

Learning Points – Quantitative 4 NT

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Bidding Level: Basic

Many are familiar with 4NT as ace asking (Blackwood, Roman Key Card Blackwood, 1430). The Gerber convention asks for aces at a lower level and is popular in NT auctions. Using Gerber allows a useful alternative for responder's 4NT bid in NT auctions.

When both players hold balanced hands, 33 HCP are usually sufficient to allow a contract of 6NT. Likewise 37 HCP is often sufficient to support 7 NT. (*33 means we are NOT missing 2 Aces and 37 HCP means we are not missing 1 Ace*).

Let's look at bidding after partner opens 1NT (15-17 HCP). You hold this very nice hand:

♠ AK6
♥ Q4
♦ KJ32
♣ K732

1NT – pass – 4 NT: *Bid 6 with a maximum partner*. While you might explore a minor suit fit, usually NT will play well (and score better). With this kind of hand you respond 4NT directly. Partner passes with 15 HCP, bids 6NT with 17 and decides whether to bid 6 with 16 HCP (Holding As and Ks and a 5-card suit, partner will bid 6NT with 16 HCP).

Change the hand to:

♠ AK62
♥ Q4
♦ KJ3
♣ K732

Now you want to determine if partner has 4 ♠s. Try Stayman 1st. If partner has 4 ♠s invite slam in ♠s. If not bid 4NT as a quantitative raise. If partner has 4 ♠s, then you can jump to 4♣ to ask for aces, intending to set the contract based on how many Aces and Kings your side is missing.

The same principle applies after a Jacoby Transfer. Change responder's hand slightly and we have:

♠ AK632
♥ Q4
♦ KJ3
♣ K72

Now you transfer to spades and jump to 4NT (*NOT Blackwood or RKB*) as a quantitative question to partner. You are asking partner 2 questions: Strain (♠ or NT) and Level (4NT, 5♠ or 6 of either). Generally partner will prefer ♠s with 3 or more cards and an outside doubleton.

4NT as a quantitative raise is useful when responding with a balanced hand. Other bidding approaches should be used with unbalanced or semi-balanced (5422) hands to explore likely trump fits. *If you play 11-14 HCP 1NT opening bids, then responder will have 19 HCP to make the Quantitative Raise.*

Generally, any sequence where 4♣ is Gerber, then 4NT is the Quantitative Raise. A few common sequences:

1♣ – Pass – 1♠ – Pass 2N – Pass – 4N QR	1♣ – Pass – 1♠ – Pass 1N – Pass – 4N QR	1♠ - Pass – 2♣ – Pass 2N – Pass – 4N QR	1N – Pass – 2♣ – Pass 2♦/♥/♠ – Pass – 4N QR	1N – Pass – 2♦ – Pass 2♥ – Pass – 4N QR
<i>Opener has 18-19 HCP Responder has 14 HCP</i>	<i>Opener has 12-14 HCP Responder has 19 HCP</i>	<i>Responder has 19 HCP or 16 if 2N is 15-17</i>	<i>2♣ Stayman Responder has 16 HCP</i>	<i>Jacoby Transfer Responder has 16 HCP</i>

Here are a few sequences where 4NT is NOT quantitative:

1♣ – Pass – 1♠ – Pass 2N – Pass – 3♦ – Pass 4♦ – Pass – 4N	1♠ – Pass – 2♦ – Pass 3♣ – Pass – 3♥ – Pass 4♣ – Pass – 4N	1N – Pass – 4♦ – Pass 4♥ – Pass – 4N <i>Texas Transfer</i>	1♠ - Pass – 2♥ – Pass 3♥ – Pass – 3♠ - Pass 4N	1♠ - Pass – 2♥ – Pass 3♦ – Pass – 4♣ - Pass 4N
<i>Blackwood for ♦s</i>	<i>Natural to play. No fit.</i>	<i>Blackwood after a Texas Transfer</i>	<i>Blackwood</i>	<i>Natural to play, No fit.</i>

A 4NT bid is a quantitative raise whenever partner makes a NT bid limiting their hand. 4NT is ace asking if a fit is shown or implied (jumping to 4N implies a fit for the last suit partner bid). 4NT is to play if our side has no fit and this is the best chance to play NT. 4NT is Blackwood after a Texas Transfer showing 6 or more cards in a major suit.