

Theory, talk on Tuesday 15.1.2019 - Canberra

CUEBID THEORY – a recommendation

Cuebids – when?

- When we have a fit, and we know the combined strength is good enough for a slam to be likely.

Cuebids – why?

- To make sure there is no suit where the opponents can take two quick tricks.

CUEBID STYLE

- 1st and 2nd round controls are shown. A cuebid of a 1st or 2nd round control should be in the suit where we can make the lowest possible bid. By-passing a suit denies a control in that suit. (Lowest cuebid style).

1st round control: Ace or void

2nd round control: King or singleton

Using this style let us discover (early enough) if one suit is “open” (the opponents have two tricks to cash) so we can stop short of slam.

To make sure we are not lacking two Aces (or two Key-Cards), we play 4NT in the middle of a cuebid sequence as Key-Card Blackwood.

Note: A direct Splinter bid is not “lowest cuebid”. For example: 1♠-4♦ is a descriptive bid, four+ trumps and values for at least game, and shortage in diamonds. It may easily be a hand with a club control. The ideal hands for a Splinter bid are when your honors are in the suits other than the short suit.

KEY-CARD BLACKWOOD – trump Queen ask (recommended structure)

When the response to 4NT is 5♥ or 5♠, it also shows if he has the Queen so the 4NT asker knows about the trump situation.

(Tip: Note that you can “lie”, saying you have the trump Queen if you know the partnership has ten or more trumps together. If they have, e.g. Ace-fifth opposite K-fifth is usually good enough for no loser in the suit, only an unlikely three-nil break may give a loser)

When the response to 4NT is 5♣ or 5♦, it does not show if he has the Queen.

Therefore, over the 5♣ or 5♦ response to 4NT, the Key-Card bidder may (if necessary) ask if the partner has the trump Queen.

Note: There are SIX IMPORTANT CARDS to check:

- five Key-Cards (four Aces and the trump King)

- the trump Queen.

If we are lacking two of those six important cards, it is likely we have two losers (assuming there are no voids).

How do we ASK about the trump Queen?

The step above the response to 4NT is asking: *Do you have the trump Queen?*

How to respond to the trump Queen ask?

- LOWEST possible in the trump suit as a sign-off bid (e.g. 5♠ if we have agreed on spades as the trump suit) That response says: *No, I don't have the Queen*
- Jump to 6 in the trump suit: *Yes, I have the Queen*

(Bidding a new suit is also promising the trump Queen and may be agreed to show the trump Queen plus the king in the suit you bid)

5NT as a grand slam try – a recommendation

If 5NT follows 4NT Key-Card, it should be used ONLY when the one asking for Key-Cards realises a grand slam might be on. This means, the partnership MUST have all the Key-Cards and the trump Queen for the 5NT ask/inquiry to make sense.

Responses to 5NT

Some partnerships use 5NT as an ask about the number of Kings.

RECOMMENDATION – show specific kings:

5NT does not ask for the number of Kings, but specific Kings. This is generally more useful as quite often the answer “one King” does not help the asker, he might need to know which King it is to see if the grand is good.

The responder to 5NT have several options:

- Sign-off in 6 of the trump-suit: “I have nothing more to show”
- Show a king below the trump suit by bidding the suit he has the King
- Go directly to 7 if he has substantial extras his partner does not know about, for example a strong side suit which will produce the necessary tricks.

REMEMBER:

If 4NT is followed by 5NT, it is a **grand slam try** promising the partnership holds ALL the Key-Cards and the trump Queen!

HAND ONE

Cuebids, 1st and 2nd round controls

♠ AJ10765 ♥ KQ9 ♦ KJ ♣ J10		♠ KQ98 ♥ AJ6 ♦ AQ104 ♣ Q9
-------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

The start of the bidding will depend on partnership agreements.

Suggestion: if for example you play with a standard Jacoby method where the opener's 3 of the trump suit is showing extras, no shortage, the bidding may go:

Dealer West. N/S Vul.

WEST	EAST
1♠	2NT
3♠	4♦
4♠	Pass

3♠ = Not minimum, no shortage

4♦ = 1st or 2nd round control, DENIES a club control

4♠ = Conclusion (4♥ would confirm a club control!)

NOTE, 1:

If the partnership plays with "lowest cuebid style", meaning when cuebidding, they make the lowest possible bid in a suit where they have a 1st or 2nd round control, the "open" suit, clubs, will be discovered. Here West discovers East has no 1st or 2nd round control in clubs, so West knows there is no slam despite having the values (in HCPs) for it.

NOTE, 2:

West must NOT cuebid 4♥ in this situation as to do so makes no sense when he KNOWS they have no control in clubs. If West bids 4♥ in this situation, he confirms he has a club control, the suit East denied a control in.

This is perhaps a little extreme, not making a slam seen from East's point of view, but E/W's combined 33-count (!) and a six-four fit in spades is this time NOT enough to make slam! Let us give West a slightly different hand opposite the same East hand:

♠ A107654 ♥ K109 ♦ K2 ♣ K5		♠ KQ98 ♥ AJ6 ♦ AQ104 ♣ Q9
-------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

This change in West's cards makes the partnership holding a combined 31-count, 2 HCP less than in the first example. Still, now the slam is safe. West will confirm a club control, and they should reach 6♠.

HAND 2

Key-Card BW, trump Queen ask

♠ K7653		♠ A98
♥ AJ1098		♥ KQ
♦ Q		♦ J1043
♣ A10		♣ KQJ4

Dealer East. All Vul.

