

DOUBLE FIT + SHAPE = SLAM

You pick up this hand:

S	South
♠	
♥	AK105
♦	KQ1054
♣	10754

There is nothing sensational about it, but West dealt and passed and your partner opened 1♦. Now things get much more interesting. You have an 8 or probably 9 card diamond fit. But before limiting your concentration to a minor suit, you should try uncovering a major suit fit with a forcing 1♥. Your partner raises to 2♥, most likely promising 4 hearts. Now your ho-hum 12 HCP take on slam potential. A double fit means extra tricks. So does a void; voids are magic. Your next bid should inform partner of your intentions.

You want to show him your void in spades and your slam intentions. You can “splinter” with a 3♠ rebid. This is a double jump and an unnecessary jump is defined as suit with a singleton or void. It also asks partner to start cue bidding controls if he sees slam as at all possible.

Partner cooperates and shows 1st or 2nd round control is clubs with a rebid of 4♣. That’s all you need to know before launching into Key Card Blackwood. To your 4NT inquiry, North responds with 5♣. This bid shows two key cards (aces in this case, since you hold the ♥K) and the ♥Q. Unfortunately, you don’t know if the two aces are in the minor suits where they are needed, or in spades and a minor. The spade ace is wasted and might endanger the contract.

There is a way to ask for key cards acknowledging the void. It is called Exclusion Key Card Blackwood. Jumping to 5 of a side suit in which you hold a void, asks partner to show his key cards excluding the named suit. The answers go in steps, starting with the excluded suit. You could have used it here were it not for the fact that the void suit is spades. That makes the answer showing zero key cards 6♦ and you would be committed to the slam level off the two minor suit aces.

Not sure of the ace of spades, you settle for a small slam, calling 6♥.

West leads the ♠A and you see this dummy:

N	North
♠	932
♥	QJ86
♦	A763
♣	AK

West leads ♠A

S	South
♠	
♥	AK105
♦	KQ1054
♣	10754

If you count winners, you have 4 hearts, 5 diamonds and 2 clubs. You need another trick and that can come from club ruffs in the dummy. You will trump the spade lead in your hand. Should you start pulling trump?

This is a case where you must not pull trump. If they break in the expected 3-2, you will be left with 1 heart which you can use to ruff for your 12th trick. But there is a better way. You can actually take all 13 tricks by using your ♥105 in hand to take two extra tricks.

After winning the initial spade lead, play a club to the dummy and ruff a 2nd spade. Go back to the dummy with a club and ruff a 3rd spade. Now you can pull two rounds of trump with the ♥AK and return to the dummy with the ♦A to finish pulling trump with the ♥A. Now you can take all your diamonds and ruff the last club with the dummy's surviving ♥J, for a total of 13 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

D 16	N North	W N E S
	♠ 932	P 1♦ P 1♥
	♥ QJ86	P 2♥ P 3♠
	♦ A763	P 4♣ P 4NT
	♣ AK	P 5♠ P 6♥
		P P P
W West		
	♠ AKJ5	
	♥ 973	
	♦ J98	
	♣ Q63	
E East		
	♠ Q108764	
	♥ 42	
	♦ 2	
	♣ J982	
S South		
	♠	
	♥ AK105	
	♦ KQ1054	
	♣ 10754	
		6♥ S NS: 0 EW: 0

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

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