

The Italian Blue Team Bridge Book

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I 2: Slam Bidding

THERE are various conventions to discover whether the partnership possesses enough controls for a slam, and they can be roughly divided into two groups, which we shall call complete and incomplete.

The incomplete conventions permit a limited exchange of information and consist of ace- and king-showing responses. The most famous of these is the Blackwood convention.

The family of complete conventions is composed of various asking bids, which are made in particular suits and enable one partner to find all the first- and second-round controls in his partner's hand (aces, voids, kings and singletons). Our system is based on neither of these methods, it is instead a system of showing controls (cue-bids). In other words, in our system when one of the two players has discovered that the combined strength of the two hands warrants some hope for slam, he shows his partner that he holds a control of the first or second round by bidding the suit in which he holds that control. This cue-bid may be followed by others, both by the same player and by his partner, and by this reciprocal exchange of information the partnership can ascertain whether or not a sufficient number of controls is held to warrant slam. This method, based upon cue-bids, is hardly a new idea in bidding theory, and is very difficult to describe, because, as we shall see, it is not possible to discuss it in terms of general rules which will guide you inevitably to the right

contract. It is instead a method which must be based upon the logic of the situation, and consequently the choice between various possible bids varies case by case, according to the type of hand held, the auction which has preceded, the possibility of the opponents' intervention, etc. etc.

We therefore consider it best to explain the logic of our slam bidding by means of examples and discussion of these examples. Each of these examples will be tied to principles and sequences already fully discussed in the preceding chapters.

But before we proceed to the examples—which we feel is generally the best method for explaining our bidding—we wish to give some more precise advice than we have so far, and so we present first some general considerations on the bidding of slams:

- 1) We have already said that the basic principle of our slam bidding is the use of cue-bids, which indicate—in the suit bid—the control of the first or second round. In the application of this principle it is essential to establish the following rule: *when a control is held in more than one suit, the first cue-bid must be at the lowest level possible.*

Exception:

When a player holds first-round control in the higher-ranking suit, and second-round control in the lower-ranking suit and does not wish to play at the five-level if partner can make no further constructive bid, he may first bid the first-round control, reserving the other suit for the next round. This inversion of the normal sequence should not confuse partner, rather it will clarify the situation for him, by telling him in which suit you hold first-round control and in which second-round.

- 2) We have said that cue-bids are the principal means for bidding slams in our system. We shall now add to this

two asking bids. When they are made with a jump the successive bids of four notrump and five notrump are requests for controls. Four notrump asks for the number of aces held, and then five notrump asks for kings, with step responses as established by the Blackwood convention. Here too, there is one exception, four notrump is Blackwood when the auction has reached the four-level on the second round of bidding.

With this one exception, the bid of four notrump without a jump may have two different meanings: a quantitative raise, or a general cue-bid. The quantitative raise is made in some cases when—holding additional values—you want to have partner choose between passing (to play four notrump) and another bid; in some other cases it is used to show the lack of a control in a particular suit and asks partner to bid a slam only if he can control that suit. (For example: 1 ♡—2 ♣; 2 ♡—4 ♦; 4 ♡—4 NT. The bid of four notrump denies, in this case, spade control, and invites partner to bid the slam only if he has control of the spade suit.) In all the other cases—which represent by far the great majority—the bid of four notrump without a jump is a general cue-bid which shows slam interest and asks partner to clarify the values which he has or to show additional values.

The bid of five notrump with a jump is the grand slam force, and asks partner to show the honors he holds in the trump suit. His responses depend on what will be the trump suit:

- a) If spades will be trump:
 - with J or less, partner bids: 6 ♣
 - with the Q, partner bids: 6 ♦
 - with the A or K and less than five cards, he bids: 6 ♡
 - with the A or K and at least five cards, he bids: 6 ♠
 - with A K, K Q, or A Q he bids: 7 ♠

- b) If hearts will be trump:
 with the Q or less, partner bids: 6 ♣
 with the A or K and less than five cards, he bids: 6 ♦
 with the A or K and at least five cards, he bids: 6 ♥
 with A K, K Q, or A Q he bids: 7 ♥
- c) If diamonds will be trump:
 with the Q or less he bids: 6 ♣
 with the A or K he bids: 6 ♦
 with A K, K Q, or A Q he bids: 7 ♦
- d) If clubs will be trump:
 with one honor or less, partner bids: 6 ♣
 with A K, A Q, or K Q he bids: 7 ♣

When the bid of five notrump is made without a jump:

- a) If it follows four notrump with a jump (request for aces) it is a request for kings, with Blackwood responses.
- b) In all other cases it is a general cue-bid with the same requirements and the same meaning as four notrump made without a jump.

It can, in some cases, however, be the grand slam force, but in such cases it is invariably clear—since all possible controls have already been located and the only possible concern is with the trump suit. When this arises the step responses are those already given.

We ask the reader to study the examples carefully, so as to understand the logic of slam bidding with our system. Pay particularly close attention to the explanations of the various bids, because in addition to the particular explanations, we have given several general rules which we have omitted from the introductory section so as not to confuse the reader.

Example 1—Opening bid of one of a suit and single raise.

Hand A:	South	North
	♠ A K Q x x x	♠ x x x
	♥ A K x x	♥ Q J x x
	♦ x x	♦ A x x
	♣ x	♣ x x x
	South	North
	1 ♥	2 ♥
	3 ♠ ²	4 ♦ ³
	5 ♥ ⁴	6 ♥ ⁵
	Pass	

Slam is reached with only 23 points in the combined hands.

