



Bridge Workshop

On Slam Bidding

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Slam	33
Grand	37

Blackwood

Blackwood is not a slam finder. A player believes he is in the slam ballpark and uses keycard to make sure the opponents cannot cash two keycards and set the slam. You do not need a keycard to use keycard, but you cannot have a void or worthless doubleton. That applies to any suit with more than one quick loser.

One typically **sets the trump suit** and investigates at lower levels, otherwise, the keycard suit is the last bid natural suit. When there is no trump suit 4NT may be quantitative (over Notrump openings) or pick a minor (in competitive auctions).

The asker must be **prepared for any response**. The responder would never bid 5♥ instead of 5♠ with the queen of trump when hearts are trump because partner may be trying for seven.

With the possession of all the keycards and the Queen of trump (or a ten-card fit), a player automatically asks for Kings. Asking for the Queen or King is a try for a grand. It is rare, but sometimes the queen ask is used when trying for six.

With a void or worthless doubleton cuebidding or 3014 Exclusion is used. I highly recommend 1430 Blackwood, 1430 DOP1 and 3014 for when clubs are trump.

Standard Control Cuebidding

Blackwood (Keycard or Standard) cannot be used when there is a void or a worthless doubleton, actually any suit with two quick losers or more.
You must cuebid.

When cuebidding starts, one bids first-round control (the possession of an Ace or a void) up-the-line skipping any suit in which first-round control is not held. When it is the first chance to bid the suit, it is first-round control, and when it is the second chance to bid the suit, it is second-round control (the possession of a King, singleton or void) and when it is the third chance to bid the suit, it is third-round control (the possession of a Queen, doubleton, singleton or void).

When first-round control has already been shown by either player, one shows second-round control at the next chance to bid the suit et cetera.

Quantitative

When accepting Quantitative, you can
bid 6NT

bid Aces assuming standard Blackwood
bid your suits (Baron)

Splinters

Splinters are a dream. One splinter can be more effective than several rounds of cuebidding. Mike Lawrence said, what I already knew, in his book Hand Evaluation

1♥ 3♠, 4♣, 4♦
1♠ 4♣, 4♦, 4♥

A splinter is only up to 14 points. A minisplinter can also be mini-max up to 14 points. With a stronger hand Jacoby 2NT is used. Using mini-max minisplinters, a full splinter can be a void.

Rule of 27

If Axxx or xxxx is opposite shortness, 27 points are needed for slam.

	3 card support or long-trump hand	4 card support
doubleton	1	1
stiff	2	3
void	3	5

Minisplinters

Use shortness points and the hand has four-card support, 10 to 12 points and the shortness in the suit jumped into. Just like responding to J2NT, the top three honours must not be singleton because partner will discredit an honour.

1♥ 2♠, 3♣, 3♦
1♠ 3♣, 3♦, 3♥

Responding is simple. With wasted honours in partner's shortness sign off in 3M. With Axxx or xxxx, bid game.

Two-Over-One Splinters

1♠ 2♣
3♦

Shows four clubs and ♦ shortness. Could have extra values but not necessarily so.

Slam Bidding with a Void

Answering Keycard with a Void

I hate it. Partner chose not to cuebid is your first clue not to do this.

1♠ 2NT

4NT 5NT a nonworking (not bid by partner) void with an even number of
keycards (not zero)

- 6♣ club void with an odd number of keycards
- 6♦ diamond void with an odd number of keycards
- 6♥ heart void with an odd number of keycards

Grand Slam Force

1NT 5NT
6NT with a minimum
7NT with a maximum or a good 16

1♥ 5NT
6♣ with 0 out of the top three trump honours
6♥ with 1 out of the top three trump honours
7♥ with 2 out of the top three trump honours

If clubs are trump, 6♣ is 0 or 1. 7♣ is 2.

Small Slam Force

1NT 4NT Quantitative, 16-17
P with a minimum
6NT with a maximum or a good 16

Small Slam Force with a Suit as Trump

1M 5M

Pass without two out of the top three trump honours
6M with two out of the top three trump honours

Five of Trump Suit as an Asking Bid (from Amalya Kearse)

1. If the opponents have bid a suit, and the partnership has not made a control showing cuebid, 5M asks partner to bid 6M if he has first or second round control in the suit.
2. If the first condition does not apply, then 5M asks partner to bid 6M if he has first or second round control in the unbid suit.

3. If the first two conditions do not apply or there are more than one unbid suit, 5M asks partner to bid 6M if he has two of the top three trump honours.

Exclusion Blackwood

One must first establish a trump suit and then a jump is asking for keycards excluding the suit bid. A nonjump is usually taken as a cuebid.

