

INSISTING ON A SLAM CONTRACT

S	South
♠	
♥	AKJ874
♦	A854
♣	AK2

You pick up this hand, but your partner has dealt and opens 1♠. Your 19 HCP is really worth about 22 points. The self-sufficient 6-card heart suit is worth an extra 3 points. You have more than enough points to get to slam. You just have to make sure your partner doesn't pass you on the way there.

You should make a forcing bid of 2♥. This is forcing because it's a change of suit, and a new suit by an un-passed responder is 100% forcing. Your partner rebids 2♠. He is showing six spades and a minimum strength hand. This doesn't excite you. You don't really care what he has in spades. You need him to have honors in diamonds. You can make another forcing bid of 3♣, hoping he will rebid diamonds. Instead, he jumps to 4♥. This is a "fast arrival" jump to game showing no interest in slam.

This is actually good news. Now you can bid 4NT and you find he has only one ace. Obviously, it is the ♠A, which does you no good. Using Blackwood with a void is not usually very helpful. You could ask for kings but if he shows only 1 king, you won't know if it's the immaterial ♠K or the critical ♦K. You might as well just bid the slam you think you can make - 6♥. This is the complete bidding:

North	South
1♠	2♥
2♠	3♣
4♥	4NT
5♠	6♥
Pass	

West leads the ♦9 and you see this dummy:

N	North
♠	AQJ1065
♥	1062
♦	QJ10
♣	7

West: ♦9

S	South
♠	
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♦	A854
♣	AK2

How would you plan the play?

You have a possible heart loser, a possible diamond loser and a club loser. You can ruff the losing club in the dummy, so you can't pull all four outstanding trump immediately. You should figure that the ♦K is in East, since it would be dangerous for West to lead away from the ♦K in a slam contract. You cover with the ♦10 and it holds.

You only need two trump in the dummy to ruff a club and a diamond, so it doesn't hurt to lead to the ♥A to see what falls. You are happy to see West's ♥Q fall under your ♥A. That simplifies things.

Play the ♣A and ruff your low club with dummy's ♥6. Now play the ♦QJ. West will probably not play his ♦K. You can overtake the ♦J with the ♦A and ruff your final diamond, knowing that East can't over ruff you.

Now come back to your hand with a spade ruff and pull East's remaining two trump. The rest of the tricks are yours – 13 in all.

This is the entire deal:

D 13	N North	W N E S
	♠ AQJ1065 ♥ 1062 ♦ QJ10 ♣ 7	1♠ P 2♥ P 2♠ P 3♣ P 4♥ P 4NT P 5♣ P 6♥
W West	S South	E East
♠ 8742 ♥ Q ♦ 92 ♣ J109865		♠ K93 ♥ 953 ♦ K763 ♣ Q43
		6♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/y7yeckar>, 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.

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