Hand B ¹ :	South	North
	♠ A K Q x x x	♠ x x x
	♥ A K x x	♥ Q J x x
	♦ x x	♦ x x x
	♣ x	♣ A x x
	South	North
	1 ♥	2 ♥
	3 ♠ ²	4 ♣ ³
	4 ♥ ⁶	Pass ⁷

¹ Same cards for South; North's club and diamond holding are reversed.

² Jump reverse, showing slam interest.

³ Cue-bid which, after the weak response of two hearts, shows the ace.

⁴ Five hearts asks partner to bid the slam with good heart support.

⁵ Having good support (Q J fourth), North can bid slam.

⁶ Lacking a diamond control, South must content himself with a bid of four hearts.

⁷ Lacking a diamond control also, North must pass.

Additional Rule:

In note (4), relating to Hand A, we said that South's bid of five hearts (jump bid in the agreed-upon trump suit) asked his partner to bid the slam with good trump support. From this we can elaborate the first additional general rule: When a player, having located the trump suit and having found

a sufficient number of controls (by means of cue-bids) makes a jump bid in the trump suit above the game level, he invites his partner to bid a slam with good trump support.

Example 2—Opening of one of a suit and reverse by responder. (This hand was successfully bid and played by Forquet and Garozzo in a World Championship.)

South	North
♠ K 2	♠ A Q 7 6
♥ A Q 10 8 3	♥ K 9 6
♦ A Q 8	♦ 6 5 4 2
♣ 10 5 3	♣ A K

South	North
1 ♥	2 ♣ ¹
2 ♥ ²	2 ♠ ³
3 ♦ ⁴	3 ♥ ⁵
3 ♠ ⁶	4 ♣ ⁷
4 ♦ ⁷	4 NT ⁸
5 ♥ ⁹	6 ♥ ¹⁰
Pass	

¹ Preparation for a reverse by responder.

² Rebid which guarantees at least a five-card suit.

³ An unorthodox reverse, because the suit is less than five-cards long, but it is justified by the fit with opener.

⁴ Can be either a cue-bid or a second suit. In any case, it shows a concentration of strength.

⁵ Shows support (three cards to an honor) in hearts.

⁶ Shows a spade honor, but less than three cards, because with three or more he would have raised spades immediately.

⁷ Cue-bid; control of the first or second round.

⁸ General cue-bid, asks for further information.

⁹ Has nothing to add.

¹⁰ Without hope for a grand slam, North signs off with six hearts.

Example 3—Opening of one of a suit and reverse by responder.

South	North
♠ A K x x	♠ Q x
♥ A x x	♥ K Q x
♦ x x x	♦ A K x
♣ K x x	♣ Q J x x x

South	North
1 ♠	2 ♣ ¹
2 NT	3 ♦ ¹
3 NT	4 NT ²
5 ♣ ³	6 NT ⁴
Pass	

¹ To force the partnership to game, and lacking a suit solid enough for an immediate jump-shift, North must make a reverse but, because his only suit is the lowest-ranking one he must make a "false" reverse by bidding clubs first and then the unplayable suit (in this case diamonds).

² Here is an example of the bid of four notrump used as a quantitative raise; even though there is no agreed-upon trump suit, and despite South's two negative bids (two notrump and three notrump), North still has a hope for slam, having a good 17 points (in fact, he could have made a reverse with only 13 points).

³ Having 14 points, South, by bidding five clubs, shows both a willingness to play slam and either the A or K of clubs.

⁴ Having 17 points, and having found a club honor in partner's hand, North bids the notrump slam.

Example 4—Opening of one of a suit and response of one notrump.

Hand A:	South	North
	♠ K x	♠ A x x
	♥ A K J x x	♥ 10 9 x
	♦ A J 10 9 x	♦ Q x x
	♣ x	♣ A x x x

South	North
1 ♦	1 NT
2 ♥ ²	2 ♠ ³
3 ♦ ⁴	4 ♣ ⁵
4 ♠ ⁶	6 ♥ ⁷
Pass	

Hand B ¹ :	South	North
	♠ K x	♠ A x x
	♥ A K J x x	♥ 10 9 x
	♦ A J 10 9 x	♦ Q x x
	♣ x	♣ K x x x

South	North
1 ♦	1 NT
2 ♥ ²	2 ♠ ³
3 ♦ ⁴	4 ♥ ⁸
Pass ⁹	

¹ Same cards for South; North's clubs have been changed.

² Reverse by opener.

³ Cue-bid which shows first- or second-round control in spades (it can't be a suit, because if it were, North would have bid one spade over partner's one-diamond opening). With this bid North shows a maximum (10 points), control in spades, and a heart fit.

⁴ Natural, forcing one round.

⁵ Cue-bid, control of first or second round. Note that North, having both club and spade controls, bids the more economical first (spades).

⁶ Cue-bid (four spades, since it goes beyond the game level in the agreed-upon trump suit [hearts], is a clear slam invitation).

⁷ Having two aces and the queen of diamonds, North bids the slam.

⁸ Although he has 9 points and second-round club control, North—opposite a partner who has shown 10 cards in the red suits—prefers to bid four hearts (which is a stronger than three hearts) rather than cue-bid the king of clubs which may be useless to his partner.

