

## Slam Bidding – From A to Z

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***Before I continue with this series I would to address maximizing the learning from the content. This cannot be done overnight, or even in a month or two. My suggestion is that you take one of the principles in this series in which you decide to adopt. Then master, or be comfortable with, it before incorporating other slam structures. This will hopefully lead you and your partner(s) not being overwhelmed, or confused.***

**Ok, back to the show....**

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

- Asking for key cards, kings and the queen of trumps.
- Cue bidding.
- Grand Slam Force.
- Forcing Pass.
- Splinters.
- Other specific bids, with specific meanings.

I am going to wrap up this series with two final articles. This month:

### Dealing with Interference

You would think that that when thinking of slam, the opponents will usually not be in the auction. But sometimes, distribution and/or favorable vulnerability allows the opponents to get in your way.

Being able to accurately bid slams when the opponents are in the auction is a necessary tool to have in your partnership tool kit.

In the last article I reference **Forcing Pass agreements**, which are critical for constructive bidding. You can find a fairly comprehensive review/article I wrote in the **Past Articles link**.

### When the opponents double a Cuebid

Take this auction:

West North East South

Pass 1♠ Pass 2NT<sup>1</sup>

Pass 3♣<sup>2</sup> Pass 4♣<sup>3</sup>

Dbl ?

1. Game forcing spade raise.
2. No shortness, non-minimum.
3. Ace of club cue bid.

West is asking for a club lead. This is actually an opportunity for N-S to use this information to their advantage. North's bids now have very specific meanings:

- 4♠ – this is discouraging. Saying that I probably have a minimum for my previous bidding AND two or more clubs.
- Rdbl – 2<sup>nd</sup> round club control.
- 4♦ or 4♥. I have the ace in the suit bid, and deny first or second round club control.
- Pass – Denies first or second round in clubs, and a convenient cue bid.

However it is more encouraging that 4♠, the weakest bid in this sequence.

The same general principle applies over many game forcing sequences. One that comes to mind is when a splinter gets doubled. Same rules - returning to the agreed trump suit in most auctions is the weakest bid available.

### When the opponents interfere over a key card ask

A good opponents will look for any means to get in your way in the auction, and force you to have agreements in specific auctions. This is one of those.

An opponent's interference can take the form of two different actions:

- Double.
- A suit bid.

In addition, the suit bid can be at the four, five and six levels. There is a solution, and actually the revised response structure can actually conserve bidding space.

**Example 1: When the opponents double a key card ask. Here is an example where the opponents double a redwood response.**

West North East South

- 1♦

2♥ 4♥ Dbl ?

Here is a reasonable structure, remember by: **R0P1: R (redouble) = 0 (zero) P (pass) = 1 (one).**

Redouble = 2<sup>nd</sup> step, 0 or 3 cards.

Pass = 1<sup>st</sup> step, 1 or 4 key cards.

4♠ = 3<sup>rd</sup> step, 2 with no queen of trumps.

4NT = 4<sup>th</sup> step, 2 with the queen of trumps.

5♣ = 5<sup>th</sup> step, 2 key cards with an undisclosed void.

Whatever South's response, North can ask for specific kings, or sign off in 5♦ or 6♦.

**Example 2 – when the opponents bid over a key card ask:**

West North East South

- 1♠

3♦ 4♦ Dbl 4NT

5♦ ?

Here you have two other bids available, pass and double. Most pairs play some form of DOP1.

**DOP1: D (double) = 0 (zero) P (pass) = 1 (one).**

### **When the opponents bid a suit at the six level.**

Here is a theoretical auction:

West North East South

- 1♠

Pass 2NT 4♦ 4NT

6♦ ?

The standard option is to play **DEPO**. **Double** shows an **even** number of key cards and **pass** shows an **odd** number. Hopefully, the previous bidding will help you logically determine how many key cards partner has for their response.

### **When the opponents double a key card response.**

Here, there are two more bids available as a result of the opponents double: Pass and redouble. Redouble should be for penalties – the opponents have made a mistake and you think you can make this contract.

The pass, is a yellow light saying that you do not have the suit doubled controlled. You usually hold a small doubleton. Partner can then sign off, or bid slam.

An immediate return to the agreed suit at the five level has its normal meaning, we do not have enough cards to make slam.

### **Example 4:**

West North East South

- 1♠

3♦ 4♦ Pass 4NT

Pass 5♣ Dbl ?

South's rebid meanings over the double:

- Pass = No 2<sup>nd</sup> round control of clubs, but otherwise there are enough key cards for a small slam.
- Redouble = Penalties.
- 5♠ = Red light, not enough key cards.

**Next article:** My own Key Card Evaluation Tool (KCET) for slam bidding.