

Lesson 13 – Bidding Slams

Note: in this lesson we will only investigate possible small slams (6 level, 12 trick contracts). In a future lesson we will learn how to investigate the very rare grand slams (7 level, 13 tricks)

To make a small slam (that's Six of something), you can afford to lose just one trick. Unless you have a void in either hand, that means your partnership must not be missing two aces.

Quantitative 4NT

If the partnership has a combined 33 HCP then there cannot be two missing aces.

A bid of 4NT in response to an opening No Trump bid is always a natural invitation to 6NT. It is called 'Quantitative' because it asks partner to be more precise about the quantity of HCP she holds.

Responder will use a quantitative 4NT bid when her point count plus opener's maximum would make 33; for example: opposite a 2NT opening showing 20-22 points, responder would raise to 4NT with 11 points ($11 + 22 = 33$). This says: "Partner, I think there is a chance for slam, so if you have a maximum hand bid 6NT". Similarly, after a weak 1NT opening (12-14) responder could raise to 4NT to show 19 points ($19 + 14 = 33$)

A good way for responder to decide is to add her points to partner's **MAXIMUM** for his No Trump opening bid, , i.e. 12 or 20 HCP:

- If the total is 33+, **bid 6NT**.
- If the total is 31-32, **bid 4NT**
- If the total is 30 or less, **Pass**

Example

1. WEST ♠ A K ♥ Q 7 3 ♦ K 8 3 2 ♣ Q 9 4 2	EAST ♠ J 5 ♥ A K 7 ♦ Q J 5 4 ♣ A K J 6	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 50%;">EAST</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6NT</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	WEST	EAST	1NT	4NT	6NT	
WEST	EAST							
1NT	4NT							
6NT								

East has 19 HCP. East reckons that if West has 14 HCP then the partnership has 33 HCP so 6NT has good chances. But if West is minimum (12 HCP or a so-so 13 HCP) then 6NT will probably not make. East invites with a bid of 4NT. West is maximum (14) so bids the slam. With anything weaker West would pass.

Blackwood 4NT

When the opening bid is in a suit, the combined point count range is usually revealed as the auction progresses. If an 8+ card fit is found, a small slam in the suit can often be made with fewer than 33 HCP. Shortage in side suits offer ruffing potential, so shortage points can be counted.

4NT (when preceded by a suit bid, not by notrumps) asks partner how many aces they possess.

Responses to 4NT

5♣	0 or 4 aces
5♦	1 ace
5♥	2 aces
5♠	3 aces

Examples

1. WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
♠ A K Q 10 7 6 3 2	♠ J 5		1 ♥
♥ A	♥ K Q 7 4 2	1 ♠	3 ♦
♦ 5 3	♦ K Q J 2	4 NT	5 ♦ (1 Ace)
♣ J 4	♣ A K	6 ♠	

- East 's jump to 3♦ shows 19-20 HCP This is enough for West to investigate slam.
- West knows spades will be trumps and bids 4NT to check they are not missing 2 aces.
- West bids the 6♠ slam.

2. WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
♠ K 8	♠ A Q 7 5 4		1 ♠
♥ A Q 4 3 2 ♠	♥ K J 8 7	2 ♥	3 ♥
♦ K J 10	♦ Q 3	4 NT	5 ♦ (1 ace)
♣ K Q J	♣ 4 3	5 ♥	

- Since East has opened the bidding, West can count a minimum of 31 combined HCP.
- West knows they have a heart fit and will bid slam unless they are missing 2 aces.
- Sadly, they are missing 2 aces, so they stop in 5♥

Is 4NT Quantitative or Blackwood?

Quantitative 4NT: When the immediately preceding bid is in No Trumps

Blackwood 4NT: When the immediately preceding bid is in a suit