⁹ Not seeing any solid chance for slam, South passes at game.

Example 5—Opening of one of a suit and reverse by the responder.

Hand A:	South	North
	♠ x x	♠ A K Q J x
	♥ A K x x x	♥ Q x x
	♦ K Q x	♦ A x
	♣ x x x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♥	2 ♦ ⁴
2 ♥	2 ♠ ⁵
3 ♦ ⁶	3 ♥ ⁷
4 ♥ ⁸	Pass ⁹

Hand B ¹ :	South	North
	♠ x x	♠ A K Q J x
	♥ A K x x x	♥ Q x x
	♦ x x x	♦ A x
	♣ K Q x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♥	2 ♦ ⁴
2 ♥	2 ♠ ⁵
2 NT	3 ♥ ⁷
4 ♣ ¹⁴	4 ♦ ¹⁵
4 ♥ ¹⁰	4 NT ¹¹
5 ♥ ¹²	6 ♥ ¹³
Pass	

Hand C ² :	South	North
	♠ x x	♠ A K Q J x
	♥ A K x x x	♥ Q x x
	♦ x x x	♦ A x
	♣ A Q x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♥	2 ♦ ⁴
2 ♥	2 ♠ ⁵
2 NT	3 ♥ ⁷
4 ♣ ¹⁴	4 ♦ ¹⁵
4 ♥ ¹⁰	4 NT ¹¹
5 ♣ ¹⁶	5 NT ¹⁷
6 ♥ ¹²	Pass

Hand D ³ :	South	North
	♠ x x	♠ A K Q J x
	♥ A K x x x	♥ Q x x
	♦ K x x	♦ A x
	♣ A x x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♡	2 ♦ ⁴
2 ♡	2 ♠ ⁵
2 NT	3 ♡ ⁷
4 ♣ ¹⁴	4 ♦ ¹⁵
5 ♦ ¹⁵	5 NT ¹⁷
6 ♣ ¹⁸	6 ♦ ¹⁹
7 ♡ ²⁰	Pass

¹ Same cards for North; South's clubs and diamonds are reversed.

² Same cards for North; South's clubs are changed.

³ Same cards for North; South's clubs and diamonds are changed.

⁴ Preparation for reverse by responder.

⁵ Reverse by responder.

⁶ Diamond support.

⁷ Heart support; establishes the trump suit.

⁸ Denies any other controls.

⁹ Since neither partner holds a control in clubs, four hearts is final.

¹⁰ Denies any other controls.

¹¹ General cue-bid; asks partner to show any additional values.

¹² Denies additional values.

¹³ Final contract.

¹⁴ Cue-bid: first- or second-round club control.

¹⁵ Cue-bid: first- or second-round diamond control.

¹⁶ South shows additional values in clubs, since his previous cue-bid could have been made with only a first- or second-round control.

¹⁷ Having discovered that the small slam is guaranteed, North makes another general cue-bid, asking partner to further clarify his hand, or to show further values to bid the grand slam.

¹⁸ The repetition of the club cue-bid guarantees first-round control.

¹⁹ Asks partner to bid the grand slam if he has two of the top three heart honors. South has already shown both the weakness of his hand and club and diamond controls, so six diamonds by North is clearly a request to bid the grand slam if South holds two of the top three heart honors.

²⁰ Bids the grand slam with A and K of hearts.

Example 6—Opening of one of a suit and jump-shift response.

South	North
♠ Q x	♠ A K J x x x
♡ A Q J x	♡ K x
♦ A x x	♦ K J x
♣ Q x x x	♣ x x

South	North
1 ♡	2 ♠
3 ♠ ⁴	4 ♦ ⁵
4 ♠ ⁶	Pass

Hand B¹:

South	North
♠ Q x	♠ A K J x x x
♡ A Q J x	♡ K x
♦ Q x x	♦ K J x
♣ A x x x	♣ x x

South	North
1 ♡	2 ♠
3 ♠ ⁴	4 ♦ ⁵
4 ♡ ⁷	4 ♠ ⁸
5 ♣ ⁹	5 ♡ ¹⁰
6 ♡ ¹¹	6 ♠ ¹²
Pass	

Hand C²:

South	North
♠ Q x	♠ A K J x x x
♡ A Q J x	♡ K x
♦ A x x	♦ x x
♣ Q x x x	♣ K J x

South	North
1 ♡	2 ♠
3 ♠ ⁴	4 ♣ ¹³
4 ♦ ¹³	4 ♡ ¹³
5 ♡ ¹⁴	5 ♠ ¹⁵
6 ♠ ¹⁶	Pass

Hand D³:

South	North
♠ Q x	♠ A K J x x x
♡ A Q J x	♡ K x
♦ A x x	♦ x x
♣ Q x x x	♣ A K x

South	North
1 ♡	2 ♠
3 ♠ ⁴	4 ♣ ¹³
4 ♦ ¹³	4 ♡ ¹³
5 ♡ ¹⁴	6 ♣ ¹⁷
6 ♦ ¹⁸	6 ♡ ¹⁹
7 ♠ ²⁰	Pass

