

Introduction to Control Bidding

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1430* is a
GREAT slam-bidding tool

*** Proper name:**
Roman Key-Card Blackwood
with 1430 responses

But to use it,
you must have **controls in every suit**

Don't bid Slam if the opponents can take 2 quick tricks

You

♠ A Q x x x
 ♥ x
 ♦ Q x
 ♣ A K Q x x

Partner

♠ K J x x
 ♥ A K x x
 ♦ x x
 ♣ x x x

♠ K J x x
 ♥ x x
 ♦ A K x x
 ♣ x x x

Swap the ♥ and ♦ suits

In either case, the bidding starts:

1 ♠ 3 ♠

Suppose you ask Key Cards:

4 NT 5 ♥

2 Key Cards without the Q

How can you tell whether to bid Slam ?

6♠ is a **terrible** contract
 (if they lead a ♦,
 they take the 1st 2 tricks)

The **problem**: you have
 no "control" of the ♦ suit

6♠ is an
EXCELLENT contract

Control Bidding – the idea

You

WOW! Partner showed 11-12 support points and 4+ Spades ... we might have Slam !!

♠	A Q x x x
♥	x
♦	Q x
♣	A K Q x x

Partner

?	
---	--

1 ♠

3 ♠

But I can't bid 4NT because we might be wide-open in ♦s

Pard will bid her controls up-the-line

I'm clearly accepting Pard's game invitation. But instead of bidding 4♠, I'm saying "I have a control in the ♣ suit ... and I'm interested in more than Game, so tell me more"

- If Pard bids 4♦, it's safe for you to ask Key Cards!!
- If not, you sign off in 4♠

A "control" is the A or K or singleton or void ... meaning the Opps can't take 2 quick tricks

The 2 example hands from earlier

Primary purposes of control-bidding:

- Is it safe to ask Key Cards?
- Will KC-Ask tell me what I need to know?

♠ A Q x x x
♥ x
♦ Q x
♣ A K Q x x

1 ♠

♠ K J x x
♥ A K x x
♦ x x
♣ x x x

3 ♠

♠ A Q x x x
♥ x
♦ Q x
♣ A K Q x x

1 ♠

♠ K J x x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x
♣ x x x

3 ♠

4 ♣

4 ♥

4 ♣

4 ♦

4 ♠

Pass

4 NT

5 ♥

6 ♠

Pass

♥ control, denies ♦ control

♦ control

It's safe to ask Key Cards. The answer will help.

2 Key Cards without the Q

♣ control, exploring Slam

Rats. We have 2 immediate ♦ losers. Let's play in 4 ♠

This should be a good contract

Examples of Control-Bid auctions

2 ♣

2 ♥

3 ♠

♠ control

2 ♦

3 ♥

4 ♦

♦ control, denies a ♣ control

Waiting

We have a fit!
And I have a decent hand (would have bid 4 ♥ with a weak fit)

Opener might or might not continue



Look Ma, no hands!

If you play 2/1 game forcing:

We have a fit!
I have interest in more than Game (would have bid 4 ♥ with a minimal opener)

1 ♠

3 ♥

4 ♦

♦ control

... also implies a ♠ control (!) because with none in either hand, it's time to sign off in 4 ♥

