

15a: Blackwood (Ace Asking Convention)

NG34Bridge

Slam

When should you look for slam?

- when you have 32+ HCP and no fit between the two hands.
- when you have 30+ HCP and a fit in a suit.
- with a very good fit and extra distribution (and close to 30 HCP)

Blackwood Convention

- This convention allows the partnership to find the number of aces and kings held. It is important to be sure which suit is trumps (or NT) **before** you bid Blackwood 4NT.
- Blackwood's sole use is to prevent the partnership bidding a small slam missing two or more aces, or a grand slam missing any aces.

4NT – asks for aces

- 4NT is an artificial bid which asks: "how many aces do you have, partner?"
- Partner must respond, as this is not a suggestion to play in 4NT.

Responses to 4NT

5♣	0 or 4 aces
5♦	1 ace
5♥	2 aces
5♠	3 aces

5NT – asks for kings

- You can ask for kings with 5NT only after you have asked for aces.
- When you ask for kings, it shows that the partnership holds all 4 aces and **you are looking for a grand slam**.
- 5NT is again an artificial bid which asks: "how many kings do you have, partner?"
- Partner must respond as this is not a suggestion to play in 5NT.

Responses to 5NT

6♣	0 or 4 kings
6♦	1 king
6♥	2 kings
6♠	3 kings

Examples

1. WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
♠ A K Q 10 7 6 3 2	♠ J 5		1 ♥
♥ A	♥ K Q 7 4 2	1 ♠	3 ♦
♦ 5 3	♦ K Q 8 2	4 NT	5 ♦ (1 Ace)
♣ J 4	♣ A K	6 ♠	

- East has 18-19 HCP to jump to 3♦. This is enough for West to investigate slam.
- West knows spades will be trumps and bids 4NT to check they are not missing 2 aces.
- West bids the 6♠ slam.

2. WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
♠ K 8	♠ A Q 7 5 4		1 ♠
♥ A Q 4 3 2	♥ K J 8 7	2 ♥	3 ♥
♦ K J 10	♦ Q 3	4 NT	5 ♦ (1 ace)
♣ K Q J	♣ 4 3	5 ♥	

- West can count a minimum of 31 combined HCP.
- West knows they have a heart fit and will bid slam unless they are missing 2 aces.
- Sadly, they are missing 2 aces, so they stop in 5♥

3. WEST	EAST	WEST	EAST
♠ K Q	♠ A 8		1 ♣
♥ Q 10 9 7	♥ A J 3 2	1 ♦	1 ♥
♦ A K J 9 7	♦ Q 8	4 NT	5 ♠ (3 aces)
♣ K J	♣ A 7 6 3 2	5 NT	6 ♣ (0 kings)
		6 ♥	

- West can count a minimum of 31 combined HCP
- West knows they have a heart fit and will look for slam
- Finding East with 3 aces, West looks for the missing ♥K
- Unfortunately it is not there, so they stop in 6♥