

## ♠♥♦♣ AGAINST CONVENTIONAL PLAY ♠♥♦♣

North dealt and passed. East also passed, and this is your hand:

|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| <b>S</b> | South |
| ♠        | AKQJ5 |
| ♥        | AK6   |
| ♦        | Q75   |
| ♣        | A4    |

There are 23 HCP and too much strength for a 1-level opening. You should open 2♣. Over partner's 2♦ waiting bid, you have a choice of rebidding 2♠ or 2NT. This is a balanced hand. However, the spades are so strong, I would opt for a 2♠ rebid.

Your partner raises to 3♠, which shows spade support and some working points. Otherwise, he would have bid 4♠ – Fast Arrival.

Do you smell a slam? You can investigate by starting control suit cue bidding. You need partner to have a control of the diamond suit. Otherwise, you could lose the first 2 tricks. You rebid 4♣, showing your club control, hoping to hear 4♦ from partner. Fortunately, he comes through with a 4♦ bid and you launch into RKBW. North shows the ♦A and you rebid 6♠.

Here is the complete auction:

| West     | North           | East | South |
|----------|-----------------|------|-------|
|          | Pass            | Pass | 2♣    |
| Pass     | 2♦              | Pass | 2♠    |
| Pass     | 3♠              | Pass | 4♣    |
| Pass     | 4♦              | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass     | 5♣ <sup>1</sup> | Pass | 6♠    |
| All Pass |                 |      |       |

<sup>1</sup> 1 or 4 Key Cards, counting the ♠K as the 5 Key Card

West leads the ♥J and you see this dummy:

|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| <b>N</b> | North |
| ♠        | 8762  |
| ♥        | Q2    |
| ♦        | A4    |
| ♣        | Q9762 |

West's Lead: ♥J

|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| <b>S</b> | South |
| ♠        | AKQJ5 |
| ♥        | AK6   |
| ♦        | Q75   |
| ♣        | A4    |

In a slam contract, it is usually a good idea to count winners. You have 10 top tricks – 5 spades, 3 hearts 1 diamond and 1 club. You need 2 more. One can come from ruffing a diamond in the dummy, but where is the 12<sup>th</sup> trick coming from?

Notice the club suit in the dummy. I always say, "I never met a 5-card suit I didn't like." If the opponents' clubs break no worse than 4-2, the 5<sup>th</sup> club can be the needed winner. The probability of this split is 74% and therefore, definitely worth a try,

Here is where the advance planning is so crucial. You need 3 entries to the dummy outside clubs. After pulling trump, you will play the ♣A and then give up a club. Regaining the lead you have to go to the dummy twice to ruff 2 clubs (assuming a 4-2 split) and then once more to enjoy that 5<sup>th</sup> club. The ♦A is one entry, the diamond ruff is the second entry, and the ♥Q is the third entry.

Having gotten this far in the plan, it's now time to play the first card from the dummy. If you follow the standard procedure for playing lopsided suits, you will take the "high card from the short side, first". That is, you will win the opening lead with the ♥Q, so you will be in the right hand to take the ♥AK later. But if you do that, you will be using up your 3<sup>rd</sup> entry. Contrary to the rule of thumb, you must win the first heart with the ♥A! Your good planning warned you about ruining a makeable slam.

If you do mess up and win the first trick with the ♥Q, there is still a possibility of making the slam. You can do a partial trump draw and leave 2 spades in the dummy, using two diamond ruffs for your 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> entry. That is dependent on East not leading a club after he wins the second club trick. His partner started with only 2 clubs and will use the outstanding spade to over ruff your spade. If you ruff high, that won't help. West will discard and hold on to his ♠10 and either over ruff the next club lead or win the last trick outright, when you play your ♠5.

This is the entire deal:

|         |  |         |  |                  |  |
|---------|--|---------|--|------------------|--|
| D       |  | N North |  | W N E S          |  |
| 1       |  | ♠ 8762  |  | P P 2♣           |  |
|         |  | ♥ Q2    |  | P 2♦ P 2♠        |  |
|         |  | ♦ A4    |  | P 3♠ P 4♣        |  |
|         |  | ♣ Q9762 |  | P 4♦ P 4NT       |  |
|         |  |         |  | P 5♣ P 6♠        |  |
| W West  |  |         |  | E East           |  |
| ♠ 1043  |  |         |  | ♠ 9              |  |
| ♥ J1095 |  |         |  | ♥ 8743           |  |
| ♦ K832  |  |         |  | ♦ J1096          |  |
| ♣ 53    |  |         |  | ♣ KJ108          |  |
|         |  | S South |  |                  |  |
|         |  | ♠ AKQJ5 |  |                  |  |
|         |  | ♥ AK6   |  |                  |  |
|         |  | ♦ Q75   |  |                  |  |
|         |  | ♣ A4    |  |                  |  |
|         |  |         |  | 6♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0 |  |

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <https://tinyurl.com/ygyw92u2>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. If you don't want to see the opponents hands, click on the white area in the South hand before you start.

Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.