

PUSHING TO SLAM

North is the dealer and opens 1♦. East overcalls 1♠ and it's up to you:

S	South
♠	8
♥	AK543
♦	A
♣	KQJ1075

You hold a 6-5-1-1 hand with 17 HCP. This should wake you up! There is a saying in bridge: "6-5: Come Alive". You are definitely in the slam zone. You can make a negative double here, planning on jumping in whatever rounded suit partner picks.

Before he rebids, however, West jumps to 4♠. You know that they can have only 10 points between them, but because of your shape, you can count on the same freakish distribution in the opponents' hands.

Partner rebid 4NT which is passed back to you. This is not asking for aces. This is the "unusual notrump." Normally, it asks partner to bid the longest of the two unbid suits. But it would not be logical to have length in hearts and clubs and to have opened 1♦. Here, it suggests that North holds 5-5 in the minors and he wants you to pick your longest minor. Of course, if partner's 10 cards are in the minors, he is going to be short in the majors. This will give you a way to eliminate the losing hearts. All you need is for partner to hold one ace and you can easily make 6♣. You can make the grand slam in clubs if he holds both missing aces. However, if he holds no aces, you will have to lose 2 tricks. Unfortunately, there is no way to find out at this level. What to do?

There are times where you can not be scientific and must guess. When I played this hand, I just bid the slam I hoped to make: 6♣. When I saw the dummy, I wished I had guessed 7♣!

West leads the ♥ J and partner tables this hand:

N	North
♠	A
♥	Q
♦	Q98632
♣	A9863

West lead: ♥ J

S	South
♠	8
♥	AK543
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The play is simple. You win the ♥ Q and pull trump. Then you ruff the three losing hearts, using partner's diamonds for transportation. Rack up 13 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

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

<http://tinyurl.com/y89s3ud6> , 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.