

THE SOUND OF SLAM

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When your partner opens the bidding and you have 19 or more points...then slam is in the air.
When your partner opens with a Strong 2 Club bid and you have 8 or more points, start thinking about slam.

When you open the bidding with 1 of a suit and your partner makes a jump shift (showing 19 or more points) slam is where you are headed.

These are all occasions on which to be joyous! But slow down and don't bid too quickly or you may get to the wrong spot!

In order to ask about aces when you have agreed on a trump suit, we used to use the old-fashioned regular Blackwood Convention. Now we use Roman Key Card Blackwood. This is a modern development which is described later on in these notes. It is a **necessity** now. We will be teaching the 1430 version.

In order to ask about aces when you are bidding **No Trumps**, you have to use the Gerber Convention.

The Gerber Convention:

After the last bid was a "**real**" No trump bid,
e.g. partner opens with 1 NT

A jump to 4 Clubs is now Gerber. This asks partner how many aces she has.

ONLY to be used after No Trumps, NOT TO BE USED after a suit bid "just to keep the bidding cheap..." NO! NO! NO!

Another example: 1D - 1S
2NT - 4C
4C is Gerber

Also, if partner has opened 1 NT and you have used either Stayman or a Jacoby Transfer, then the only way to now Ace ask is to use Gerber.

If you find out that your side has all 4 aces, then in order to ask about kings, you now bid 5C: Same responses as aces but at the 5 level.

Responses to Gerber:
4D = 0 or all 4 aces
4H = 1 ace
4S = 2 aces
4NT = 3 aces

RULE TO REMEMBER:

Do not use the Blackwood Convention

- a) with a void somewhere in your hand
- or
- b) with 2 or 3 small cards in another suit somewhere in your hand.

(More on this part at a later date)

JACOBY 2NT FORCING RAISE IN A MAJOR

If you have 4 or more of your partner's major suit and 13 or more points, you should now show this by bidding 2NT in response to her opening bid of 1S or 1H.

You see if she opens 1S and you bid 2S, that shows 6-9 points

If she opens 1S and you bid 3S, this shows 10-12 points. This is called a limit raise and the opener can now pass. You therefore have to have a way to show 13 OR MORE Points and 4 or more trumps.

You will FIRST have to agree with partner that you are going to play this convention called **Jacoby 2NT**. Jacoby 2NT is not used so that you can get to game...when your side has 26 points in the combined hands, you will always get to game. The Jacoby 2NT convention is used in an attempt to get your side to slam even if you only have 26 points in the combined hands. We are looking for what I call magic...singletons in the right places are wonderful things. Jacoby 2NT also allows you to show other special features...let's look at this.

The **Jacoby 2NT** response to an opening bid of one of a major suit is a **forcing raise** and shows **unlimited strength: 13 or more pts including distribution**. The raise shows 4 card support for partner's suit and requests more information about the strength and distribution of opener's hand.

Points Required 13 or more points (unlimited)

Quality of Trump Support 4 card (or better) support for partner's major

How does the convention work?

- **Responder** starts the forcing raise sequence by bidding **2 NT ♠ALERTABLE♥** in response to partner's opening bid of 1 spade or 1 heart. This asks his partner to describe the strength and shape of his opening bid.

- **Opener** shows the strength and distribution of his hand as follows:

- New suits at the 3 level show **a singleton OR void in the suit bid ♠ALERTABLE♥**

1H - 2NT
3 D

Opener for this bid has something like:

Axx
KQ10xx
X
Kxxx

- Rebid of **3 of the agreed trump suit** denies a singleton or void and **shows 16 or more points, including distribution**

1H - 2NT
3H

Opener for this bid has something like:

Ax
KQ10xx
Qx
AJ10x

- Rebid of **4 of the agreed trump suit** denies a singleton or void and shows a **minimum opening bid** with no interest on the opener's part in slam. The opener is saying, in essence, that slam is doubtful because they have only a minimum hand. ♠**ALERTABLE**♥

1H - 2NT
4H

Opener for this bid has something like:

xx
KQxxx
Qx
AJ10x

- Rebid of a **new suit at the 4 level** shows a strong hand with a good second five-card suit.

1S - 2NT
4D

Opener for this bid has something like:

AQTxxx
X
KQTxx
x

3D would show a singleton or a void in D. Rather than show your singleton or void in C or H, it is better to show your second suit now. This helps partner to revalue her hand and decide if there is potential for a small or grand slam now. (This bid at the 4 level does NOT deny a singleton or a void in the hand. Since you have two 5 card suits (or better) you now **must** have a singleton or a void in the hand.

