

## Slam Bidding – From A to Z

By Neil Kimelman

### Article 5: More Slam Tools

So far this series has primarily focused on a few specific slam bidding tools:

- Asking for key cards, kings and the queen of trumps.
- Cue bidding.

Last article was a way to give you feedback on your own slam choices. Before more quizzes, we need to finish with the Conventions and Treatments to which allude to in the first article of this series.

- IV. Grand Slam Force.
- V. Forcing Pass.
- VI. Other specific bids, with specific meanings.

#### Grand Slam Force (GSF)

This tool asks about your trump holding – do you have top honours and how many?

Traditionally a jump to 5NT, after a suit has been agreed, is the GSF. The responses are:

1<sup>st</sup> step – Ace or king

2<sup>nd</sup> step – Queen

3<sup>rd</sup> step – Two of the top three honours (AK, AQ or KQ).

#### When to use the GSF

**Example 1:** ♠A97432 ♥- ♦AK ♣AKQxx

North                  South

|    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| -  | 1♠                 |
| 2♦ | 3♣                 |
| 3♠ | 5NT <sup>GSF</sup> |

### GSF For the Minors

5NT does not work well as the GSF for the minors, as the responses will often take you past the safe level of six of the minor. But there is a solution I like to play: A jump to 5♥ is the GSF for the agreed minor. This should never be a memory issue. The only question is to decide whether you want to play this or Exclusion\*.

#### **Example 2:**

| North             | South |
|-------------------|-------|
| -                 | 1♠    |
| 2♦                | 3♦    |
| 5♥ <sup>GSF</sup> |       |

\*I prefer GSF. I have seen too many Exclusion accidents. In addition, there is a technical benefit, when the response is the 1<sup>st</sup> step, and the trump suit is spades or diamonds. Opener can relay, asking if partner has extra length. Back to Example 1:

|    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| -  | 1♠                 |
| 2♦ | 3♣                 |
| 3♠ | 5NT <sup>GSF</sup> |
| 6♣ |                    |

North has shown three spades with their 3♠ bid. You hoped partner held KQx, but alas, the 6♣ response showed ♠Kxx. Too risky too bid 7♠, hoping for a 2-2 split (40%). But what if partner has four spades? Now there is a 78% chance that the remaining spades will split 2-1. The bidding continues:

|    |  |
|----|--|
| -  | 1♠                                     |
| 2♦ | 3♣                                     |
| 3♠ | 5NT <sup>GSF</sup>                     |
| 6♣ | 6♦ If you have extra length bid seven. |

### Forcing Pass.

You can find my article on the Forcing Pass in 'Neil's Deals'. Just click on Past articles.

### Other specific bids, with specific meanings.

There are bids that are slam tries that have commonly accepted meanings, which are very specific. Let's go through them now:

#### **A jump or bid of five of the trump suit.**

This bid has different meanings depends on the auction:

- If there is **one unbid suit**, a bid of 5 of the agreed suit asks partner to bid six with either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> round control in the unbid suit. If you have 1<sup>st</sup> round control, you would normally show it with a cue bid at the six level, in case partner is interested in a grand slam.
- If the **opponents have bid one suit**, a bid of 5 asks partner to bid six with either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> round control in the opponent's suit. With 1<sup>st</sup> round of control, it is better to cuebid in case a grand slam is available.
- If **none of the above** is applicable, a bid of five of the trump suit asks partner to bid slam with good trumps.

#### **A jump to 5NT after partner opens 1NT.**

This bid forces to 6NT, and invites partner to bid a grand slam with a maximum. As in other invitational notrump auctions, when accepting you can investigate

whether you have an eight card fit that may play better. A bid at the six level accepts the grand slam try, and shows their lowest ranking four card suit. A bid at the seven level shows a five card suit. So here is an example auction.

### Example 3:

1NT<sup>1</sup>      5NT<sup>2</sup>

6♣<sup>3</sup>      6♦<sup>3</sup>

7♦<sup>5</sup>

1. 15-17.
2. Inviting a grand, usually with a balanced 20-21 HCP hand.
3. Accepting, showing four clubs in case partner has four as well.
4. No clubs, but I do have four diamonds.
5. Great, so do I!

### Exclusion Keycard

This is when one partner jumps to a new suit at the five level. This bid is a key card ask, but shows a void in bid suit, so the responder ignores holding the ace in this suit. You cannot play exclusion keycard and Grand Slam Force if a minor is agreed.

**Caution:** This bid can be tricky, and is subject to remembering.

### Partner opens the bidding with five of a major.

Partner is showing a hand missing the ace and king in the (long) suit bid, but has no losers outside of that suit. If they had opened 5♠ a possible hand might be: ♠QJ109xxx ♥AK ♦- ♣AKQJ. Holding one of these honours you would bid 6♠ and with both (lucky partner!) bid seven. But 7♠, not 7NT!

### Splinters

I fully endorse showing shortness, where at all possible. This will often be the clue to determine whether the two hands mesh well, or not.

### Splinter situations

Most players know that when partner opens a major, a jump to a lower ranking suit at the four level, shows at least four card support and most one card in the bid suit. Here are other auctions where splinters can work well:

**Example 2:** Three level splinters.

1♣            1♠  
3♦/3♥ splinter

**Example 3:** Game forcing auction.

-            1♠  
2♦            3♥ splinter

In a game forcing auction, a splinter does not promise extras. However with a minimum, it is best to splinter only with four or more cards in partner's minor.

**Example 4:** Over a simple raise.

-            1♠  
2♣            4♣/4♦/4♥ splinter

**Example 5:** By responder in a 2♣ auction.

-            2♣  
2♦            2♠  
4♣/4♦/4♥ splinter

**Example 5:** In a notrump auction:

- 1NT  
2♦ Hearts 2♥  
4♣/4♦ splinter

### Baron Grand Slam Try

This is uncommon treatment, in light of other options listed above. A jump to the bid below six of the trump suit asks partner to bid seven if their trumps are better than shown. So if opener has promised five hearts, the agreed suit, and partner jumps to 6♦, opener should bid 7♥ with either Qxxxx or xxxxxx.

**Next article:** The Key Card Principle of Slam Bidding and dealing with interference.