- ¹ Same cards for North; South's clubs and diamonds changed.
² Clubs and diamonds reversed for both North and South from Hand B.
³ Same cards for South; North's club honors changed.
⁴ In this case the raise may be given with a doubleton honor (A, K or Q) because partner's jump-shift shows a self-sufficient or nearly self-sufficient suit.
⁵ Cue-bid which, while showing a diamond control, denies club control.
⁶ Lacking a club control himself, South signs off at four spades.
⁷ Cue-bid (It is implied that since North has denied a club control, the bid of four hearts is a slam try and thus indicates club control).
⁸ Not knowing whether his partner has first- or second-round club control, North makes the cheapest bid, leaving the initiative to partner.
⁹ The "repetition" of the cue-bid guarantees the ace of clubs.
¹⁰ Cue-bid, showing heart control.
¹¹ Guarantees the ace and additional heart values.
¹² Knowing that the ace of diamonds is missing, North stops at six spades.
¹³ Cue-bid.
¹⁴ Shows heart control and simultaneously denies club control.
¹⁵ Having only one ace, not knowing that his partner has two, and cue-bids having been made in all suits, North leaves the decision to partner, expecting him to bid the slam with two aces.
¹⁶ With two aces and a good hand, South bids six spades.
¹⁷ Grand slam try, showing first-round control in clubs.
¹⁸ Repetition of the diamond cue-bid guarantees first-round control.
¹⁹ Asks partner for additional values; grand-slam try.
²⁰ Having QJ of hearts and Q of clubs, South bids the grand slam.

Example 7—Opening of one of a suit and jump-shift response.

Hand A:	South	North
	♠ x x	♠ A K x x x
	♡ Q J x x	♡ A K x x
	♦ K Q J 10 x	♦ x x
	♣ A x	♣ x x

South	North
1 ♡	2 ♠ ²
3 ♦ ³	4 ♡ ⁴
Pass ⁵	

Hand B ¹ :	South	North
	♠ x x	♠ A K x x x
	♡ Q J x x	♡ A K x x
	♦ K Q J 10 x	♦ x x
	♣ A Q	♣ x x
	South	North
	1 ♡	2 ♠ ²
	2 ♠ ³ ♦ ³	4 ♡ ⁴
	6 ♡ ⁶	Pass

- ¹ Same cards for North; South's clubs changed.
² Unorthodox jump shift, since the suit isn't really good enough, but it's necessary because North can't make a reverse starting with clubs or diamonds, having only small doubletons in each.
³ Second suit.
⁴ Shows very strong heart support without club or diamond control.
⁵ Realizing that the slam goes down with a club lead, must pass.
⁶ Having no fear of a club lead, and missing only the ace of diamonds, North can bid the slam.

The reader will have noticed that over three diamonds by South, North bid four hearts (a jump) to show the very strong trump support. From this we may state another rule: *When the unbid strength lies in trump, and there is no further outside strength to be shown, jump in trumps.*

Example 8—Opener's normal reverse.

South	North
♠ A K J x x x	♠ Q 10 x
♡ x	♡ Q x x
♦ A K J x	♦ x x
♣ x x	♣ A K J x x

South	North
1 \diamond	2 \clubsuit
2 \spadesuit ¹	3 \spadesuit ²
4 \diamond ³	4 \spadesuit ⁴
4 NT ⁵	5 \clubsuit ⁶
5 \diamond ⁷	6 \spadesuit ⁸
Pass	

¹ Reverse (solid or semi-solid suit).

² Raise (three to an honor). Fixes the trump suit.

³ Cue-bid.

⁴ Bidding game, North denies holding heart control (otherwise he would have made a cue-bid in hearts).

⁵ In spite of partner's signoff, South—holding a heart control—makes another try by bidding four notrump.

⁶ Cue-bid.

⁷ Cue-bid.

⁸ Having no further fear of heart losers, North bids the slam.

Example 9—Opener's Reverse.

South	North
\spadesuit A K J 10 x x	\spadesuit x x x x
\heartsuit x x	\heartsuit A K x x
\diamond A Q J x	\diamond K x
\clubsuit x	\clubsuit x x x

South	North
1 \diamond	1 \heartsuit
2 \spadesuit ¹	3 \spadesuit ²
4 \clubsuit ³	4 \diamond ³
4 \spadesuit ⁴	5 \heartsuit ⁵
6 \spadesuit	Pass

¹ Reverse (solid or semi-solid suit).

² Raise (four small cards). Fixes the trump suit.

³ Cue-bid.

⁴ Not holding heart control, and having nothing more than he has already shown, bids four spades.

⁵ Cue-bid, highly invitational to slam.

⁶ Having all the right cards, South can bid the spade slam.

Example 10—Opening of one of a suit and double raise by partner.

Hand A:	South	North
	\spadesuit A K x x x	\spadesuit Q x x x x
	\heartsuit A x x	\heartsuit K J x
	\diamond x	\diamond A x x
	\clubsuit K Q x x	\clubsuit x x

South	North
1 \spadesuit	3 \spadesuit
4 \clubsuit ²	4 \diamond ²
4 \heartsuit ²	4 \spadesuit ³
5 \diamond ²	5 \heartsuit ⁴
6 \spadesuit ⁵	Pass

Hand B ¹ :	South	North
	\spadesuit A K x x x	\spadesuit Q x x x x
	\heartsuit A x	\heartsuit K J x
	\diamond K Q x x	\diamond A x x
	\clubsuit x x	\clubsuit x x

South	North
1 \spadesuit	3 \spadesuit
4 \diamond ²	4 \spadesuit ⁶
Pass ⁷	

¹ Same cards for North; South's clubs, diamonds and hearts changed.

