

Slam Bidding (North Hands)

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|----|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | AKQx
xxxx
x
A10xx | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♦. | 7. | x
Q9xxx
AKx
A109x | Dealer: North |
| 2. | AJx
KQxxx
KJxx
x | Dealer: North | 8. | KQ10x
AQJ9x
x
KQx | Dealer: West
West opens 1♦ |
| 3. | AQx
KQ10xx
x
Axx | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♣ | 9. | x
QJxx
A10x
1098xx | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♠ |
| 4. | 109x
Ax
AQJ10xx
AQ | Dealer: South | 10. | ---
Qxxx
AQ10
AKJxxx | Dealer: North |
| 5. | KQJxx
AQxx
xx
Kx | Dealer: North | 11. | Qx
Jxx
KQx
AQxxx | Dealer: South |
| 6. | AKQxx
K98x
x
Axx | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♣ | | | |

Slam Bidding (South Hands)

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|----|--|--|-----|--|--|
| 1. | Jxx
AK10xxx
Ax
Jx | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♦ | 7. | AKxx
KJ10x
Jx
KQx | Dealer: North |
| 2. | KQxxx
Ax
A10x
10xx | Dealer: North | 8. | A98xx
Kxx
Axx
xx | Dealer: West
West opens 1♦ |
| 3. | x
xxxx
AKQJxxx
x | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♣ | 9. | xx
A10xxx
KQJx
AK | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♠ |
| 4. | KQxx
KQJxxx
K
xx | Dealer: South | 10. | xxx
AKxxx
xxx
10x | Dealer: North |
| 5. | A109x
10x
AQ10xx
Ax | Dealer: North | 11. | AKxx
A10
AJxxxx
K | Dealer: South |
| 6. | 109xx
AQx
Axxxx
x | Dealer: South
West overcalls 2♣ | | | |

Slam Bidding (Analysis)

1. Partner shows 4 trumps, diamond shortness, and game opposite an opening bid (13 or more points). Many South players would see their hand as too minimum to consider slam. But try to visually construct some North hands which represent the “best possible minimum” (e.g., AQxx/Jxxx/x/AQxx). This requires one of two finesses, a reasonable slam which gets even better with a black suit lead. If North has slightly better than a minimum, the odds for success go up. So South should check for key cards. Even with a “bad minimum” (KQx/QJxx/x/KQxxx) with no aces and 3 points in the heart suit, 5♥ is cold and RKC would reveal the missing aces. North’s actual hand was AKQx/xxxx/x/A10xx. Slam makes even if hearts are 3-0. Note that North made the key splinter bid to get to this 26-point slam. An even better approach than RKC would be for South to cue-bid 5♦ over 4♦. This shows first round control of diamonds and slam interest but no controls in the black suits (South did not bid 4♠ or 5♣). Since South has slam interest with no black suit controls, he must have very good hearts. Over 5♦, North, holding excellent cards in the black suits, would bid 6♥. The reason that this approach is better than using RKC is that North might hold a hand such as xx/QJxx/x/AKQxxx. RKC (or regular Blackwood) should be avoided with two quick losers in a side suit.
2. South should bid 3♣ (fourth suit forcing) to allow North to clarify his hand. This sends the message to North that South has 5 spades (otherwise South would have bid NT or supported one of North’s suits. With three trumps and extra values, North jumps to 4♠. This also tells South that North has club shortness. Holding good spades and aces in both of North’s suits, South checks for key cards and bids 6. North held AJx/KQxxx/KJxx/x. An excellent 27-point slam.
3. After North’s 2♥ bid, you definitely want to be in game. Show the singleton in the opponent’s suit with a splinter bid of 4♣. Partner has AQx/KQ10xx/x/Axx. North checks for key cards and bids 6.
4. What is 4♣? North is saying that he accepts South’s six-card suit and is showing slam interest by cue bidding a club control. South can see slam if North has 3 aces. South indicates interest by cue bidding a diamond control. Holding 109x/Ax/AQJ108x/AQ North checks for key cards and bids 6. The key bid was North’s cue bid of 4♣, implying heart support.
5. The 3NT rebid shows 15-16 hcp (by partnership agreement) and no shortness. With 14 hcp, South might be tempted to sign off in 4♠. However, South should try to imagine the “best possible minimum” hand North could have (e.g., KQxxx/Ax/Kxx/Kxx). This will encourage South to indicate slam interest by cue bidding 4♣. When North cues 4♥, South checks for key cards and bids 6. North holds KQJxx/AQxx/xx/Kx. The 30-point slam needs one of two finesses (a 75% chance).
6. South should settle for 4♠, given his minimal opening. North could have KQJxx/Kxx/xx/Axx, and there would be no play for 6. However, over 4♣, North bids 5♦ (continued interest with a diamond control). South can now show his heart control. North, holding AKQxx/K98x/x/Axx bids the excellent 29-point slam.

7. The spade shortness opposite South's AK is not encouraging, but South's hand has extra values. South should imagine the "best minimum" North could have (e.g., x/AQxxxx/AKx/xxx). Slam would be a virtual laydown. Thus, South shows interest by cue bidding 4♣. When North cues 4♦, South checks for key cards and bids 6. North holds x/Q9xxx/AKx/A109x, and the slam rolls home.

8. Since your jump promises only 9+ hcp and a 4-card suit, you have extras. However, you shouldn't use RKC or Blackwood with 2 losers in an unbid suit. Suppose you use RKC and North shows 2 key cards and the trump queen, do you want to be in six? Suppose he has KQJx/AQJ9x/x/QJ10. However, you can show your extra values by cue bidding. This hand shows the value of Italian cue bidding—bidding controls (A, K, void, or singleton) up the line. You would bid your cheapest control (the ♥K), which strikes a nerve with partner, who has KQ10x/AQJ9x/x/KQx. He checks for key cards and bids the cold 28-point slam.

9. Partner's 4♦ cue bid shows the ♦A and he should have good hearts (what else can he have to bid at the 3 level?). Thus, slam is worth a try...if you don't have 2 quick spade losers. You can find out by bidding 5♥. This asks partner to bid 6 with second round control of spades. Partner does so, holding x/QJxx/A10x/1098xx. The 24-point slam comes home with a successful heart finesse. Partner's choice of a 3♥ raise (showing values) was useful, rather than a murky 4♥ bid.

10. In this auction, partner is asking about trumps (you can see why he is concerned). He is not asking about second round control of the unbid suit (diamonds). If he's interested in your possible diamond control, he could have initiated a cue bidding sequence over 4♥. He was unable to use RKC to ask about trump key cards, since his hand was ---/Qxxx/AQ10/AKJxxx. If you showed one or two key cards, he would not know if one was the useless ♠A. With the ♥AK, you bid six. Another 23-point slam rolls home.

11. Don't get carried away with the cue bidding rhythm. You know partner has the ♣A and diamond support. Wouldn't you like to find about his diamond honors? Use RKC. He shows two key cards with the queen. You ask for kings. He has none. Do you settle for 6♦? What else (besides the ♣A and ♦KQ) can he have to have made a 2/1 forcing 2♣ bid? The ♣Q and a 4-3 ♣break is enough OR the ♣Q and ♠Q OR a doubleton ♠ OR six clubs. In other words, you don't need much. So bid it, and the 33-point grand slam rolls home. Partner has Qx/Jxx/KQx/AQxxx.