♣	Jump to 4♦, 4♥, 4♠
♦	Jump to 4♥, 4♠, 5♣
♥	Jump to 4♠, 5♣, 5♦
♠	Jump to 5♣, 5♦, 5♥

1 st step	0 or 3 keycards
2 nd step	1 or 4 keycards
3 rd step	2 keycards without the Queen
4 th step	2 keycards with the Queen

Progressive: The next step (skipping the trump suit if need be) is the Queen ask and the next step after that is the King ask.

Third Round Control Asking

If there is one step or more between the asking suit and six of the trump suit:

1♠	2NT	
4NT	5♣	
6♦	6♥	No third or second round ♦ control
	6♠	Third round ♦ control
	6NT	Second round ♦ control
	7♣	second and third round ♦ control

If there is no step between the asking suit and six of the trump suit:

1♠	2NT	
4NT	5♣	
6♥	6♠	No second round ♥ control
	7♠	Second round ♥ control

Example 1: Do Not Hide the Trump Queen

The following hand occurred during a Robot matchpoint tourney.

N-S vul.

♠AQ3 ♥Q62 ♦K962 ♣A32
♠107542 ♥4 ♦Q1083 ♣J97
♠98 ♥K53 ♦J754 ♣K654
♠KJ6 ♥AJ10987 ♦A ♣Q108

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	3♥
P	3♠	p	4♦
P	4♥	P	4NT
P	5♠	P	6♥ All Pass

They are playing that 3M over a 1NT opening is slamish. 3♥ sets the ♥'s as trump, and asks partner to cuebid. North signs off in 4♥ although he could continue cuebidding, but that would go above game. South asks for keycards, and the response forces him to 6♥ which is fine.

The ♥ finesse works and one ♣ goes away on the ♦ King but South still must lose a ♣. It would be nice if North declares, and East leads a ♣, but that is not a good lead into the hand that could easily have the ♣ Ace and ♣ Queen.

The lesson here is that if the trump suit is ♥'s and partner asks for keycards, One must never hide the ♥ Queen because one is afraid of forcing partner to 6♥. Partner may need the Queen for six or may be trying for 7.

Ball Parks & Mild Slam Try

Example 2: Partner opens 1NT, what is the ball park?

W	N	E	S
1NT	2♣	??	2♣ is clubs + higher suit, DONT

Systems on over dbl and 2♣. Double of 2♣ is Stayman. To penalize 2♣, a player must pass and partner looking at two clubs must reopen with a double. Looking at three clubs or more, partner is not trap passing.

a.	♠42	♥Q65432	♦983	♣97	9 losers
b.	♠42	♥KQ8653	♦983	♣97	8 losers
c.	♠942	♥KQ865	♦K83	♣97	8 losers
d.	♠Q42	♥KQ865	♦K83	♣97	7 losers
e.	♠42	♥KQJ1098	♦K83	♣97	7 losers
f.	♠42	♥AJ10987	♦K83	♣97	8 losers

g.	W	N	E	S	
	1NT	P	??		
g.	♠42	♥KQJ1098	♦K83	♣K2	6 losers
h.	♠42	♥KQJ10987	♦K83	♣2	6 losers
i.	♠A2	♥KQJ10987	♦K83	♣9	5 losers
j.	♠A	♥KQJ109874	♦K83	♣9	4 losers
k.	♠A	♥KQJ1098764	♦83	♣A	3 losers

Mild Slam Try

g.	♠42	♥KQJ1098	♦K83	♣K2	6 losers
A.	♠AK2	♥65	♦AQ76	♣A875	not quacky
B.	♠KQJ	♥65	♦AQJ2	♣QJ53	quacky

A.	B.	
g.	1NT 2♦	1NT 2♦
	2♥ 4♥	2♥ 4♥
	4NT 5♣	P
	5♦ 6♦	
	6♥	

Splinter or Keycard

h. ♠42 ♥KQJ10987 ♦K83 ♣2 6 losers
i. ♠A2 ♥KQJ10987 ♦K83 ♣9 5 losers
j. ♠A ♥KQJ109874 ♦K83 ♣9 4 losers

A. ♠K43 ♥65 ♦AQ76 ♣AK75 not quacky
B. ♠KQJ ♥65 ♦AQJ2 ♣QJ53 quacky

h. 1NT 2♦ 1NT 2♦
 2♥ 4♣ 2♥ 4♣
 4♦ 4NT 4♥
 5♠ 6♥

i&j. 1NT 4♦ 1NT 4♦
 4♥ 4NT 4♥ 4NT
 5♥ 6♥ 5♣ 5♥

Worthless Doubleton

k. ♠A ♥KQJ1098764 ♦83 ♣A 3 losers

A. ♠KQ2 ♥A5 ♦A876 ♣K752 not quacky
B. ♠KQJ ♥A5 ♦QJ52 ♣QJ54 quacky

k. 1NT 2♦ 1NT 2♦
 2♥ 3♦ 2♥ 3♦
 3♥ 3♠ 3♥ 3♠
 4♦ 4NT 4♥ P
 5♥ 6♥

What is the key to evaluating a long suit?