² Cue-bid.

³ To show the heart control he would have to bid five hearts, but not having enough strength to bid at the five-level, must content himself with bidding four spades.

⁴ Now that partner has exceeded the level of four spades, shows the heart control.

⁵ Sure of the heart control, South can bid the slam.

⁶ Since opener has denied club control (by bidding four diamonds), North does not show the heart control.

⁷ Since partner did not show a club control, opener passes.

Example 11—Opening of one notrump and response forcing to game.

South	North
♠ J x x	♠ K Q x
♥ A Q x x	♥ x x
♦ A Q x	♦ K x
♣ K J x	♣ A Q x x x x

South	North
1 NT	2 ♦ ¹
2 ♥ ²	3 ♣ ³
4 ♣ ⁴	4 ♦ ⁵
4 ♥ ⁵	4 ♠ ⁵
5 ♦ ⁵	6 NT ⁶
Pass	

¹ Forcing to game (conventional).

² Shows 16-17 points and four hearts.

³ Natural, shows at least a five-card suit.

⁴ Raise of partner's suit, shows maximum with good cards.

⁵ Cue-bid.

⁶ Bids six notrump rather than six clubs to protect against a heart lead.

Example 12—Opening of one notrump and response forcing to game.

South	North
♠ K x x	♠ A x x x
♥ K x x	♥ A x
♦ A x	♦ K x x
♣ A J x x x	♣ K Q x x

South	North
1 NT	2 ♦ ¹
2 NT ²	3 ♣ ³
4 ♣ ⁴	4 ♦ ⁵
4 ♥ ⁶	4 ♠ ⁶
5 ♦ ⁶	5 ♥ ⁶
5 ♠ ⁶	6 ♣ ⁷
Pass	

¹ Forcing to game (conventional).

² Shows 13-15 points.

³ Asks for distribution and point count.

⁴ Shows five clubs and 15 points.

⁵ North has visions of slam because he knows that partner has five clubs and only two diamonds (with three diamonds he would have opened one diamond).

⁶ Cue-bid.

⁷ Being certain of all the key cards, bids the club slam. Note that with the queen of diamonds, North could have bid seven clubs, knowing that partner held specifically 3-3-2-5 distribution.

Example 13—Opening of one notrump, response forcing to game.

South	North
♠ A x x	♠ Q J x
♥ K x	♥ A J x x
♦ K x x x	♦ A x
♣ A K x x	♣ Q J x x

South	North
1 NT	2 ♦ ¹
3 ♣ ²	3 ♦ ³
3 NT ⁴	4 ♣ ⁵
4 ♦ ⁶	4 ♥ ⁶
4 ♠ ⁶	5 ♦ ⁶
5 ♥ ⁶	6 ♣ ⁷
Pass	

¹ Forcing to game (conventional).

² Shows 16-17 points without a four-card major.

³ Asks for four-card minor suits.

⁴ Shows both minors.

⁵ Shows suit, slam try.

⁶ Cue-bid.

⁷ Bids the slam.

Example 14—Opening of two clubs and reverse by responder.

South	North
♠ A x x	♠ x x
♥ K J x	♥ A Q x x
♦ x	♦ A x x x
♣ K Q x x x x	♣ A x x

South	North
2 ♣	2 ♦ ¹
2 NT ²	3 ♥ ³
3 ♠ ⁴	4 ♣ ⁵
4 ♥ ⁶	4 NT ⁷
5 ♦ ⁴	6 ♣
Pass	

¹ Forcing for one round (conventional), asks for clarification.

² Shows one-suiter with two outside stoppers.

³ Reverse by responder.

⁴ Cue-bid.

⁵ Shows club support; fixes the trump suit.

⁶ Shows heart support.

⁷ General cue-bid; denies spade control.

Example 15—Opening of two clubs, response forcing one round.

South	North
♠ A	♠ x x
♥ K J x x	♥ A Q x x x
♦ K x	♦ A x x
♣ K Q x x x x	♣ A x x

South	North
2 ♣	2 ♦ ¹
2 ♥ ²	4 NT ³
5 ♦ ⁴	5 NT ⁵
6 ♠ ⁶	7 ♥
Pass	

¹ Forcing one round (conventional), asks for clarification.

² Second suit, at least four cards in length.

³ Asks for aces.

⁴ One ace.

⁵ Asks for kings.

⁶ Three kings.

⁷ Bids the grand slam, knowing that all controls are held.

Example 16—Opening of two clubs, response forcing one round.

South	North
♠ x x	♠ A K x x
♥ A K x x x	♥ Q x x
♦ —	♦ x x x
♣ A Q J x x x	♣ K x x

South	North
2 ♣	2 ♦ ¹
3 ♥ ²	4 ♣ ³
4 ♦ ⁴	4 ♠ ⁵
5 ♦ ⁶	5 ♠ ⁷
5 NT ⁸	7 ♣ ⁹
Pass	

¹ Forcing one round (conventional), asks for clarification.

² Shows six clubs and five hearts.

³ Asks partner to show outside controls if he has them, or to bid four notrump if he has both controls and two aces.

⁴ Shows diamond control and shows either two aces and no spade control, or spade control without two aces.

⁵ Cue-bid.

⁶ Denies spade control and shows two aces a diamond void.

⁷ Grand slam try, shows first- and second-round spade control.