The down side of Jacoby 2NT is that you lose the ability to bid 2 NT as a natural response. If you have 13-15 HCP, balanced hand & stoppers, you can bid 3NT instead.

(C) Responder's Rebids

- Once you have made your **2 NT** Forcing Raise, your job is NOT finished !!
- After the opening bidder has provided you with additional information, you now revalue your hand based on that information.

EXAMPLES OF RESPONDER'S REBID

Hand 1:

You hold S K x x x H K Q 9 4 D 6 4 2 C A Q.

Partner opens 1S and you bid **2 NT**. Partner clarifies the strength and distribution of his hand by bidding 3H, showing a singleton or void in H. Now evaluate your H K Q x x, which are sitting opposite partner's short suitThis is known as "wasted values", as it is never good to have High Cards in a suit in which partner has shortness.

Show your lack of interest in slam by jumping directly to 4 S.

Hand 2:

You hold S K x x x H 6 4 2 D K Q 9 4 C A Q.

This hand is similar to hand 1 -- only the D and H have been changed. But what a difference this switch makes to your view of the prospects of this hand! Now, when partner opens 1S and you bid **2 NT**, partner's response of 3H, showing a singleton or void in H makes your hand much stronger! Your three small H are no longer a problem, as partner is short in H and your other cards are "working" opposite partner's hand. You will not lose more than one trick. **Slam is a distinct possibility on this hand.**

Bid 4 N.T. (Blackwood) to move to slam.

- * To **show a lack of interest in slam**, responder to the opening bid jumps directly to 4 of the agreed major.
- * **To show interest in slam**, either bid 4 NT (Key Card Blackwood 1430) or cue bid your cheapest Ace or Void to show interest in bigger and better things. (*You will learn about cue bids later*)
- * Cue bids are used when responder's hand has a void, or when responder needs *specific* information about **WHICH** aces (or first round controls) partner has. These are the best times to use cue-bids. It is an exchange of information with the opening bidder. **You should not use Blackwood when you have either a void or two or three small in a side suit.** Cue bid instead to show first round controls (an ace or a void). (*More on this later*)

If partner later bids 5 NT asking about Kings, you have already shown the K of trump, you cannot show it again, so you just respond as with regular Blackwood, responding with Kings, NOT COUNTING K of trump.

1075 KQ
 AKQ987 J10
 72 AKQ103
 A4 KQ53

WEST (dealer) EAST
 1H 3D
 3H 4NT
 5D 6H

A4 2
 7542 AKQJ108
 KQ875 AJ109
 K2 AJ

WEST EAST
 (dealer)

3D 2C
 4H 3H
 5C 4NT
 6H 5NT
 7H

East's 3D bid was a Standard American jump shift showing 18 or 19 + points.
 3H = Hearts (most likely 6 of them)
 4NT by East agrees Hearts as trumps and asks for key cards
 5D = 3 or 0 key cards
 East knows it cannot be none or West could not have opened the bidding.
 East knows that West has 3 key cards and East has one so it is fine to be in 6H missing one key card. East also knows that they are not missing the ace and king of trump. Playing old-fashioned Blackwood, East could not have known that last fact.

3D = 8+ HCP and a good quality 5 card D suit headed by 2 of the top 3 honours.
 4NT is Roman Key Card Blackwood
 5C = I have 1 or 4 key cards (E knows it must be one)
 5NT asks about kings excluding the K of Hearts.
 6H = Regular old-fashioned Blackwood: 2 kings (excluding K of trump)

76 AQ52
 9 AK5
 KQ109654 J73
 984 AKQ

WEST (Dealer) EAST
 3D 4NT
 5C 6D

A1087 QJ963
 3 AKJ
 AQJ872 K64
 QJ K10

WEST (Dealer) EAST

1D 1S
 3S 4NT
 5H 5S

West opened with 1D. East responded 1S. West rebids 3S. East bids Blackwood: 4NT. If EW were playing old-fashioned Blackwood, West would show two aces. East would now bid 6 Spades

Playing normal old-fashioned Blackwood, you should never be Afraid to get to 6 missing one ace.

BUT USING ROMAN KEY CARD BLACKWOOD, East would now hear from West 5H in response to 4NT.

This would say that West has 2 key cards, excluding Spade Q. East only has one key card. EW are missing 2 key cards. You should never get to 6 missing two key cards.

(You should never be in 6 when the contract depends on a Trump finesse.)

Also, you should note that East does not know WHAT key cards are missing. Their side could actually be missing the ACE and KING of trump.

East should now bid 5 S which should end the auction.