



Slam Bidding

For the Exciting Game of Bridge

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Preface

This is the eighth book in the Watson bridge series. It is an in-depth look at slam bidding. Not only is knowing when to look for slam very important, but having the proper tools can also be very critical. Slams have been discussed by the other books in the series with different examples and in less detail.

Partners discuss partscore and game bidding the most but should not forget the less frequent slam. Slam bidding is more effective with Two Over One than with Standard American but can be honed using any system. Finding more slams can be achieved with more exploration below game. Experience and study will help a player improve in recognizing the slam ballpark.

With all regular partners, the simple topics, such as bidding strong hands and Blackwood, must be known well in addition to the following advanced ones.

- 1430 keycard Blackwood and the Queen ask
- Cuebidding
- 4♣ and 4NT in various Notrump auctions
- Grand slam forces, 5NT, with 6♣, if available, as zero of the top three honours.
- Small slam force that asks for control in a side suit or for the quality of the trump honours.
- A new suit after the King response at the five-level asking for second-round control, and a new suit at the six-level asking for third-round control.





Once these are known, the complex topics such as the following can be added.

- 3014 exclusion Blackwood
- Minorwood
- Modified Kantar's second method asking for second and third-round controls
- Italian cuebidding
- Slam bidding with Drury
- Other Ace asking such as kickback
- Perhaps even the declarative interrogative

The goals of slam bidding are to increase the frequency of slam exploration below game and to decrease the frequency of missed and failed slams. A system of adept slam bidding learned from this book will make the game of bridge much more enjoyable and successful for you and your regular partners.

Enjoy!!





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Chapter One

The Slam Ballpark

What two pastimes have a rubber, a squeeze play, and a grand slam?

Baseball and bridge.

This chapter could be entitled, “What Leads to Slams,” but that does not combine my two favourite games. This chapter adds another three items common to both games, the ballpark, the baseline, and the slider.

1.1 The Baseline

A slam, a contract for twelve tricks, needs around 33 points, while a grand slam, a contract for thirteen tricks, needs around 37 points. These are for a forty-point deck and are calculated with the following formulae.

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Small Slam} \\ &40 - (2*4) + 1 \\ &= 33 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Grand Slam} \\ &40 - (1*4) + 1 \\ &= 37 \end{aligned}$$

As advancing players know, points help a player get to the correct contract most of the time, but they are just estimates of a hand’s power. The chances for a slam improve on a sliding scale depending on various characteristics shown by the following examples.





1.2 Good for Twelve Tricks

The following hands, with various attributes, are good for twelve tricks. The total points held by the North and South hands are written beside the South hand, and the examples are arranged from the most points needed to the least points needed.

Example 1.1: Two flat quacky hands with no fit

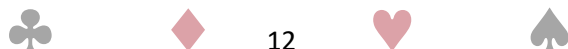
♠AJ2	♥QJ42	♦QJ3	♣AK2	
♠KQ64	♥K53	♦AK2	♣QJ3	36

Example 1.2: Two flat quacky hands with one eight-card fit

♠AJ102	♥QJ2	♦QJ3	♣AK2	
♠KQ64	♥K53	♦AK2	♣QJ3	36

Example 1.3: Two flattish quacky hands with one eight-card fit

♠AJ109	♥QJ2	♦QJ	♣AK92	
♠KQ64	♥K5	♦AK52	♣QJ3	36





Example 1.4: Double fits and wasted quacks in the short suits

♠A9853 ♥QJ42 ♦QJ ♣AK

♠KQ64 ♥K10985 ♦AK ♣QJ 35

Example 1.5: Ten-card fit¹ and all the Queens and the Jacks

♠A9865 ♥KQJ8 ♦QJ ♣A5

♠QJ743 ♥A7 ♦AK42 ♣QJ 34

Example 1.6: Nearly two flat hands, not quacky

♠A942 ♥AK6 ♦KQ7 ♣976

♠KQJ7 ♥Q73 ♦53 ♣AKQ5 33

Example 1.7: A flat hand opposite one with a five-card suit

♠A7632 ♥AK5 ♦KQJ ♣42

♠KQJ ♥QJ8 ♦987 ♣AK95 33

¹ In a ten-card fit, the finesse for the King is taken, but in an eleven-card fit, the declarer cashes the Ace.



Example 1.8: Two flattish not-quacky hands with one eight-card fit²

♠A1092 ♥Q82 ♦43 ♣AK92

♠KQ64 ♥K5 ♦AK52 ♣QJ3 31

Example 1.9: A stiff with wasted honours

♠A974 ♥AK74 ♦KQ95 ♣9

♠KQ83 ♥98 ♦A87 ♣KQJ10 31

Example 1.10: A five-card suit and a good fit

♠A7632 ♥AK5 ♦KQ7 ♣42

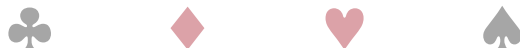
♠KQ98 ♥Q98 ♦98 ♣AK75 30

Example 1.11: Two not-quacky hands with two eight-card fits

♠A109 ♥Q32 ♦32 ♣AK982

♠KQ643 ♥K5 ♦AK5 ♣Q43 30

² An eight-card fit needs the Ace, the King, and the Queen to avoid a loser.



Example 1.12: Balanced hands with a ten-card fit³ and mirrored distribution

♠A7632 ♥AK6 ♦AK ♣AK2

♠K9854 ♥973 ♦98 ♣Q75 30

Example 1.13: A double fit and no quacks in the short suits

♠A9854 ♥QJ63 ♦98 ♣AK

♠KQ32 ♥K10542 ♦AK ♣75 29

Example 1.14: A stiff opposite Axxx⁴

♠A974 ♥AK76 ♦KQJ5 ♣9

♠KQJ3 ♥98 ♦983 ♣A842 27

Example 1.15: With the following 27 points, slam is down one.

♠A974 ♥AK74 ♦KQJ5 ♣9

♠KQJ3 ♥98 ♦983 ♣KJ42

³ A ten-card fit only needs the Ace and the King to avoid a loser.

⁴ A stiff opposite Axxx also includes Ax, Axx, Axxxx, et cetera.