⁸ In this sequence five notrump shows all the strength concentrated in his two suits.

⁹ Opener must have A Q of clubs and A K of hearts.

Example 17—Opening of two clubs and response of three of a suit.

South	North
♠ A Q x	♠ x x
♥ x x x	♥ A K Q J x x
♦ x	♦ A x x
♣ A K J x x x	♣ x x

South	North
2 ♣	3 ♥ ¹
3 ♠ ²	4 ♦ ³
5 ♦ ⁴	5 NT ⁵
6 ♥ ⁶	Pass

¹ Shows one-suiter with solid or semi-solid suit (forcing to game).

² Shows either a two-suiter (clubs & spades) or a cue-bid.

³ Cue-bid.

⁴ Cue-bid; shows that three spades was also a cue-bid. It is therefore implied that South has at least three hearts.

⁵ General cue-bid (grand-slam try).

⁶ Shows minimum for the bidding and North must pass.

Example 18—Opening of two clubs and response of three notrump.

South ♠ x ♥ A x x x x ♦ x ♣ A K Q x x x	North ♠ A x x ♥ K Q x ♦ K x x x ♣ J x x
---	---

South 2 ♣ 4 ♥ ² 5 ♥ ⁴ Pass	North 3 NT ¹ 4 NT ³ 6 ♣ ⁵
--	---

¹ Shows 12-13 points, balanced hand, and stoppers in the other three suits.

² Shows the two-suiter with six clubs and five hearts.

³ Blackwood, even though made without a jump. North can make this slam try because he knows that partner has eleven cards in the two suits.

⁴ Two aces.

⁵ The final contract.

Example 19—Opening of two diamonds and response of two hearts.

South ♠ x ♥ A K x x ♦ K Q x x ♣ A Q J x	North ♠ A x x x ♥ Q J x x ♦ J x x ♣ K x
---	---

South 2 ♦ 2 ♠ ² 3 ♥ ⁴ 4 ♦ ⁶ Pass	North 2 ♥ ¹ 2 NT ³ 3 ♠ ⁵ 6 ♥ ⁷
--	--

¹ Relay, asks for strength and distribution.

² Shows singleton heart or spade, 17-20 points.

³ Asks further information on force and singleton.

⁴ Singleton spade, 19-20 points.

⁵ Asks for number of controls, beginning with four.

⁶ Six controls.

⁷ Knowing partner's point count and the number of controls he holds, North can reconstruct South's hand almost to the card and bids the virtually lay-down slam.

Example 20—Opening of two diamonds and response of two hearts.

South ♠ A K Q x ♥ A K J x ♦ A K x x ♣ x	North ♠ x x ♥ Q x x x x ♦ x x ♣ A K x
---	---

South 2 ♦ 3 ♠ ² 4 NT ⁴ Pass	North 2 ♥ ¹ 4 ♣ ³ 7 ♥ ⁵
---	---

¹ Relay, asks for strength and distribution.

² Singleton club, 21-24 points.

³ Asks for number of controls, beginning with six.

⁴ Nine controls.

⁵ Bids the grand slam, knowing that all aces and kings are held.

Example 21—Opening of two diamonds and response of two notrump.

South	North
♠ A K J x	♠ x x
♥ A x x x	♥ K Q x x x x
♦ x	♦ x x x
♣ A K x x	♣ x x

South	North
2 ♦	2 NT ¹
3 ♣ ²	3 ♥ ³
3 NT ⁴	4 ♦ ⁵
5 ♦ ⁶	6 ♥
Pass	

¹ Shows one-suiter, with six-card suit and two honors including A or K.

² Singleton diamond.

³ Natural.

⁴ Clarifies point count.

⁵ Asks for number of controls.

⁶ Eight controls.

Example 22—Opening of three clubs, response of three diamonds.

South	North
♠ A Q x	♠ K x x x
♥ x	♥ x x x x
♦ x x	♦ A K x
♣ A Q J 10 x x x	♣ K x

South	North
3 ♣	3 ♦ ¹
3 ♠ ²	4 ♦ ³
4 ♥ ⁴	4 ♠ ⁵
5 ♠ ⁶	6 ♣
Pass	

¹ Shows diamond stopper, asks for partner's controls in hearts and spades.

² Shows spade stopper, no heart stopper.

³ Cue-bid, slam try.

⁴ Shows singleton heart.

⁵ Cue-bid.

⁶ Shows additional spade value; if he had not had it, he could have shown a single spade stopper by bidding four notrump, because five clubs is a signoff.

Example 23—Opening of three clubs, response of three spades.

South	North
♠ K x x	♠ A Q x x x x
♥ —	♥ x x x
♦ A x x	♦ x
♣ A Q J x x x x	♣ K x x

South	North
3 ♣	3 ♠ ¹
4 ♦ ²	4 ♠ ³
5 ♥ ⁴	5 NT ⁵
7 ♣ ⁶	Pass

¹ Shows spade stopper, denies heart or diamond stoppers.

² Lacking heart stopper, South should technically bid four clubs, but he has such a strong hand that he prefers to bid four diamonds which, in addition to showing a diamond control, is forcing to game.

³ Shows at least five spades.

⁴ Shows singleton or void in hearts and spade support.

⁵ Without the king of clubs, North would have bid six clubs but having the king of clubs and having already denied any diamond or heart stoppers, he invites partner to bid the grand slam if he has first-round control in hearts and diamonds and the king of spades.

