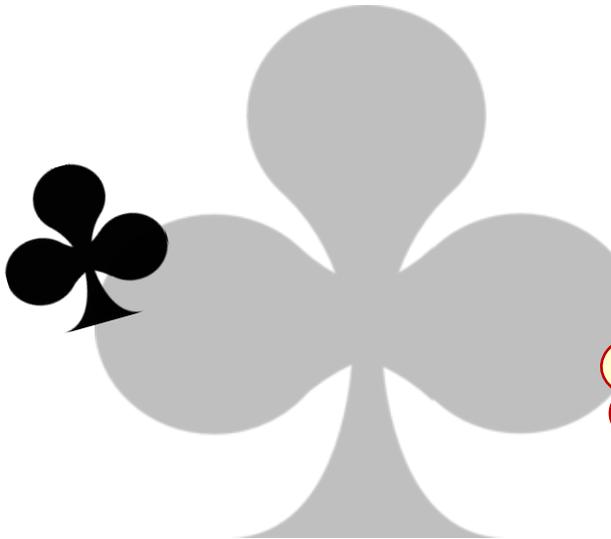


BAZE CONVENTION

You open 1NT (15-17), your partner responds 2♣, Stayman, asking for a 4-card major. You cooperate by bidding 2♠. How does your partner show a strong hand with spade support, strong enough to show slam interest?



W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	?

How to show slam interest in support of Spades?

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	4NT
P	?		

Does this auction look familiar?

How often, playing with a pickup partner, have we seen this 4NT bid? We know it is a *quantitative* raise, but does partner? Is he showing spade support, and asking for keycards? Hopefully not, since the 4NT bid

should not be showing spade support. More likely, partner has four hearts and around 16 HCP's, asking us to bid 6NT with a maximum NT opener. That is what this 4NT bid should show.

How, then, do we show partner that we have a major suit fit (4 or 5 cards) and have serious slam interest? **BAZE!**

When do we use **BAZE**?

BAZE is used after a NoTrump opening, a 2♣ Stayman inquiry, and a positive Stayman response. So, after 1NT - 2♣, and a positive response of either 2♥ or 2♠, if we have a major suit fit (4 or 5 of the trump suit), and we can see the possibility of slam, we use **BAZE** to further describe our hand.

BAZE hand types:

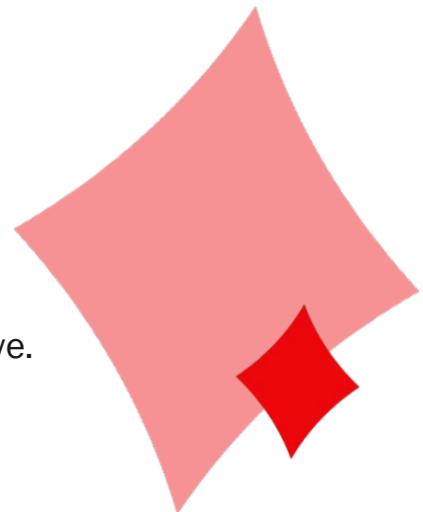
There are three types of hands as responder where—with a major suit fit—**BAZE** can be used.

They are:

1. A flat hand with NO SINGLETON, 4 or 5 trump, and enough HCP's to pursue a possible slam.
2. A shapely hand WITH A SINGLETON (or void), 4 or 5 trump, and serious interest in slam.
3. A hand with a fit, and strong enough to leap into RKCB.

BAZE when responder has no shortage:

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	4♦
P	?		



A typical auction for the first type of hand is shown above.

1NT is 15-17 HCP.

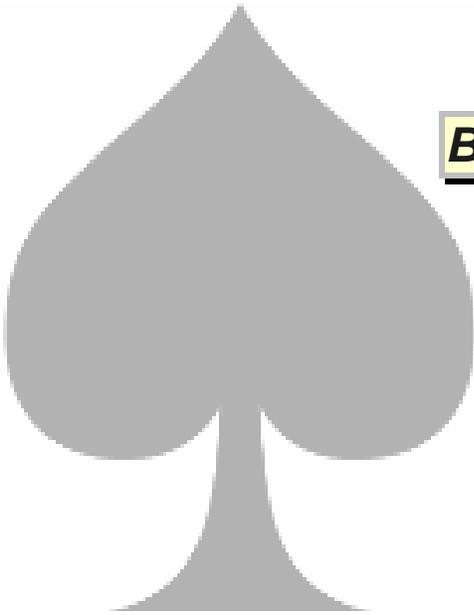
2♣ is Stayman.

