

Learning Points – Help Partner Find Our Slam II

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Slams Level: Basic / Intermediate

North Deals None Vul MPs	♠ AJ ♥ A1097 ♦ K6 ♣ AQJ84	Mike
♠ N ♠ ♥ W 17 E ♥ ♦ S ♦ ♣ ♣		
	♠ KQ942 ♥ KJ2 ♦ A5 ♣ K93	Steve

Tuesday Night Club Game, January 4, 2011 Mrs. Peggy Barrett, Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070. Mike Ma is my partner. We play a 2/1 version of Precision.

Bidding slams is more than counting HCP. Best results come from a clear view of 1st and 2nd round controls and total tricks available.

Our Precision Auction

North	East	South	West
1♣ ¹	Pass	1♠ ²	Pass
2♣ ³	Pass	2N ⁴	Pass
3♠ ⁵	Pass	4♦ ⁶	Pass
4♥ ⁷	Pass	5♣ ⁸	Pass
5♦ ⁹	Pass	5N ¹⁰	Pass
7N	All Pass		

West leads ♦J

- 1= 16+ HCP any Shape
- 2=12+ HCP 5+ ♠s
- 3= Cs, asking fit and Power
- 4=♣Qxx+ & 4+ Controls (A=2, K=1)
- 5=Asks ♠ Suit Quality
- 6=Exactly ♠HHxxx (H=A, K, or Q)
- 7=Asks control of ♥s
- 8=2nd round ♥ control
- 9=Asks control of ♦s
- 10 = 1st round ♦ control

Standard or 2/1 GF Auction

North	East	South	West
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4N ¹	Pass	5♠ ²	Pass
5N ³	Pass	6♣ ⁴	Pass
6♦ ⁴	Pass	6♥ ⁴	Pass
7N	All Pass		

- 1= 1430 RKB for ♠s.
- 2= 2 Key Cards Plus the ♠Q
- 3+ Asks specific Kings (6 Key Cards)
- 4= Specific King

North knows there are 9 tricks in the black suits regardless whether South has 4 or 5 ♠s. 9+4=13. With all 1st and 2nd round controls accounted for, bid 7NT. What are you waiting for? The key to successful grand slam bidding is to be able to count where 13 tricks come from whether in NT or in a trump contract.

The Bidding

The Precision auction was delicate, employing many of the advanced tools from this system. No alerts are made by North South once the bidding passes 3N by rule. Alerts at a high level can cause unauthorized information to be shared by North South. In these auctions, EW must ask for explanations along the way or wait until the end of the auction (best) when NS must explain the entire auction. North showed 5+ ♣s and 16+ HCP. South showed 4+ Controls (South holds 5: 1♠, 1♥, 2♦, and 1♣). South also showed ♠KQxxx, ♥K, ♦A, and ♣K.

The Play

Declarer can count 14 winners if both black suits behave. Instead of claiming immediately, declarer checked the split for ♠s at tricks 2 and 3. Since both opponents followed, Declarer immediately claimed 13 tricks. ♠s were not splitting worse than 4-2. There were at least 5 ♠s, 2 ♥s, 2 ♦s, and 4 ♣s. Making 7NT was worth 7 of 8 MPs. 3 pairs failed to reach slam, while 5 played in small slams.

Post Mortem

The bidding is where we find magic in this hand. While Mike and I play Precision, good judgment with any sound bidding approach should get you to the grand slam. Here's one ← possible Standard auction. North has at least 9 cards in the round suits. South's jump to 4♣ either shows 5♠'s or 4+ ♣s in support.

Cue-bidding locates 4 red-suit tricks. After South's 5♣ cue bid

North Deals None Vul MPs	♠ AJ ♥ A1097 ♦ K6 ♣ AQJ84	
♠ 653 N ♠ 1087 ♥ Q653 ♥ 84 ♦ J1084 W 17 E ♦ Q9732 ♣ 65 S ♣ 1072		
	♠ KQ942 ♥ KJ2 ♦ A5 ♣ K93	NS: 7 ♠ ♥ ♠ N

Contract	Scores		Matchpoints	
	N-S	E-W	N-S	E-W
7 NT S	1520		7	1
7 NT N	1520		7	1
7 NT N	1520		7	1
6 NT N	1020		4.5	3.5
6 NT N	1020		4.5	3.5
6 ♣ N	940		3	5
3 NT N	520		2	6
3 NT S	490		0.5	7.5
3 NT N	490		0.5	7.5

NT can offer a small advantage when a void allows for an opening lead ruff by opponents, and will beat all other grand slam scores. Notice if South takes control of the auction and bids RKB over ♣s or ♥s too soon, then South might not have enough information to → bid the grand slam. If you happen to play 1430 RKB you might find you can't ask for the ♥Q.

Standard or 2/1 GF Auction

North	East	South	West
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	4N ¹	Pass
5♦ ²	Pass	6N	All Pass

1= 1430 RKB for ♥s.

2= 0 or 3 Keycards (1430)

Yes, opener should have 18+ HCP for their reverse, but what if opener only had 16 or 17? Whether we have 36+ HCP or not, the key question is whether we have 12 or 13 tricks. Don't start into RKB until you know what strain to play. Move toward a grand slam when you know what the sources of tricks are for your side. Grand slams in NT often require we locate Qs and Js in our long suits.

Standard or 2/1 GF Auction

North	East	South	West
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦ ¹	Pass	4♥ ¹	Pass
4♠ ¹	Pass	5♦ ¹	Pass
5♥ ¹	Pass	5♠ ¹	Pass
7N	All Pass		

1= Control bid in support of ♣s.

←An alternative Standard or 2/1 Game Force approach shows what happens if South describes instead of taking control. Here South chooses to support ♣s and imply 5♠s. (Many play that 3♣ by responder is a poor minimum). North begins a control bidding sequence and South cooperates. Notice how control bidding Aces then Kings helps the right partner count to 13. North, not South, can count to 13 winners. (If you adopt a control bid style that allows bidding 2nd round control below game level, you depend on RKB to clarify Aces and Kings. South could have chosen 4N RKB for ♣s instead of the 5♦ control bid).

Better to resist the urge to take control so our partnership has the right person making the final decision with best information.

Learning Points

1. Use RKB to stay out of slams, not get into them. 1430 is slightly superior to 0314. Specific Kings is superior to the number of Kings held by responder. (Be sure you know what to do with more than 1 King). And yes, 5N always promises 6 Key Cards – the 4 aces and the KQ of the trump suit.
2. When you are in the grand slam zone, go slow, not fast. Find out where your tricks are coming from before bidding RKB or 1430. Control bidding can be as or more effective than RKB in many cases. Avoid starting RKB holding a void or a useless doubleton, unless prior bidding makes partners controls in those suits clear).
3. Usually the stronger of the two hands will have better information and should be captain. NT auctions are the exception where opener has narrowly limited HCPs and shape.
4. Be sure you agree with partner when 4N is RKC 1430 and when it is natural. Yes, there are times when 4N is natural!!

Keywords: Counting Controls and Tricks, Roman Key Card Blackwood 1430, Control bidding