

# CONTROL BIDS

You might wish to investigate slam but don't have the right kind of hand to bid Blackwood. If you have a void or a hand with 2 or more losers in a suit you should not bid Blackwood.

♠ A K J 7 6 4 2

♥ - - -

♦ K 3 2

♣ K Q 3

You open 1♠ and partner makes a limit raise of 3♠. With 16 HCP and a void you are thinking slam is a possibility. With the void however this is not a hand to bid Blackwood or 1430 with. Suppose you bid 4NT (1430) and partner answers 5♣ showing one or four keycards? So partner has one of the three aces you don't have. Which one?

Suppose partner has:

♠ Q T 9 3

♥ A K 4 2

♦ Q 5

♣ 7 4 2

With both minor suit aces missing there is no slam here.

But what if partner has:

♠ Q T 9 3

♥ K 4 3 2

♦ A 5

♣ J 4 2

Now with only the club Ace to lose a small slam is a laydown. However 1430 will not tell you which hand partner has. Control Bids do. Control Bids (which used to also be called Cue Bids) show first or second round control in a suit. It means the opponents cannot take the first 2 tricks in that suit. We use control bids when we have agreed on a trump suit and are looking for slam.

Bidding control bids if partner has the second hand with the diamond Ace the auction would go:

OPENER

♠ A K J 7 6 4 2

♥ - - -

♦ K 3 2

♣ K Q 3

1♠

4♥ (control in hearts)

6♠

RESPONDER

♠ Q T 9 3

♥ K 4 3 2

♦ A 5

♣ J 4 2

3♠

5♦ (control in diamonds)

Opener knows there is no first round control in clubs because responder bypassed the suit when bidding 5♦. Also responder knows opener's 4♥ bid must show *first* round control because responder has the king. Likewise Opener knows responder's 5♦ bid shows first round control because opener holds the ♦K. With second and third round control in clubs and first and second round controls in all other suits opener can bid 6♠.

As previously mentioned you should also not bid Blackwood or 1430 if you have two losers in a suit.

OPENER

♠ A K J 7 6 4 2

♥ A K Q

♦ 3 2

♣ 3

RESPONDER

♠ Q T 9 3

♥ J 3 2

♦ Q 5 4

♣ A Q 5

Using 1430 alone the auction would go:

1♠

4NT (1430)

??? (which one???)

3♠

5♣ (one keycard)

Using control bids the auction would go:

1♠

4♣ (control in clubs-singleton)

3♠

4♠ (no control in diamonds or hearts)

Opener knows there are two losers in diamonds and slam is not possible.

Now let's give responder this hand:

OPENER

♠ A K J 7 6 4 2

♥ A K Q

♦ 3 2

♣ 3

RESPONDER

♠ Q T 9 3

♥ J 3 2

♦ A K 6 4

♣ 4 2

Using 1430 alone the auction would go the same way and opener still would not know which ace his partner held. Using control bids the auction will go:

1♠

3♠

4♣

4♦

4♥

5♦ (second round control)

6♠

An even better auction:

1♠

3♠

4♣

4♦

4NT (1430 to check if partner

5♣ (one keycard)

has first or second round

control in diamonds)

5♦ (Do you have the trump Queen) 6♦ (yes I do plus the ♦K)

6♠

This second auction is even better because it locates the trump Queen and the second control in the diamond suit. Note that when Blackwood comes into auction control bids are "turned off". After bidding 4NT opener's 5♦ bid is not showing second round control; it is asking for the trump queen as part of the 1430 convention.

So how do we know when a bid is a control bid? If we have agreed on a trump suit, a non-jump bid of a new suit at the 4 level is a control bid. The exception is that if hearts are trump, a bid of 3♠ is a control bid.

Examples:

1♠ — 3♠ — 4♦

1♥ — 3♥ — 3♠

1♦ — 1♠ — 3♠ — 4♥

1♣ — 1♠ — 2♥ — 3♥ — 4♦

1♠ — 2♦ — 2NT — 4♠ — 5♣