

AN INTERESTING BID

What would this auction mean to you?

| | |
|------------|----------------|
| <i>You</i> | <i>Partner</i> |
| 1NT | 2♣ |
| 2♠ | 3♥ |

or

| | |
|-----|----|
| 1NT | 2♣ |
| 2♥ | 3♠ |

Given that 4NT should be Quantitative (slam invitational) over the response to Stayman, showing 4 cards in the other Major, how does one show slam interest (or better), having used Stayman?

The answer to the above two auctions is that 3-other-Major shows slam interest (or better) so, having used the bid, a 4NT bid now becomes Roman Key Card Blackwood (RKCB).

Here's a hand from the USBF's Online Invitational, which replaced their Open Team Trials – given there will be no world championships held in 2020.

♠ A 10 5 3
♥ A Q 6
♦ K 9 5 2
♣ Q 7

♠ K Q 8 2
♥ K 5 3
♦ A J
♣ K 5 4 2

One table bid a simple 1NT – 3NT and made 11 tricks, with the diamond finesse.

The other table had this auction:

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| <i>North</i> | <i>South</i> |
| | 1NT |
| 2♣ | 2♠ |
| 3♥ (1) | 3♠ (2) |
| 4♦ (3) | 4NT |
| 5♥ (4) | 6♠ |

- (1) Spade support, slam interest (not slam forcing)
- (2) Cooperating (otherwise he would rebid 4♠)
- (3) 1st or 2nd round cue bid
- (4) 2 key cards, no ♠Q

The ♠9 was led, North's 10 winning the trick. Declarer played a diamond to the Ace and led a club towards dummy's Queen. When this held, he played the ♦K and trumped a diamond with the ♠8. He cashed a high spade, led a heart to dummy and trumped his last diamond with his ♠Q. He could return to dummy with a heart to draw the last trump and claim 12 tricks (losing a club at the end).

Of course, if South had a hand less suited to cooperating for slam, for example a 15 HCP hand with fewer aces and kings, he would just rebid 4♠, and then you play in game rather than slam.

This structure also applies after a 2NT opening bid. You can have the following auction (assuming simple Stayman, or Puppet Stayman):

| | | |
|-----|----|---|
| 2NT | 3♣ | |
| 3♥ | 3♠ | showing heart support and slam interest (or better) |

or

| | | |
|-----|----|---|
| 2NT | 3♣ | |
| 3♠ | 4♥ | showing spade support and slam interest (or better) |

Why is this 'interesting bid' / structure important?

Because it means that responder's jump rebid to 4NT can now be Quantitative, with 4 cards in the other Major. With slam hands in opener's Major, you bid the 'other Major' then 4NT at your next turn, and that is clearly Roman Key Card Blackwood.

From a recent session:

♠ J 10
♥ K 10 9 5
♦ K 8 5 3
♣ K J 2

♠ A K Q 9
♥ A 3 2
♦ A J 10 7
♣ A 7

North

South

2NT (21-22 HCP)

3♣

3♠

4NT (Quantitative, 4 hearts)

and South can now continue to slam with a maximum.

Let me modify North's hand, to include a spade fit:

♠ J 10 4 2
♥ K 10 9 5
♦ K 8
♣ K J 2

♠ A K Q 9
♥ A 3 2
♦ A J 10 7
♣ A 7

North

South

2NT (21-22 HCP)

3♣

3♠

4♥

shows a spade fit, and slam interest

Now either South or North can continue with 4NT (in this case, South would do so, with his maximum), and it is obviously RKCB for spades.

On a similar 'theme', I like 4-level transfers after 1NT (and 2NT) opening bids for the simple reason that you can make clear-cut bids. Here's an auction, when playing 4-level transfers:

♠ A 7 3
♥ K 8
♦ J 6 5 3 2
♣ A K 9 5

West

East

1NT

2♦

2♥

4♥

Sitting West, I had to resolve whether partner had forgotten system or was making a slam try with hearts. After all, if wanting to play in 4♥, he could have transferred via 4♦ - and either passed 4♥ or bid 4NT with a slam hand. Fortunately, I held a minimum and passed.

When dummy came down, I checked about our 4-level bids, and partner replied with, "Sorry, I had an obvious 4-level transfer." By transferring at the 2-level then jumping to slam, he had made a mild slam try (without a splinter/shortage)!

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| ♠ A 7 3 | ♠ Q 4 |
| ♥ K 8 | ♥ A Q J 10 6 3 |
| ♦ J 6 5 3 2 | ♦ 9 7 |
| ♣ A K 9 5 | ♣ Q 8 3 |

These bids are great additions to your system because they are 'illogical bids' in a normal auction. That helps for memory purposes. Of course, anything you add to your system must be able to be remembered and deciphered at the appropriate moment (so illogical bids are good).

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