

# Gerber (Ace Asking)

NG34Bridge

## - after partner's 1NT or 2NT opening bid.

If partner opens 1NT or 2NT and responder's hand suggests that the final contract should be in No Trumps (i.e. balanced) then a bid of 4NT is quantitative, inviting opener to pass, bid 6NT, or, if a grand slam is possible, bid 5NT.

Some partnerships prefer to use Gerber if the final contract is likely to be in 5NT or 6NT, especially if there is a risk that the opponents may have AK in a suit. One advantage over Blackwood is that there is no risk of confusion over the meaning of a 5NT bid, which might, if using Blackwood, be interpreted as a King asking bid when the bidder wishes to sign off in 5NT.

Note: A 4♣ bid is Gerber ONLY if it is a jump bid. 2NT - 3♣ - 3♥ - 4♣ is natural.

4♣ Responses:    4♦ = 0-4 aces    4♥ = 1 ace    4♣ = 2 aces    4NT = 3 aces.

If all four aces are held, the Gerber bidder can bid 5♣ to ask for Kings.

5♣ Responses:    5♦ = 0-4 kings    5♥ = 1 king    5♣ = 2 kings    5NT = 3 kings.

Note that whereas a Quantitative 4NT is an INVITATION to slam, leaving the final decision to partner, a bid of 4♣ (Gerber) is not consultative. Responder has unilaterally decided to bid a slam provided partner has the requisite number of aces. Partner is no more than an ace and king counting robot, so 4♣ (Gerber) should only be made in the knowledge that the partnership has sufficient strength for a slam provided the partnership has sufficient first and second round controls to prevent the loss of two quick tricks. Responder needs at least 19 HCP, as opener may have only 12 HCP.

If responder has 17-18 HCP and a distributional hand with a strong long suit, he should make what is known as a slam try by making a 3 level jump bid in his long suit. This alerts partner to the fact that game is almost certain, in either No Trumps (with a long minor) or in a major, and a slam is possible if opener is maximum and has good support (3+ in a major or 4+ in a minor)

### Example 1

East	West	East
♠ K Q 3	1NT	4♣
♥ A K	5♦	6♣
♦ 4		
♣ A K J 9 8 5 2		

East has 20 points and wants to play in club contract. He can count 4 shortage points so with 24 total points opposite at least 12 points a small slam has excellent chances provided that there are not two quick losers. East bids 4♣ (Gerber) to ask for aces. When West shows one ace East bids the slam. Note that if East had bid a quantitative 4NT then West would have passed, even if holding one or two aces.

## Example 2

<b>East</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
♠ K J 3	2NT	4♣
♥ 4 3	4NT	5♣
♦	6♥	7NT
♣ A K Q J 8 5 4 2		

East has 14 points opposite a minimum 20 HCP. 6♣ is almost certain but a grand slam might be on if West has the right controls. East bids 4♣ (Gerber) and West shows all three missing aces. East's 5♣ is asking for kings and when West shows both missing kings East can see 13 tricks and no losers so bids 7NT. If East had bid 5NT, a quantitative grand slam invitation, West would have bid 6NT with 20 – 21 HCP and the grand slam would have been missed.