2♠ shows four Spades.

The 4♦ bid says the following:

- We have a *FIT* in spades.
- I *DO NOT* have a singleton.
- I have *SLAM INTEREST*.
- It requests the No Trump opener to Q-bid, Bid RKCB, or sign-off.

Keep in mind that with South having a flat hand, slam will not be made on shape. The two hands together will need to be much closer to the HCP total of 33. South needs to bear this in mind when bidding 4♦ and North must also be aware of this. If he is minimum for his No Trump opener it may be best to sign off in game.

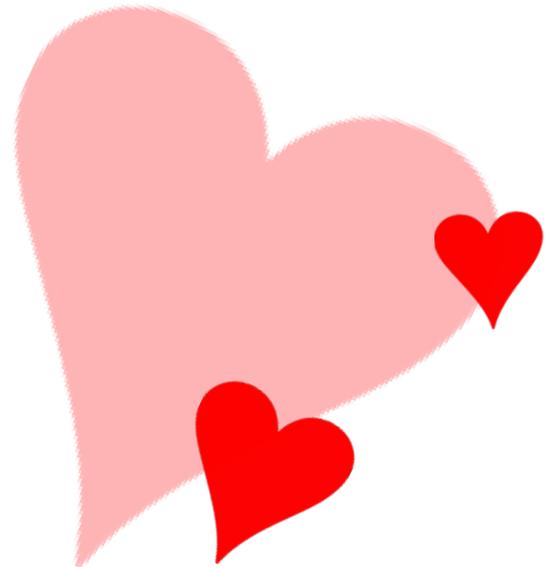


BAZE when responder has shortage:

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♥	P	3♠
P	?		

The second hand-type can be shown with the above auction. 1NT is 15-17 HCP. 2♣ is Stayman. 2♥ shows 4 Hearts. The 3♠ bid (*a bid at the 3 level in the other major*) says the following:

- We have a *FIT* in hearts.
- I have a *SINGLETON . . . SOMEWHERE*.
- I have *SLAM INTEREST*.



W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	3♥
P	?		

The second hand-type can also be shown with the above auction. 1NT is 15-17 HCP. 2♣ is Stayman. 2♠ shows 4 Spades. The 3♥ bid (*a bid at the 3 level in the other major*) says the following:

- We have a *FIT* in spades.
- I have a *SINGLETON . . . SOMEWHERE*.
- I have *SLAM INTEREST*.

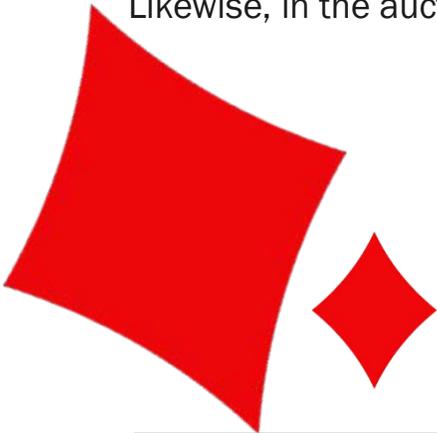
The bid at the 3 level of the other major says nothing about the location of the singleton. We'll get to that in a moment . . .

Where is the singleton?

Now, for the No Trump opener to ask responder where the location of the singleton is, he bids the NEXT STEP. So, in the auction below, 3♠ asks, “Partner, where is your singleton?”

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	3♥
P	3♠		

Likewise, in the auction below, 3NT asks, “Partner, where is your singleton?”



