

Standard Agreements (Many People Do Not Know)

- A voluntary bid of 5♥ or 5♠ invites slam. It may be bid for one of these reasons:

When no other suit has been bid:

1♠ - 3♠
5♠

How good are your trumps, partner?

There is one unbid suit in the auction:

1♦ - 1♥
1♠ - 3♠
5♠

Please bid six if you have first- or second-round control of the unbid suit (clubs, in this case).

The opponents have bid:

1♠ - (3♥) - 5♠

Please bid six if you have first- or second-round control of the enemy suit (hearts, in this case).

- An opening bid of 5♥ or 5♠ is extremely rare. It asks partner to bid six with the ace or king of trumps. An example hand would be:

♠ QJ10987
♥ -
♦ AK
♣ AKQ109

- An unusual jump to 5NT is a *grand slam force*. It asks partner to bid seven of the agreed suit if he holds two of the top three honors (AK, AQ or KQ) and a small slam if he doesn't.
- The lead of an ace vs. notrump asks partner to follow with his *highest card* in the suit.
- The lead of a queen vs. notrump requests partner to *unblock the jack* if he has it. The queen might be led from some holding as KQ10943.
- A double of a strongly-bid 3NT (e.g. 1NT - 3NT) asks for an *unusual lead*. Doubler usually has a running five-trick suit and would like you to lead it. Lead a short suit in which you hold no honors.
- Even if you lead the ace from ace-king, non-standard agreements apply *only* to the opening lead. Leads in the middle of the hand revert to standard (i.e. king from ace-king).
- Although we never lead away from aces on the opening lead (vs. suit contracts), we sometimes do in the *middle* of the hand.
- When partner passes your takeout double (converting it into a penalty double) he expects you to *lead a trump*.
- New suits by partner of a preempter are *forcing*. Even after a weak-two bid.

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- To sign off at 5NT after a Blackwood sequence, bid a new suit after the ace-showing response. That asks partner to bid 5NT, which you can pass. Here's an example:

1♣ - 2♣
4NT - 5♦
5♥ - 5NT
Pass

♠ KQJ
♥ AQ
♦ KQ
♣ K108543

After the inverted raise, opener checks for aces. He finds out he is off two aces, but unfortunately he cannot get back to 5♣, so he bids 5♥, asking partner to bid 5NT, which he passes.

- Both sides do not preempt on the same hand. A jump overcall of a preemptive bid is *strong*. It shows about 20 points and a good six-card or longer suit. You might overcall 3♣ with 4♥ with a hand such as:

♠ KQ
♥ AQJ986
♦ AQJ5
♣ 8

- A 2NT overcall of a weak-two bid is *not the Unusual Notrump*. Nor is a jump to 3NT.
- To show a void in answer to standard Blackwood, *make your normal response at the six-level* instead of the five-level. 6♦ = 1 ace and a void, etc. Only show useful voids (e.g. in an unbid or the enemy's suit).
- 5NT following Blackwood 4NT *guarantees possession of all four aces*. Partner is within his rights to bid a grand slam on his own if he can count thirteen tricks armed with that knowledge.
- If in doubt whether 4♣ is Gerber or Stayman, it is Stayman. Stayman takes precedence.

You	Partner	
2♣	2♦	
3NT	4♣	(Stayman)

- All bids, jump or not, by responder are *non-forcing* after partner opens and RHO doubles. Responder's hand is limited by the fact he didn't redouble (or bid 2NT if playing Jordan 2NT).

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- When your side has voluntarily bid a game and the opponents bid over you, a pass by either you or your partner is *forcing*.

1♠ - P - 3♠ - P
4♠ - P - P - 5♣!
?

You must either buy the contract or double the opponents. You can pass the decision to partner if you wish.

- All doubles of slams are lead-directing.
- If partner leads a king and you follow suit with the queen, you promise you can win the next trick. In other words, you started with the QJ(x...) or a singleton Q. In either case, partner knows he can safely underlead his ace if he wants to get to your hand. Therefore, you cannot signal a doubleton with Qx.