Length points

5th and 6th card is 1 point Every card after that is 3 points each

a. Pass, the dead zone is 0 to 4. Thank opponent from saving you from down two or more. b. partscore c. inv 8 losers d. game zone e. game zone
f. invitational yes two doubletons are two points, but the occurrence of wasted honours is greater so with 8 losers invite. See c.

Example 2: Game or Slam Ball Park

N-S vul.

♠52 ♥KQJ10987 ♦K83 ♣2
 ♠J8764 ♥A4 ♦9 ♣QJ1093 {N
 W E
 S} P 1NT

♠AK3 ♥65 ♦AQ76 ♣A875

W	N	E	S
		P	1NT
P	2♦	P	2♥
P	4♣	P	4♦
P	5♦	P	5♠
P	6♥	all pass	

Example 3: Learn by Example

N-S vul.

♠AK7 ♥A109 ♦KQ2 ♣J1097
 ♠J1098 ♥43 ♦543 ♣8654 {N
 W E
 S} P 1NT

♠2 ♥KQJ72 ♦J1098 ♣AKQ

In Two-Over-One:

S	N
1♥	2♣
2♦	2♥
3♣	3♠
4♣	4♦
4♠	5♦
6♥	P

The bids:

- South does not have first round ♠ control but has first round ♣ control by bidding 3♣ over 2♥.
- North does not have first round ♦ control but has first round ♠ control by bidding 3♠ over 3♣.
- South has second round ♣ control by bidding 4♣ over 3♠.
- North has second round ♦ control by bidding 4♦ over 4♣.
- South has second round ♠ control by bidding 4♠ over 4♦.
- North has third round ♦ control but does not have third round ♣ control.

South may or may not have 1st round ♦ control, and North never showed his ♠ King or ♣ Queen. North bid 2♥ not 4♥ because he has extra values. South is obligated to cuebid so he becomes the de facto captain.

North is not sure whether South has extra values or not because he may just be cooperating. After all, why not satisfy partner's slam aspirations below game? However, South knows he has extra values, and extra values plus extra values leads to slam.

This above auction has a minor drawback in that South was not given the opportunity to use keycard. Because cuebidding does not show trump controls, keycard and cuebidding seem to work hand-in-hand. South could have been off the two red Aces and had to rely on the fact that they both had extra values.

Example 4: Quantitative with Baron

N-S vul.

♠K32 ♥K1098 ♦KQ62 ♣A6
 ♠Q1054 ♥Q765 ♦109 ♣J92
 ♠AJ6 ♥AJ ♦AJ54 ♣Q1087

W	N	E	S
		P	1NT
P	4NT	P	5♣
P	5NT	P	6♦
all pass			

Example 5: Grand Slam Force

N-S vul.

♠Q732 ♥A109 ♦AKQJ109 ♣---
 ♠J4 ♥QJ75 ♦2 ♣A98762 
 ♠65 ♥8432 ♦543 ♣J543
 ♠AK1098 ♥K6 ♦876 ♣KQ10

W	N	E	S
	P	1♠	
P	2NT	P	3♠
P	5NT	P	7♠
all pass			

Example 6: Exclusion

N-S vul.

♠AK1098 ♥K6 ♦876 ♣AQ10
 ♠Q ♥J9432 ♦--- ♣K876543 
 ♠J4 ♥Q875 ♦5432 ♣J92
 ♠76532 ♥A10 ♦AKQJ109 ♣---

W	N	E	S
P	1♠	P	2NT
P	3♠	P	5♣
P	5♠	P	7♠
all pass			

3♠ shows extra values, and 5♣ is keycard excluding the ♣ suit. 5♠ is two without the Queen. 7♠ is to play. 7♠ is down one on a diamond lead. North can correct to 7NT with the club Ace, South may be counting ruffs.

Example 7: Third Round Control

West Dealer North South Vulnerable

♠Q653 ♥AJ108 ♦K2 ♣K102
 ♠J4 ♥976 ♦6543 ♣6543 
 ♠AK1098 ♥KQ5 ♦A98 ♣A7

W	N	E	S
P		P	1♠
P	2NT	P	3♠
P	4♥	P	4NT
P	5♣	P	5♦
P	6♣	P	6♦
P	7♣	P	7♠
all pass			

It is best that the stronger hand asks for keycards. Both 3♠ and the 4♥ cuebid show extra values. 5♣ is one keycard. 5♦ asks for the ♠Queen and 6♣ says yes with the ♣King. 6♦ is Kantar's method asking for second and third round control. 7♣ says both 2nd and 3rd round control. 7♠ is cold.