

Cue Bidding to Slam

Rationale

In a number of lessons, in a game forcing situation, we have used “control” bids to tell partner that there could be more than game on a particular board. This lesson clarifies this process through the concept of “Cue Bidding”.

FAQ: What is a “cue bid”?

ANS: After suit agreement, the bid of a new suit which can't be a long suit trial is called a *cue bid*. It shows *first* round control of that suit. 1st round control is a void or the ace. 2nd round control is a singleton or the king. We start with the control which we have closest to our last bid.

FAQ: When should we be cue bidding rather than using blackwood?

ANS: 1..if you have a void
2.. If you have an uncontrolled suit .i.e. two or more losers off the top
3.. If you need to know whether partner holds a specific king

Slam suggesting bids

- When we have an agreed suit in a game forcing situation but below game, the bid of a new suit shows 1st round control of that suit. Further, it suggests that slam should be considered. It is an extension of Fast Arrival. “We’re going to game slower so I’m interested in more than game.”
- Partner agrees to the suggestion by cue bidding also. By agreement, partner is not *obliged* to cue bid if he feels his hand doesn't suit. When he does cue bid, his bid will be 1st round control.
- All further cue bids are 1st round control unless the player has already denied 1st round control or our side has already shown 1st round control. Show cue bids in order with cheapest first.

Let's look at a few bidding sequences

♠AKT432	♠J76	1S	3S ¹
♥A975	♥KQ2	4C ²	4D ³
♦KQ83	♦A2	4H ⁴	4S ⁵
♣--	♣T8432	5C ⁶	5H ⁷
		6S ⁸	

¹limit
²This can't be a trial bid. – We are committed to 4S anyway. It must be 1st round control of clubs and suggesting slam. 4 losers opposite 8 losers.

³Slam try is accepted and 1st round control.

⁴1st round control of hearts.

⁵Why did east pause at 4S? It indicates either poor trumps or no further controls. It can't be both problems or he wouldn't have encouraged west.

⁶1st & 2nd round control of clubs. I know east is worried about trumps – he can't have good ones because I've got them.

⁷2nd round control of hearts – west has 1st.

⁸Partner that 2nd round heart control is gold!

FAQ: Aren't you worried that you'll bid slam knowing all the suits are “controlled” but the opponents still have ace king or trumps or trump ace and another ace?

ANS: Yes! Sometimes, you will also use blackwood after you're satisfied that we're close and no open suit or void is evident.

♠832	♠6	1H	3S ¹
♥AKT75	♥Q842	4C ²	4D ³
♦Q6	♦AJ4	6H ⁴	
♣AK9	♣QJ632		

¹splinter
²1st round control in clubs – slam suggestion
³1st round control. Slam suggestion accepted.

Without DA, east would decline and sign off in 4H.

⁴Not as rash as it looks. Do we have a trump loser to go with our spade loser. That wouldn't leave east with much of a hand for his game raise.

FAQ: Surely an immediate 4NT would do?

ANS: If east is allowed to splinter with a singleton A or K, it may not do. Also, it can be a spade void.

♠82	♠65	1H	3H ¹
♥AKT75	♥Q842	4C ²	4H ³
♦KQ	♦AJ4		
♣AK98	♣QJ63		

¹8 loser
²4 loser. 4C is clearly a 1st or 2nd cue bid since we are now committed to game.

³Yikes. Neither of us have the spades controlled.

Otherwise, he would have bid 3S before 4C. No way am I telling him I have DA. I hope this auction is over.

♠--	♠KT432	2D ¹	2S ²
♥AKT863	♥542	3H	4H
♦K3	♦AJ2	5C ³	5D ³
♣AK932	♣74	6H ⁴	
		¹ game force	² positive with 5 spades
		³ 1 st round controls.	⁴ reasonable slam only

♠AQT874	♠K652	1S	2NT ¹
♥AK3	♥82	3C ²	3D ³
♦Q962	♦AK	3H ⁴	4D ⁴
♣--	♣Q7654	4H ⁵	4S ⁶
		4NT ⁷	5H ⁸
		6S ⁹	

¹splinter
²slam suggestion 1st round control

³1st round

⁴2nd round control

⁵West knows east has no shortage or wasted values in clubs. This should encourage west to rkc if needed

♠AKQJ87	♠9543	2D ¹	2H ²
♥--	♥8762	2S	4S ³
♦KQJ2	♦A3	5C ⁴	5D ⁴
♣AKQ	♣542	7S ⁵	

¹Game Force

²Weak

³weaker than 3S

⁴1st round controls

⁵DA will be gold. Diamond void could be tricky.