

SLAM BIDDING (REFINEMENTS) AFTER 1NT AND 2NT OPENING BIDS

♠ A Q J 6 5

♥ A K

♦ A 3 2

♣ A J 2

♠ K 8 7 2

♥ 5 4 3

♦ K Q 9 8 7

♣ 6

2♣

2NT (22-23)

3♠

2♦ (waiting)

3♣ (puppet Stayman)

?

NOW:

4♣ should show 4 hearts and longer clubs (5+ clubs) and slam interest

4♦ ditto but diamonds

4NT Quantitative with 4 hearts

So how do you show a slam try with spade support?

You bid 4♥ – just as:

1NT

2♠

or

1NT

2♥

2♣

3♥

2♣

3♠

(I believe I have written about this before, but I cannot locate the article!)

Anyway, the summarised version is:

If you use Simple Stayman, partner shows a Major and you then bid the other Major at the 3-level, you are showing slam interest in opener's Major. Logic dictates that it cannot be a natural suit, or you would have used a transfer bid rather than Stayman.

So, on the above hand:

4NT

5NT (all the key cards)

4♥

5♣ (1 key card)

7♣ (good 5 card diamond suit + the club shortage = bid grand)

Here's another interesting hand that arose after a 2NT opening bid:

♠ Q 3 2

♥ A K 5 3

♦ A 3

♣ A K J 5

♠ A K J 8 6 4

♥ 4

♦ K 9 2

♣ 6 4 3

West

2NT (20-21)

3♠

East

3♥

?

My (non-regular) partner bid 4NT, but this should be a Quantitative 4NT bid, inviting slam. Regardless, I interpreted it as Roman Key Card Blackwood. So, firstly, let's look at the auction we could have had after 4NT...

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
2NT	3♥
3♠	4NT
5♦ (1)	5♥ (2)
5NT (3)	6♦ (4)
7♠	

- (1) 0 or 3 key cards
- (2) Queen ask – don't play RKCB without the Queen ask!
- (3) I have the Queen and 2 kings (otherwise I would bid the king I held or 6♠ to deny a king)
- (4) Knowing partner has ♠Q, ♥AK, ♦A, ♣AK (20 HCP), partner cannot have a Queen. Counting!
 This bid of a new suit at the 6-level asks for third round control of that suit for the grand slam.
 If partner holds either the Queen (impossible) or a doubleton, they bid the grand slam.

Having got that out of my system, let's discuss responder's initial bid. It is better to play transfers at the 4-level as well as 'basic' transfers. This means that you can bid 4♥ (transfer to spades), then 4NT, which is obviously RKCB. Transfers at the 4-level (Texas or South African Texas) allow you to differentiate between hands where you want to play at the 4-level, slam invitational hands and slam-going hands, whilst leaving your Quantitative 4NT bid intact.

2NT	4♦	
4♥	Pass	To play
2NT	4♦	
4♥	4NT	RKCB on hearts
2NT	3♦	
3♥	4NT	Quantitative with 5 hearts
2NT	3♦	
3♥	4♥	Slam interest/invitational

Similarly, these agreements can be used over 1NT openings, with 2-level transfers and 4-level transfers:

1NT	4♦	
4♥	Pass	To play
1NT	4♦	
4♥	4NT	RKCB on hearts
1NT	2♦	
2♥	4NT	Quantitative with 5 hearts
1NT	2♦	
2♥	4♥	Slam interest/invitational (no splinter)

Furthermore, these bids can be used after 2-level and 3-level intervention, which allows the contract to be right-sided. *I do recommend the use of 4-level transfers (either version).*

This was one such hand that I held:

♠ A 2
♥ A Q J 6 5 4
♦ A K
♣ 10 7 6

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1NT (14-16)	2♦ (1)	4♦ (2)	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Pass	5NT (3)	Pass
6♣	Pass	6♥	All Pass

And from an online session yesterday (our three-day lockdown meant my club went back online), North held:

♠ A K J 10 7 6 4
♥ Q 4
♦ 8
♣ K J 8

East opened with a weak 2♥ and partner overcalled 2NT. People struggled with this hand but, playing 4-level transfers, you can bid 4♥ as a transfer to 4♣, and now 4NT will be RKCB in spades. You find 3 key cards but no ♠Q, so settle in 6♣.

Equally, if East passed and South simply opened 1NT, you have the same auction!

I really like structures (conventions) where there is consistency. Not only is it easier to remember, but it also is more likely to crop up, improving your prospects of getting it right all the time.

Barbara Travis

www.bridgewithbarbara.com

