

USING A REVERSE TO GET TO SLAM

You are sitting South with this hand:

South
 ♠ AK76
 ♥ Q
 ♦ AKJ8
 ♣ A983

This hand holds 21 HCP, but you can deduct a point for the dubious ♥Q. This distribution, 4-4-4-1, is called a rattlesnake distribution. It is particularly hard to represent – particularly when very strong. Most will open a minor and hope to show the distribution in later rounds. With so many points, there is some danger of partner passing, so it's usually best to start with 1♣. This gives partner more incentive to scrape together a bid. Another reason to open 1♣ is that you can rebid 2♦ on the next round. This is called a reverse bid. Any bid at the 2-level that requires partner to go to the 3-level to get back to your first suit is a reverse, and therefore, requires a stronger hand to make the bid. The strength requirement for a reverse bid is 17 or more points.

When you rebid 2♦, partner knows you have a big hand. Your reverse bid is also forcing for one more round. Here is the way the bidding could progress:

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

North's bids of 3♣ and 4♣ show good support of clubs and are mildly slam invitational. His bid of 5♦ is a key card blackwood response and shows one key card; either the ♦A or the ♣K. These bids should be enough to convince you that a slam in clubs is more than an even bet.

East leads the ♠2 and you see this dummy:

	North
Vul: N/S	♠ Q104 ♥ A53 ♦ 104 ♣ QJ1042
West ♠2	South ♠ AK76 ♥ Q ♦ AKJ8 ♣ A983

West made a passive lead of the ♠ 2. I like to count winners as well as losers in a suit slam contracts. Since the dummy has a longer trump suit, I reverse the dummy and count losers in the North hand. I have no spade losers, 2 heart losers, no diamond losers and a possible club loser. I plan to ruff the two heart losers in the dummy before I pull all the trump.

Counting winners; I have 3 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 4 or 5 clubs. If I lose the club finesse, I only have 10 tricks. Again, I need two heart ruffs to make the required 12 tricks.

I will win the lead in my hand and play up to the ♥ A and ruff a heart. I will lead another spade to dummy's ♠ Q and ruff another heart. Then I will play off the top diamonds and ruff a diamond in order to take the club finesse through East. This loses to West's ♣ K, but I will win his spade return and claim.

Here is the entire deal:

D 1	N North ♠ Q104 ♥ A53 ♦ 104 ♣ QJ1042	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>1♣</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>1NT</td><td>P</td><td>2♦</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>3♣</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	P	P	P	1♣	P	1NT	P	2♦	P	3♣	P	3♥	P	4♣	P	4NT	P	5♦	P	6♣
W	N	E	S																							
P	P	P	1♣																							
P	1NT	P	2♦																							
P	3♣	P	3♥																							
P	4♣	P	4NT																							
P	5♦	P	6♣																							
W West ♠ 532 ♥ 10986 ♦ 9752 ♣ K5		E East ♠ J98 ♥ KJ742 ♦ Q63 ♣ 76																								
	S South ♠ AK76 ♥ Q ♦ AKJ8 ♣ A983	6♣ S NS: 0 EW: 0																								

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/j7wya44> , 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.