

On some hands, the five level is inevitable. This is more likely to occur when a player makes a bid that uses up a great deal of bidding space.

<i>West</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ J 10 7 5 2	1♠	2NT	♠ A K 6 4 3
♥ A K 9 8 2	4♥	5♣	♥ Q 6 4
♦ A 4	5♦	7♠	♦ 8 7
♣ 2	Pass		♣ A J 10

West's 4♥ bid showed a 5-card heart suit with two of the top three honors. East was delighted to hear that, but without a diamond control, it would have been wrong for him to bid 4NT. West could have had a hand where a diamond lead would have been fatal in 6♠, such as:

♠ Q J 8 7 2 ♥ A K J 4 3 ♦ J 2 ♣ 3

Therefore, East control-bid 5♣. This bid promised a *first-round* control in clubs. Why is that?

Because 4NT is no longer available, a 5-level control-bid shows first-round control in that suit.

When West bid 5♦, he promised either the ♦A or a diamond void. If he had second-round control of diamonds, he would jump to 6♠.

That was all East needed to bid the excellent grand slam. Not surprisingly, at the tournament where this hand was actually played, many pairs only got to six.

Partnership Checklist – Control Bids

Use this checklist to firm up your control-bidding agreements. Check A or B on #1. Check Yes or No on #2-6. I recommend B on #1 and Yes on #2-6.

Keep in mind that this checklist does not address:

- É Auctions where a minor suit is bid and raised;
- É 2/1 Game Forcing auctions.

1. Each player's first control-bid promises:

- A a first-round control in the suit
- B any control (Italian style)

2. Controls are bid up-the-line, so bypassing a suit denies a control in that suit.

- Yes No

3. As long as slam is possible, always show a control below the game level.

- Yes No

4. If partner has shown a 5+ card suit, a control-bid in his suit shows the ace or king.

- Yes No

5. Once you have shown a short suit, only control-bid that suit with a void.

- Yes No

6. A control-bid at the five level shows first-round control in that suit.

- Yes No