<u>WEST</u>	<u>EAST</u>
	1NT
2♥	2♠
3♥	3♠
4♣	4♥
4NT	5♣
5♦	5♠
Pass	

2♥ = Transfer

3♥ = Natural, game forcing

4♣ = 1st or 2nd round control (lowest)

4♥ = 1st or 2nd round control, denies a control in diamonds

4NT = Key Card BW (West must have a diamond control!)

5♣ = 1 KC (or 5♦ depending on agreement)

5♦ = asking for the trump Q

5♠ = No, I don't have it

If West goes on trying for the slam by bidding 4NT, East shows one KC. They are missing one, and knowing about a diamond loser, West realises the trump suit must be without a loser to make slam. So, West asks East if has the trump Queen with the step above the KC-response, here 5♦. East says: No trump Queen.

West's conclusion is that they are missing one KC (an Ace) and have a trump loser.

One may say this was pushy by West, and it is a risk that 5♠ goes down. But slam could have been cold with these kinds of values. Let us change East's hand just a bit:

♠ K7653 ♥ AJ1098 ♦ Q ♣ A10		♠ AQ8 ♥ KQ ♦ J1043 ♣ K987
-------------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

Note that in this case East has only 15 HCPs whereas in the bidding problem above, he had 16. So, the partnership has 1 HCP less in this last variation, but slam is a fine contract, only depending on three-two in spades. And the partnership will be able to bid the slam in a controlled fashion as East will show he holds the trump Queen when he is asked about it!

HAND 3

Grand slam-try. Showing specific kings

♠ AK1084 ♥ K2 ♦ 2 ♣ AQ1095		♠ Q976 ♥ A984 ♦ AJ7 ♣ K6
-------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------------

Dealer West. All Vul.

WEST	EAST
1♠	2NT
3♦	3♠
4NT	5♠
5NT	6♣
7♠	Pass

The start is based on a Jacoby version where West shows shortage (3♦). When East says he has not an absolute minimum 2NT by bidding 3♠ (with a minimum 2NT, East should have bid 4♠ over 3♦), West asks (no point in cuebidding here, because West knows there is no suit with two quick losers).

When East shows 2KCs and the trump Queen, West tries for grand slam with 5NT. East shows the club King (specific Kings) and West knows the grand slam must be good!

Note that if the answer to 5NT is number of Kings, East will show one King which does not help West. East could have held the diamond King and the grand should not be bid as it would be on a finesse.

HAND 4

Responses to a 5NT, grand slam try

♠ AJ1085		♠ KQ6
♥ K		♥ A94
♦ KQJ105		♦ A4
♣ 94		♣ AQ1063

Dealer East. All Vul.

<u>WEST</u>	<u>EAST</u>
	1♣
1♠	2NT
3♦	3♠
4♦	4NT
5♦	5NT
7NT!	

This bidding assumes they play the jump rebid to 2NT as 18-19. West's 3♦ is game forcing, natural, and West's 4♦ is a cuebid, denying 1st or 2nd round control in clubs. East has a club control and a massive max hand, so he asks. When West has a Key-Card, East must confirm the partnership has all the Key-Cards and the trump Queen with 5NT (West is unlimited, so East can't cut him off by bidding for example 6♠).

What does West know now?

- He knows about his East's KQ of spades (all KCs and the trump Q is confirmed by the 5NT bid)
- He knows about the three other Aces.

This means West can count:

Five spade tricks + two heart tricks + five diamond tricks + the club Ace

= 13 tricks!

This hand proves that TRICKS are more important than HCPs!

Because, note that E/W has 33 HCP combined and a five-three fit, normally what you need for a small slam, but West can after this good bidding COUNT to thirteen tricks!

4. January 2019


GeO Tislevoll

WEST's HANDS TO BID

BIDDING PROBLEM 1

Dealer **WEST**. N/S Vul. (the opponents are passing throughout).


WEST's hand:

♠ AJ10765	
♥ KQ9	
♦ KJ	
♣ J10	

BIDDING PROBLEM 2

Dealer **EAST**. All Vul. (The opponents are passing throughout.)

West's hand:

♠ K7653	
♥ AJ1098	
♦ Q	
♣ A10	

BIDDING PROBLEM 3

Dealer **WEST**. All Vul. (The opponents are passing throughout)

West's hand:

♠ AK1084	
♥ K2	
♦ 2	
♣ AQ1095	

BIDDING PROBLEM 4

Dealer **EAST**. All Vul. (The opponents are passing throughout.)

West's hand:

♠ AJ1085
♥ K
♦ KQJ105
♣ 94

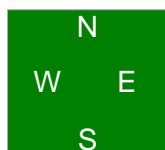


EAST's HANDS TO BID

BIDDING PROBLEM 1

Dealer **WEST**. N/S Vul. (the opponents are passing throughout).

EAST's hand:



♠ KQ98
♥ AJ6
♦ AQ104
♣ Q9

BIDDING PROBLEM 2

Dealer **EAST**. All Vul. (The opponents are passing throughout.)

East's hand:



♠ A98
♥ KQ
♦ J1043
♣ KQJ4

BIDDING PROBLEM 3

Dealer **WEST**. All Vul. (The opponents are passing throughout)

East's hand:

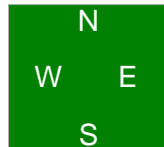


♠ Q976
♥ A984
♦ AJ7
♣ K6

BIDDING PROBLEM 4

Dealer **EAST**. All Vul. (The opponents are passing throughout.)

East's hand:



♠ KQ6
♥ A94
♦ A4
♣ AQ1063