⁶ He's got all the cards.

Example 24—Sequence one club—one diamond; three diamonds.

South	North
♠ x	♠ x x x
♥ K x	♥ A x x x
♦ A K J x x	♦ x
♣ A K Q x x	♣ J x x x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♦
3 ♦ ¹	3 ♥ ²
3 ♠ ³	4 ♥ ⁴
4 NT ⁵	5 ♣ ⁶
6 ♣	Pass

¹ Shows club-diamond, two-suiter with 3½-4½ losers.

² Cue-bid which, while showing control, invites three notrump or suit game.

³ Shows singleton spade.

⁴ Cue-bid, slam try.

⁵ Asks which minor responder has.

⁶ The suit.

Example 25—Sequence one club—one heart; two notrump.

South	North
♠ A K x x	♠ Q x x x
♥ A K x	♥ Q x x x
♦ A Q J x	♦ x x
♣ K x	♣ A x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♥
2 NT ¹	3 ♣ ²
3 ♦ ³	3 ♥ ³
3 ♠ ³	4 ♣ ⁴
4 ♦ ⁴	4 ♠ ⁵
5 ♣ ⁴	5 ♥ ⁶
6 ♠ ⁷	Pass

¹ Shows balanced hand with 23-24 points.

² Asks for four-card suits.

³ Four-card suit.

⁴ Cue-bid.

⁵ Sign-off.

⁶ Not having bid four hearts over four diamonds, shows the queen of hearts now.

⁷ Final contract.

Example 26—Sequence one club—one spade; two spades. (Grand slam bid and made by Forquet in a European Championship.)

South	North
♠ A K x x x	♠ x x x x x
♥ A x x x	♥ x
♦ x	♦ A x x x
♣ A Q x	♣ K x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ¹
2 ♠ ²	3 ♠ ³
4 ♣ ⁴	4 ♦ ⁵
4 ♥ ⁶	5 ♣ ⁷
5 ♦ ⁸	5 ♥ ⁹
6 ♥ ¹⁰	7 ♠ ¹¹
Pass	

¹ Three controls.

² Natural.

³ Raise, fixes spades as trump.

⁴ Cue-bid.

⁵ Cue-bid.

⁶ Cue-bid.

⁷ Cue-bid; the club control is surely second-round, otherwise North would have cue-bid clubs first, then diamonds. Now South knows which cards are held.

⁸ Cue-bid (North, holding the ace, knows South has K, singleton or void).

⁹ Cue-bid (South, holding the ace, knows North has K, singleton or void).

¹⁰ From partner's bidding, South can easily deduce that he has ace of diamonds, king of clubs and singleton heart. (With three kings, partner would not bid as vigorously.) At this point the bidding of the grand slam hinges upon North's spade support. By bidding six hearts, South shows interest in the trump suit, because, if he had been interested in partner's outside strength in clubs, diamonds or hearts he could have bid five notrump, six clubs or six diamonds. To clarify this here are two variations on South's hand:

1) ♠ A K Q x x
♥ A K x
♦ x
♣ A x x x

In this case the auction would have been the same up to five hearts by North but—over five hearts—South would have bid five notrump to give North the chance to bid six clubs in case he had K and Q of clubs.

2) ♠ A K Q x x
♥ A x
♦ K x x
♣ A Q x

In this case South, over five hearts by North, would have bid six clubs to give partner a chance to bid six diamonds in case he held A and Q of diamonds.

¹¹ Having five spades, North can bid the grand slam.

Example 27—Sequence one club—one spade; two spades.

Hand A:	South	North
	♠ A K x x x x	♠ Q x x
	♥ A Q J x x	♥ x x x
	♦ —	♦ A K x x
	♣ A x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ²
2 ♠ ³	3 ♠ ⁴
4 ♣ ⁵	4 ♦ ⁵
4 ♥ ⁵	4 ♠ ⁶
4 NT ⁷	5 ♦ ⁸
6 ♠ ⁹	Pass

Hand B ¹ :	South	North
	♠ A K x x x x	♠ Q x x
	♥ A Q J x x	♥ K x x
	♦ —	♦ A x x x
	♣ A x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ²
2 ♠ ³	3 ♠ ⁴
4 ♣ ⁵	4 ♦ ⁵
4 ♥ ⁵	4 ♠ ⁶
4 NT ⁷	5 ♥ ⁵
7 ♠ ¹⁰	Pass

¹ Same cards for South; North's hearts and diamonds changed.

² Three controls.

³ At least five spades.

⁴ Immediate raise, shows at least a tripleton honor.

⁵ Cue-bid.

⁶ Waiting bid, has nothing else to say.

⁷ Asks for further information.

⁸ Shows that all three controls are in diamonds.

⁹ Knowing that the king of hearts is missing, South can not bid a grand slam on a finesse and therefore signs off at six spades.

¹⁰ Since partner has shown ace of diamonds and king of hearts, South can confidently bid the grand slam.

Additional Rule:

From this example we can present another general rule. It's clear that partner of the player who bids one club, after having shown the number of controls he holds must try, throughout the bidding, to show where he has these cards. Therefore we have the following rule: When trumps have been agreed upon, responder, even if he has nothing outside the controls already shown, can show all the controls he holds if it is possible under the level of game. In our example (Hand B) we see in fact that, over four hearts by South, North bids four spades and not five hearts because—holding no additional values—he can't go beyond the level of game. Later, however, when South bids four notrump, North shows his king of hearts by bidding five hearts.

