

## BIDDING A SLAM

You are sitting in the South with this hand:

S	South
♠	AQ84
♥	KQ94
♦	AK4
♣	Q5

When you pick up this hand you smile and plan to open 2NT. Imagine your surprise when North, your partner who dealt this beauty, opens 1♦. You add his 13 points to your 20 points and you know you have the points for a slam. You don't know yet where it is going to pay so you keep calm and make sure your bids are forcing. You don't want partner to stop below the slam level.

You show your two 4-card majors by bidding up the line. Responding 1♠ would deny 4 hearts, but 1♥ does not deny 4 spades.

This is how I would bid the hand:

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

This is the full deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; font-size: 2em;">9</div>		<b>N North</b> ♠ KJ53 ♥ ♦ Q9752 ♣ AK63	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>P</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>3♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>4♣</td> <td>P</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>P</td> <td>6♠</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S		1♦	P	1♥	P	1♠	P	2♣	P	2NT	P	3♦	P	4♣	P	4NT	P	5♦	P	6♠
W	N	E	S																								
	1♦	P	1♥																								
P	1♠	P	2♣																								
P	2NT	P	3♦																								
P	4♣	P	4NT																								
P	5♦	P	6♠																								
<b>W West</b> ♠ 962 ♥ AJ10753 ♦ 106 ♣ J2		<b>E East</b> ♠ 107 ♥ 862 ♦ J83 ♣ 109874																									
	<b>S South</b> ♠ AQ84 ♥ KQ94 ♦ AK4 ♣ Q5	6♣ N      NS: 0 EW: 0																									

Does this bidding make sense?

- 1 After partner rebid spades, you know there is a spade fit and the slam is probably going to be in spades. You make another forcing bid. This bid is a conventional bid called “4<sup>th</sup> suit forcing to game.” It doesn’t say anything about clubs but does say that you have enough points to be in at least a game, and you haven’t yet decided on the strain. It asks partner to tell you more.
- 2 Partner’s puzzling rebid of 2NT at least give you room to keep bidding at the 3-level. You know you have slam but if partner doesn’t have the ♣A or ♣K, you could lose the first two tricks. Your bid of 3♦ says you have 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> round control of the diamond suit, but have no control of clubs, the suit you skipped over.
- 3 North makes the bid you have been waiting to hear. His club bid shows a stopper in that suit. Now you know to won’t lose the first two club tricks.
- 4 Your 4NT bid asks for either aces (in standard Blackwood) or key cards (in Roman Key Card Blackwood). Knowing you can’t lose two tricks off the top makes it safe to use this convention.

<sup>5</sup> In either Blackwood system, this bid means he has two controls: either two aces or one ace and the ♠K.

<sup>6</sup> Whatever the meaning of the 5♥, you have all that is necessary for your slam bid of 6♠.

East will probably lead the ♣10. You win the ♣Q in the dummy and pull trump with 3 rounds of spades. Now you play out all the diamonds, discarding hearts on the 2 extra diamonds in your hand. You discard another heart on the 3<sup>rd</sup> club. Now you can ruff the last heart in the dummy as well as the last club in your hand.

You've made 7♠. Bidding the grand slam would depend on knowing about the heart void in partner's hand. There is a conventional way of discovering that fact, but it is beyond the scope of this article. We will be happy with our great score.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/j27dyzn> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own