

Slamming again ?

Some hands you only get to game and wish you *had* bid the slam and some you bid a slam and wish you hadn't !

Perhaps you are destined to be unlucky in this area but in an effort to change your luck we are going to examine what it is that makes for good slams.

Points ?

NT slams generally need in the region of 33 pts. This figure of 33 is easy to remember as it means the opponents cannot hold 8 pts ie cannot hold two Aces. Of course 6NT might be made with less points but it usually requires some fortune or a long suit or both.

Suit slams are trickier to quantify in terms of points. You might think that 30+ might also be needed but because tricks can be made by ruffing { rather than just with high cards } then the total number of points needed is often less than 30 and on freak hands { where there are double voids/singletons} slams might be made with much less. {{ There is a grand slam hand in one of Ian Flemings books in which Bond makes 13 tricks in clubs with only 8 points between his hand and dummy's}}

Controls ?

Controls are Aces , Kings , singletons and voids.

Ideally a declarer will have controls in all four suits if they are to make slams.

e.g a "good" 6Sp with 4 x "controls"

AKxxx	Qxxx	Here there are only 27 pts but the declarer has at her service
KQx	Axx	first round control in spades ,hearts and diamonds. Second round
AQxx	Kx	control is also held in clubs.Possession of controls prevents the
x	xxxx	defenders taking two quick tricks.

and a "bad" 6Sp { where there are only 3 controls }

AKxxx	QJxx	There are actually 30 pts but the declarer has no "controls" in the
KQx	AJx	club suit { and has no control over that suit ! }.
AQx	KJxx	Twelve tricks might be made if the defenders fail to lead clubs
xx	xx	but obviously such slams are to be avoided if possible.

Distribution ?

Long suits and of course long *good* suits can provide extra tricks.

Thus possession of a five card side suit can make the difference in both suit and NT slams. It is an obvious point but a five card suit might make 5 tricks whereas a four card suit can never make more than 4 tricks.

e.g NT slam with a five "bagger"

AQx	KJx
KQJ	xxx
AQx	KJxxx
Kxxx	Ax

Twelve tricks can be made

e.g NT slam with no long suits

AQx	KJx
KQJ	xxx
AQx	KJxx
Kxxx	Axx

Eleven tricks are the limit here