Example 28—Sequence one club—one spade; two hearts.

Hand A:	South	North
	♠ K Q x	♠ x x x
	♥ A Q J x x x	♥ K x x
	♦ —	♦ A x x x
	♣ K Q J x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ²
2 ♥	3 ♥ ³
3 ♠ ⁴	4 ♦ ⁴
4 ♥ ⁵	Pass

Hand B: ¹	South	North
	♠ K Q x	♠ A x x
	♥ A Q J x x x	♥ K x x
	♦ —	♦ x x x x
	♣ K Q J x	♣ x x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ²
2 ♥	3 ♥ ³
3 ♠ ⁴	4 ♥ ⁶
6 ♥ ⁷	Pass

¹ Same cards for South; North's spades and diamonds reversed.

² Shows three controls.

³ Guarantees tripleton honor as support.

⁴ Cue-bid.

⁵ Knowing that partner's controls are the king of hearts and the ace of diamonds, and knowing that he must lose a club and a spade, signs off with four hearts.

⁶ Having neither club nor diamond control, North by bidding four hearts shows that his three controls are in hearts and spades.

⁷ South thus knows that North has the king of hearts and the ace of spades and bids the cold slam.

Example 29—Opening bid of one club and response of one spade.

Hand A:

South	North
♠ K Q x	♠ A J x x
♥ A Q x	♥ K 10 x x x
♦ A K Q x x	♦ x x x
♣ x x	♣ x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ¹
2 ♦ ²	2 ♥ ²
3 ♥ ³	3 ♠ ⁴
4 ♦ ⁴	5 ♣ ⁴
5 ♠ ⁴	6 ♥ ⁵
Pass	

¹ Three controls.

² Natural.

³ Raise. Fixes trump suit.

⁴ Cue-bid.

⁵ Having nothing further to say, signs off at six hearts.

Example 30—Opening bid of one club and response of one spade.

South	North
♠ A Q J 10 x x x	♠ K x
♥ —	♥ J x x x x x
♦ K x	♦ A Q x x
♣ A K J x	♣ x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ¹
3 ♠ ²	4 ♠ ³
4 NT ⁴	5 ♦ ⁵
5 NT ⁶	6 ♣ ⁵
7 ♠ ⁷	Pass

¹ Three controls.

² Shows solid or semi-solid suit.

³ Shows spade honor.

⁴ General cue-bid; asks for location of controls.

⁵ Cue-bid.

⁶ General cue-bid; shows intention of bidding the grand slam.

⁷ Knowing that partner holds king of spades, ace of diamonds and at most singleton club, South has sufficient cards to bid the grand slam.

Example 31—Opening of one club and response of one spade.

South	North
♠ K	♠ A Q J 10 x x x
♥ A Q J x x x	♥ K x
♦ A J x	♦ x x
♣ A J x	♣ x x

South	North
1 ♣	1 ♠ ¹
2 ♥ ²	3 ♠ ³
4 ♣ ⁴	4 ♥ ⁵
7 ♠ ⁶	Pass

¹ Three controls.

² Natural.

³ Jump which shows solid or semi-solid suit.

⁴ South makes a low cue-bid to find out where North's other control is.

⁵ North shows his other control.

⁶ With king of hearts in partner's hand the grand slam should be on.

Example 32—Opening of one club and response of one notrump.

South ♠ A K x ♥ A K x x ♦ Q J x ♣ Q J 10 South 1 ♣ 2 NT ² 3 ♥ ⁴ 3 NT ⁵ 6 NT ⁷	North ♠ Q 10 x x ♥ Q J x ♦ A x ♣ A x x x North 1 NT ¹ 3 ♣ ³ 3 ♠ ⁴ 4 NT ⁶ Pass
---	---

¹ Four controls.

² Balanced hand, 18–20 points (generally without four-card minor).

³ Asks for four-card suits.

⁴ Four-card suit.

⁵ Denies four spades.

⁶ Quantitative raise, if partner has minimum (18 points) he may pass.

⁷ South has 20 points with good texture, and bids the small slam.

13: After the Opponents Open the Auction

IN this chapter, we will examine what happens when the opponents open the bidding. We shall first indicate the various overcalls in our system and show what is required in point count and distribution for each.

OVERCALLS OVER OPPONENT'S OPENING BIDS OF ONE CLUB, ONE DIAMOND, ONE HEART OR ONE SPADE

1. *One of a suit* is a natural bid which shows at least a four-card suit and 9–14 points, depending on distribution.
2. *Two of a suit*, if made without a jump, shows at least a five-card suit which must be reasonably solid. The strength needed depends upon the vulnerability; if made with a jump shows 13–15 points and generally a six-card suit (may sometimes be only five cards).
3. *Three of a suit*, if made with a single jump, shows the same as above (two of a suit with a jump); if made with a double jump, shows a weak hand with a long suit; it corresponds to an opening bid of three, and is closely tied to the vulnerability as to requirements.
4. *Four of a major* shows desire to play that contract.
5. *Four of a minor* is preemptive.
6. *One notrump* shows 16–18 points and a balanced hand.
7. *Two notrump* is conventional, shows two-suiter, 13–15 points.
8. *Three notrump* is gambling, as in Acol.