** If that is not the case, do not use Blackwood. **Do NOT use Blackwood when you have a void.** (Set up a cue-bidding sequence.) **Do not use Blackwood when you have a suit that could have two quick losers (Qx or worse).** Cue bid controls instead.

Normally you use Blackwood when all you want to know is how many Aces (or Key Cards) partner has. **Bidding 5NT after your 4NT inquiry asks for Kings and is an invitation to a grand slam. It guarantees that the partnership has all 4 Aces.** If Responder has the right hand, s/he can place the contract at the 7 level.

If your partner asks for Aces and you have a void in the opponents' suit or in an unbid suit, **you bid 5NT with 2 Key Cards and an unknown void. You bid 6 of the suit in which you have a void IF the void suit is below your trump suit and IF you have that void and one other Key Card. If you have no other Key Cards and a void, give an answer of zero Key Cards.**

Occasionally you will discover you are off two key cards and want to stop at 5NT. In order to do that, you bid the unbid major at the 5 level and partner will bid 5NT. (If both majors are unbid, bid 5 spades to get partner to sign off in 5NT.)

Cue-bidding shows controls when looking for slam. You must have suit agreement to start cue-bidding. Make your cheapest cue-bid first. Cue-bid first-round OR second round control as long as you are below 4NT. (Second round control can be King OR singleton if in a trump suit.) Partner can check back with 4NT to confirm the nature of your control.

When a cue-bidding sequence is underway and partner jumps (or raises) to 5 of your major, that asks you about control of the unbid suit. With two quick losers, pass. With a singleton in the unbid suit, bid 6 of your suit. With an Ace in the unbid suit, cue-bid the suit at the 6 level (or at the 5 level if the unbid suit is spades and your suit is hearts). If you have King of the unbid suit, bid 5NT (to make sure your hand is NT Declarer so the lead comes up to your King). If the opponents have bid one suit, leaping to 5 of your major asks partner about control of that suit. With two quick losers, pass. With Ace, bid 6 of the opponents' suit. With King, bid 5NT (giving partner choice between 6NT and 6 of your major).

Grand Slam Force. Occasionally partner only needs to know your holding in the last-bid suit. A jump to 5NT inquires. Bid 6C with queen or less. Bid 6D with Ace or King & minimum length. Bid 6H with Ace or King and maximum length. Bid 7C with two of the top three honors (in last suit bid). (Leap to 5NT must come after a suit bid—cannot be after a NT bid and be Grand Slam Force.)