

CONTROL BIDS

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Today's Agenda

- Welcome!
- What is a Control?
- What is a Control Bid?
- Why use Control Bids rather than just bid Blackwood?
- How to use Control Bids
- Examples
- Play 4 sample hands

What is a Control?

- If you have a 1st round control...
- The opponents cannot lead that suit and take an immediate trick
- Because you have the A or a void
- Must have 1st round control in at least 3 suits to make a small slam

- p.s. terminology – cue bid vs control bid

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What is a Control?

1. American style – 1st round control only - A or void
 2. Italian style – 1st or 2nd round controls - A or void + K or singleton
 3. Hybrid style – special partnership agreements
- There is not unanimous agreement on which style to use
 - But Debbie Rosenberg, Larry Cohen and Marty Bergen recommend Italian style
 - So, let's play Italian style and bid 1st and 2nd round controls
 - 1st round control = A or void
 - 2nd round control = K or singleton

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What is a Control Bid?

- A bid that does not show a suit
- A slam try which promises a 1st or 2nd round control in the bid suit
- Control bids are always non-jump bids in a side suit
- It's a control bid when:
 1. Trump suit has been agreed
 2. If major agreed, a new suit above 3 of our major is a control bid
 - Below 3 of agreed major a new suit is a game try
 3. If minor agreed, a new suit above 3NT is a control bid
 - Below 3NT, a new suit shows a stopper and is a try for 3NT

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Why Use Control Bids?

1. Want to find out if partner has a stopper in a specific suit
 - Avoid opponents taking 2 immediate tricks
2. Merely want to express interest in slam
 - Not yet certain we have enough strength to make slam
 - Want to hear what partner thinks about possibility of slam
3. Want to be careful not to get too high
 - Note: either partner can still bid Blackwood

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Why Not Just Bid 4NT (Keycard BW)?

- Forces us to the 5-level which could be too high
- May not tell us the information we need – i.e. which Ace or Aces (keycards) partner has
- Keycard can easily follow control bidding
- If you bid 4NT be prepared to bid slam if you are missing only one A (kc)
 - Don't bid slam if missing 2 keycards or 1 keycard + Q of trump

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How to Use Control Bids

- Partners bid controls up the line starting with the "lowest" level
- Skipping over a suit denies a control in the skipped suit(s)
- Do not control bid the A or K of trump
- If minor suit agreed, control bids are only above 3NT
 - Below 3NT bids are still exploring possibility of game in NT

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Example

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1D | 1H |
| 3H | ? |

- 3S would be the “lowest” level control bid
- 3S, 4C or 4D shows
 - Interest in a H slam
 - Promises a control in the bid suit
 - Does not indicate length in the suit bid
 - More likely to be based on a high card rather than shortness

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Hand 1

| | | |
|-------|--------|---------------------|
| | North | South Deals, No Vul |
| | J653 | |
| | A853 | |
| | QJ5 | |
| | 75 | |
| 84 | | 7 |
| 9 | | KJT76 |
| T8632 | | 94 |
| QT943 | | KJ862 |
| | AKQT92 | |
| | Q42 | |
| | AK7 | |
| | A | |

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Hand 2

North J872
9
KQT93
T85

West Deals, Both Vul

AKQ
AKQ863
75
AQ

654
T52
A62
J742

T93
J74
J84
K963

Hand 3

North AQT764
K7
85
AKQ

North Deals, All Vul

5
Q642
KQ64
9852

J2
983
AT972
T64

K983
AJT5
J3
J73

Hand 4

North 6
A9765
Q93
J954

South Deals, No Vul

AJ73
K8
AKJ7
862

KQT98542
4
42
AQ

-
QJT32
T865
KT73

THANK YOU FOR COMING