2 ♥

4 ♣

4 ♥

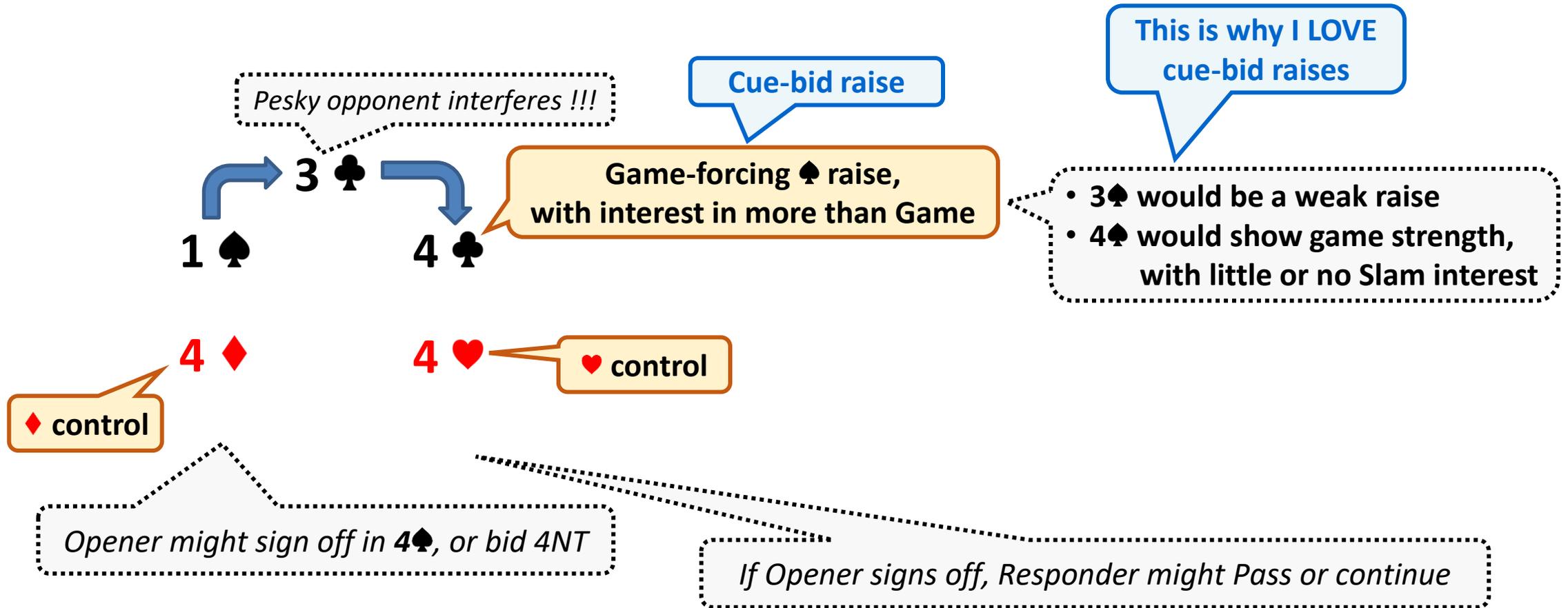
Natural, game-forcing, promises 5+ ♥s

♣ control, denies a ♠ control

I'm ready to stop

Opener might or might not continue

Another Control-Bid auction



A Control-Bid in a suit Partner bid shows **A or K** (*not shortness*)

You've agreed on ♥ as trump

1 ♠

3 ♥

2 ♥

3 ♠

A control bid – not a raise of ♠.
Promises A or K of ♠
(not singleton, not void)

WHY ???

Suppose this is Opener's hand:

♠ A Q x x x
♥ K Q x
♦ A J x x
♣ x

If I know that responder has the ♠K,
I'm smelling Slam !!



If responder has a singleton or void in ♠,
I'm not very excited

♠ K x
♥ A J x x x
♦ K Q x
♣ x x x

♠ x
♥ A J x x x
♦ K Q x
♣ K x x x

Control Bids apply when you: **have agreed on a trump suit and are in a game-forcing auction**

These are NOT Control-Bids:

1 ♠ 2 ♠

3 ♦

Game try

1 ♠ 4 ♦

Splinter raise of ♠s

Opener might sign off or explore slam

1 NT 2 ♦

Transfer

2 ♥

3 ♣

Natural, game-forcing

As you wish ...

Splinter raise of ♠s

1 ♥ 1 ♠

4 ♣

Responder might sign off or explore slam

My most fun Control-Bid ever

Great hand! I'll open 1♥.

- If Pard bids 2♥, I'll bid 4♥.
- If Pard bids 1♠, I'll bid 4♠.
- If Pard bids 1NT, I'll bid 3♥.

♠ J 10 x x
♥ A K J x x x
♦
♣ A K x

OMG!! Pard made a Limit Raise (11-12 support with 4+ ♥s).

- I wonder if we have Slam???
- Probably not. I have no idea how to figure it out.
- Heck, I'll control-bid ♣s anyway

1 ♥

4 ♣

6 ♥

Partner
3 ♥

4 ♥

♠ A
♥ Q 10 x x
♦ Q x x x x x
♣ x x

Pard had a minimal Limit Raise.

We got a ♠ lead, and took 13 tricks (♠A, ♣A, ♣K, and 10 ♥s (cross-ruff)).

OMG – Pard doesn't have the ♦A nor the ♦K.

- Everything she has is in ♠ or ♥ or ♣.
- Everything she has is perfect!



Good bidding? Bad? Who knows? 😊

You use "1430" to ask Key Cards

Technically, called "Roman Key Card Blackwood with 1430 responses"

Bidding 4NT in a "suit auction" says "Partner, tell me how many Key Cards you hold"

Partner responds as follows:

- 1 or 4 Key Cards → bid 5♣
- 3 or 0 Key Cards → bid 5♦
- 2 Key Cards without the Q of Trump → bid 5♥
- 2 Key Cards WITH the Q of Trump → bid 5♠

Root of the mnemonic "1430" or "1-4, 3-0"

WOW! Partner opened!
We probably have Slam in the ♠ suit !!

EXAMPLE: suppose you hold this hand

... and partner opens 1♠

You

- ♠ K Q J x
- ♥ K Q J 10 9
- ♦ K Q J
- ♣ x

Partner

1 ♠
5 ♦

You

4NT
6 ♠

How many Key Cards do you have?
(with ♠ as trump)

She said "3 or 0 Key Cards."
Must be 3 ... with 0, wouldn't have an opening bid

Two cautions about 1430

1. Do NOT use 1430 if you have a small Doubleton in a side suit unless partner has bid it or showed “control”

Partner

♠ A Q x x x x
♥ Q x
♦ A J
♣ K x x

You

♠ K J x
♥ J x
♦ K Q x
♣ A Q J x x

If either person bids 1430, they find out they're **missing only 1 Key Card**, and they **have the Q of Trump (♠) (great !!)**

BUT – opponents can take the first 2 tricks in Hearts

2. Do NOT use 1430 if you have a void

Partner

♠ ? J x x x x
♥ ? ? ?
♦ ? ?
♣ ? ?

You

♠ K Q x x
♥
♦ K Q x x
♣ K Q J x x

Suppose partner says “I have 2 Key Cards”

You can't tell which they are ... and the ♥A doesn't help you ... if that's one of Partner's Key Cards, you will lose 2 Aces