

SIMPLE BEGINNERS GUIDE TO SLAM BIDDING

The following is intended as a VERY simple guide to slam bidding for beginners.

WHAT IS A SLAM?

A 'Small Slam' mean a contract for 12 tricks.

A 'Grand Slam' means a contract for 13 tricks.

POINTS NEEDED FOR SLAMS

Small Slam (12) in suit contract 31+

Small Slam (12) in No Trumps 33+

Grand Slam (13) in suit contract 35+

Grand Slam (13) in No Trumps 37+

WHETHER TO BID A SLAM

Bid a slam if you think your side has enough points and you have decided which suit is trumps or you want to play in No Trumps.

THE 'BLACKWOOD' CONVENTION - 4NT

When you know your side has enough points for a Small Slam you need to be sure you haven't got two Aces missing, otherwise you may lose the first two tricks! The Blackwood conventional bid of 4NT asks 'How many Aces do you have, partner?'

Having heard the reply you can either pick the final contract or continue to look for a Grand Slam by bidding 5NT to ask 'How many Kings do you have, partner?'

Note: Don't ask for Kings just because you have all the Aces! To bid a Grand Slam you need to have the right strength (i.e. 35+ for suit contract or 37+ for No Trumps) as well as all the Aces and Kings.

Responses to 4NT
5♣ no ace or all four aces
5♦ one ace
5♥ two aces
5♠ three aces

Responses to 5NT
6♣ no king or all four kings
6♦ one king
6♥ two kings
6♠ three kings

Note: Be wary of using Blackwood for finding minor suit grand slams, you may not be able to stop at the level you want to!

SMALL SLAM (12 tricks) OR GRAND SLAM (13 tricks)?

Bid Small Slam if it has 50% chance of success

- e.g. if it might need one successful finesse
- e.g. **not** if it needs a finesse and a 3-2 break

Bid a Grand Slam if it has better than 50% chance of success

- e.g. **not** if it needs one successful finesse

Reminder! Don't ask for Kings just because you have all the Aces! To bid a Grand Slam you need to have the right strength (i.e. 35+ for suit contract or 37+ for No Trumps) as well as all the Aces and Kings. Just having all the Aces and Kings does not guarantee you will make a Grand Slam!

THE INVITATIONAL 4NT

A 4NT immediate response to an opening bid of 1NT or 2NT is invitational and NOT Blackwood.

W: 1NT E: 4NT	19-20 points. Invites opener to bid 6NT if he has 14 points. (14+19 = 33, the points required for Small Slam in No Trumps) If opener has 12 or 13 points he passes.
W: 2NT E: 4NT	11-12 points. Invites opener to bid 6NT if he has 22 points. (22+11 = 33, the points required for Small Slam in No Trumps) If opener has 20 or 21 points he passes.

THE 'GERBER' CONVENTION - 4♣

Gerber is used instead of Blackwood **in two cases only**:

Directly after a 1NT opener.

Directly after a 2NT opener.

This is because a bid of 4NT after a NT opening bid is invitational – asking partner to bid 6NT if maximum. See above.

The Gerber conventional bid of 4♣ asks 'How many Aces do you have, partner?'

Responses to 4♣
4♦ no ace or all four aces
4♥ one ace
4♠ two aces
4NT three aces

Responses to 5♣
5♦ no king or all four kings
5♥ one king
5♠ two kings
5NT three kings