

How to Invite Slam in Opener's Minor over 4S

Presented by Mike Savage

The other day I held something like: **S:** A **H:** K10x **D:** xxxx **C:** AQJxx, partner opened the bidding 1C and the next hand bid 4S! What should I bid? 5C will never get us to a slam if one exists as I have too many controls for partner to bid a slam. 6C would be an overbid as there might well be two losers in the hand. I'd sure like to invite a club slam while not *committing* to it. There needs to be a way to do that—and after some thought, there seems to be a good method to do it.

4NT over 4S, especially over a 1C (or even a 1D) opener by partner, should not be used as any kind of Blackwood (ace or control asking). Some might play 4NT here as a natural bid, but the frequency of occurrence of that type of hand seems too low to be worth it. Others might want 4NT over 4S to be used as a take-out for the two unbid suits. Lastly, you might use 4NT as a slam try in opener's minor.

Rather than pick just one of these possible meanings for 4NT over 4S, here is a way to combine two of them. Playing this method you can bid 4NT as a try for slam in partner's minor suit **or** to show a two-suiter in the unbid suits, asking partner to pick between them. Here is how it would work:

1C-4S 4NT = Club slam try or a red two-suiter (diamonds and hearts, the unbid suits).

5C = Shows a minimum with no interest in a club slam.

Pass = Has a club slam try but is giving up.

5D = Has a red two-suiter and is asking partner to choose between them.

5D/5H = Accepts club slam and is bidding his longer red suit or, if equal, the stronger.

5NT = Wants to play in 6C or six of a red suit (pick-a-slam).

6C = To play.

6D = Pass or correct to 6H.

1D-4S 4NT = Diamond slam try or a rounded two-suiter (clubs and hearts, the unbid suits).

5C = Shows longer clubs than hearts (or the stronger if of equal length).

Opener might or might not accept a diamond slam try if responder has one.

Pass = Has a rounded two-suiter.

5D = Shows a diamond slam try.

5D = Shows no interest in a diamond slam and opener has longer hearts than clubs.

Pass = Has a diamond slam try but is giving up.

5H = To play with a club/heart two-suiter.

5NT = Wants to play either 6D or six of a rounded suit (pick-a-slam).

6C = Pass or correct to 6H.

6D = To play.

Over a **4H** preempt, you could use **4NT** to simply be a slam try in opener's minor (*my choice*).

1C-4H 4NT = A slam try in clubs.

5C = To play with no interest in a club slam.

5D, 5H and **5S** = A cue-bid of opener's lowest 1st round control.

1C-4H 5C = To play with just enough values and clubs to prefer to play 5C than to defend 4H.

1D-4H 4NT = A slam try in diamonds.

5D = To play with no interest in a diamond slam.

5C, 5H and **5S** = A cue-bid of your lowest 1st round control.

1D-4H 5D = To play with just enough values and diamonds to prefer to play 5D than to defend 4H.

Instead of using **4NT** over **4H** as a straightforward slam try in opener's minor, there are couple of other possible usages of **4NT** that come to mind. Responder could use **4NT** to show that you have longer length in the unbid minor than you have in opener's suit. This is classically done with 6-4 in the minors but easily might be 6-5 or 7-5. This usage might get you to the best minor game—or even slam.

Another possible usage is to use **4NT** over **4H** to show either a slam try in opener's minor or a slam try in the unbid minor. With no slam interest, opener will rebid 5C and responder will pass or correct.