W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♥	P	3♠
P	3NT		

Low—Middle—High

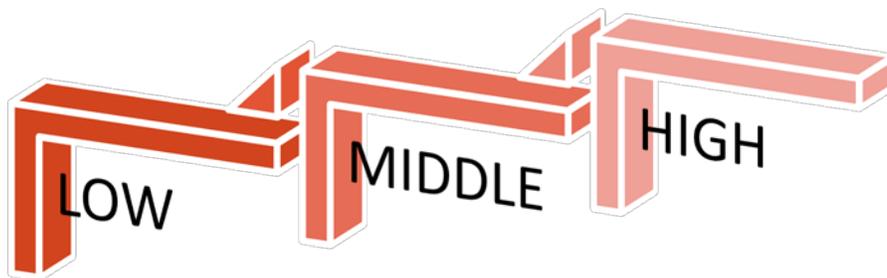
The reason for using the “NEXT STEP” is to save bidding space.

It is now responders turn to tell partner the location of that singleton. How is this done? You might think that to show the location of the singleton that responder would bid that suit. WRONG!

Think about the following auction: 1NT - 2♣ - 2♥ - 3♠ - 3NT . . . where 3♠ shows *Heart support* and slam interest with a singleton, and 3NT asks the location of the singleton. What if the singleton is in spades? If you bid 4♠, you go past game and partner may have wasted values in your short suit. How do you address this? Again, use steps.

Think the following: **LMH** = Low, Middle, High. What the heck is LMH? Quite simply, LMH is this . . .

- To show a singleton in the Lowest suit, use the Lowest step.
- To show a singleton in the Middle suit, use the Middle step.
- To show a singleton in the Highest suit, use the Highest step.



In the auction below, where 3♠ asks the location of the singleton . . .

- 4♣ shows a ♦ singleton.
- Remember, in response to the 3♠ singleton-ask, the next steps are:
 - 3NT (low - showing a ♣ singleton),
 - 4♣ (middle - showing a ♦ singleton), and
 - 4♦ (high - showing a ♥ singleton).

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	3♥
P	3♠	P	4♣



Using LMH you **NEVER** bid past game in your response. Now partner can Q-bid, bid RKCB, or just sign-off in game based on your singleton suit. **Isn't this great!?**

Roman Key Card Blackwood

What about RKCB (Roman Key Card Blackwood) by responder? Can it be bid showing trump support directly over a positive response to a Stayman bid? Yes! But not with 4NT. Remember that 4NT is a quantitative raise.

So, how do we bid it? See the auction below:

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	4♣

4♣ here . . . directly over a positive response to a Stayman bid, shows a Spade FIT and asks for key cards. Simple!

Just use whatever flavor of RKCB you prefer, 1430 or 0314.



MODIFIED BAZE

As with all conventions, someone comes along and thinks of improvements. Sometimes there is a cost that negates any perceived advantage. Not so with *Modified Baze*, which moderately improves the response structure of Baze.

What are the improvements? In *Modified Baze*, the shortness showing rebid by responder of 3 OM (other major) remains the same, but the four-level bids of 4♣ and 4♦ are inverted. Think about it, by inverting the 4♣ and 4♦ bids, you create *extra bidding space* for opener to show a control.

4♣ now shows the flat hand requesting control bids.

4♦ becomes RKCB.

Examples below:

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	4♣

Agrees Spades – No Shortage

Here, 4♣ agrees trumps, shows a hand without shortness, and demands control bids in search of slam. Note that the extra room allows more space to show controls.

Here, 4♦ agrees trumps, shows a hand without shortness, and is now RKCB asking for key cards. Remember that 4NT is a quantitative raise.

W	N	E	S
P	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	4♦

RKCB – Spades

This is a minor modification to **Baze**. It is an improvement.

BAZE after 2NT?

What about hands that open 2NT?

You don't have enough room to show (or not show) singletons, so to show strong trump support after a Stayman sequence and slam interest, bid the other major at the cheapest level.

The No Trump bidder can then Q-bid, bid RKCB, or sign-off in game.

🌀 🌀 🌀 🌀 End 🌀 🌀 🌀 🌀

Sources:

Miller, Billy (2010, December). The Coolest Gizmos and Gadgets, Modified Baze. *ACBL Bulletin*, volume Page 59.

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