

SETTING UP A LONG SUIT

East dealt and passed. This is your hand.

S	South
♠	K4
♥	A75
♦	A97
♣	AJ642

With 16 HCP and a balanced hand, 1NT is almost automatic. Partner bid 2♥, transferring you into spades. After you accept the transfer, he bid 3♥. This shows either 5-5 or 6-5 in the majors and is forcing to game. You would rather be in a heart game, so you rebid 4♥. He then rebids his spades. This is a cue bid. He is looking for slam and is asking for your cooperation. You have a 1st round club stopper so you rebid 5♣. He bids 5♦ and you bid the slam you hope you can make. Here is the entire bidding sequence:

West	North	East	South
			Pass 1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥
All Pass			

East leads the ♣K. Take over for North and plan the play:

S	South
♠	K4
♥	A75
♦	A97
♣	AJ642

East leads ♣K

N	North
♠	AJ10987
♥	KJ832
♦	K5
♣	

Notice that North did not use Blackwood to search for the slam. He has a void in clubs. If you showed 1 ace, he wouldn't know if it was in one of the red suits where he needed it; or in clubs where it would be a duplication of values and disaster for the slam. Therefore, he used cue bids instead and got to the right place. Don't use Blackwood with a void.

You have no minor suit losers. You can lose a heart and maybe two, if they split badly. You are also missing the ♠Q, so there is a possible loser in spades.

Usually, it is right to ruff the opening lead when you have the Ace facing a void. Then you can use the Ace later, when you know what you want to discard in the other hand. But here, there are no discards outside of spades, so you might as well win the ♣A in the dummy and discard the ♠7.

Your objective should be to set up the spade suit by taking the ♠AK and ruffing a spade. The trouble is, you have only 3 hearts in dummy and you'll need all of them for pulling trump. Plus, you must try the finesse of the ♥J. The best plan is to pull two rounds of trump and lead the last trump in the dummy to set up the spade suit in your hand. Play the ♥K and lead up to the ♥J. This wins and you find the suit split in the expected 3-2. Now you must stop pulling trump and leave the last heart outstanding. Go up to the ♠K and back to the ♠A, planning to ruff the 3rd spade with the ♥K. You can afford to lose 1 trick to the ♥Q, but all your spade should run by that time.

When you play the second top spade, you notice that West plays his ♠Q under you're ♠A. Great, the spades are ready to run and you still have the ♥K to pull the last trump. All the rest of the tricks are yours. Grossly underbid 😊

This is the entire deal:

14		N North		W N E S	
		♠ AJ10987		P P 1N1	
		♥ KJ832		P 2♥ P 2♠	
		♦ K5		P 3♥ P 4♥	
		♣		P 4♠ P 5♣	
				P 5♦ P 6♥	
W West		E East			
♠ 632		♠ Q5			
♥ Q64		♥ 109			
♦ Q10832		♦ J64			
♣ 93		♣ KQ10875			
		S South			
		♠ K4			
		♥ A75			
		♦ A97			
		♣ AJ642		6♥ N NS: 0 EW: 0	

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

<http://tinyurl.com/yga9cfqz>, 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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