

BIDDING UP TO THE GRAND SLAM

You pick up this beautiful hand.

S	South
♠	AK865
♥	AQ108
♦	K7
♣	A6

You open 1♠ and partner responds 1NT. The opponents are silent. You want to show your hearts, but with 20 HCP, you want to do it with a jump. A rebid of 3♥ is enough, since partner's response limits his hand to 10 points.

Partner makes a very aggressive bid of 4♣. Considering his first response was limited, he must have a good fit for hearts and wants to explore game or possibly slam. He is showing control of the club suit, in case that it would influence your decision.

You know you are in the slam zone now. He is promising the maximum for his first bid and likes hearts. You can now check on key cards. A rebid of 4NT is asking how many of the key cards he holds – the four aces and the king of hearts. His answer is 5NT. In the version of the Roman Key Card system you are playing, this means he has 2 key cards and a void. So you know he has the ♦A and the ♥K. Those are the only two key cards you are missing. His void must be in either spades or clubs. If the void is in clubs, you eliminate your club loser by ruffing in the dummy. If he has a spade void, you can dump at least 2 of partner's clubs and eventually ruff your club in the dummy.

A grand slam isn't cold, but it is better than 50%. I would simply rebid 7♥!

West leads the ♣10. Here are the two hands. How will you make this grand contract?

N	North
♠	J7
♥	K6432
♦	AQ10854
♣	

West leads the ♣10

S	South
♠	AK865
♥	AQ108
♦	K7
♣	A6

You are happy that the void is in the club suit. This will make it easier to ruff the losing ♣6. There are no losers in the red suits and you already plan to eliminate the club loser with a ruff. You do have 3 spade losers that will also need ruffing. Therefore, a lot will depend on the split of the four outstanding hearts. If they break 2-2, you will have 3 hearts available to ruff 1 club and 2 spades. But that might be sufficient if the spades break no worse than 4-2. Your 5th spade might be good and won't have to be ruffed.

Win the club lead and discard a diamond from dummy. Pull trump in two rounds and start setting up the spade suit. Take the ♠AK and ruff a spade. Come back to your hand with a diamond and ruff your 4th spade. Now play dummy's top diamonds, discarding your losing club on the ♦Q. Notice that the defender's ♦J hasn't fallen, but ruffing another diamond will solve that problem. Your last two cards are both good. You claim your grand slam.

This is the entire deal:

14	N North	W West	E East	S South
	♠ J7	♠ Q3	♠ 10942	♠ AK865
	♥ K6432	♥ 95	♥ J7	♥ AQ108
	♦ AQ10854	♦ J962	♦ 3	♦ K7
	♣ K10973	♣ K10973	♣ QJ8542	♣ A6
	S South			
	♠ AK865			
	♥ AQ108			
	♦ K7			
	♣ A6			
				7♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/ycmzxx5a> , 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.