

1

<p>♠ A 9 4          ♥ K Q 9          ♦ 8 6 3          ♣ A K J 4</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		<p>♠ Q 7 2          ♥ 10 5 4 3          ♦ K 10 7 4          ♣ 10 9</p> <p>♠ J 6 3          ♥ A J 7          ♦ A Q J 5          ♣ Q 6 3</p>	<p>♠ K 10 8 5          ♥ 8 6 2          ♦ 9 2          ♣ 8 7 5 2</p>
N												
W	E											
	S											

Dealer: North			
Neither Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 NT	Pass
4 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

No. 10639

Opening Lead: ♠ 5

Illustrates:  
 Quantitative Raise

Quantitative Raise

East is too strong to open 1NT and opens with the longest suit, planning to rebid in NT at the lowest level. After hearing that partner has 15-16 points responder realises that if partner is maximum the partnership will have 33 points, sufficient for a slam. So West bids 4NT.

This is called a quantitative raise and requests that partner bids a slam if they are maximum for their bid. If not they should pass.

East is minimum, so passes.

To make the contract declarer needs to take repeated finesses in diamonds. This requires taking care with the entries.

2

<p>♠ AK96          ♥ J7          ♦ KJ76          ♣ KJ7</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		<p>♠ 10          ♥ Q542          ♦ 843          ♣ 106542</p> <p>♠ J874          ♥ K10986          ♦ 109          ♣ 83</p>	<p>♠ Q532          ♥ A3          ♦ AQ52          ♣ AQ9</p>
N		E										
W												
	S											

Dealer: East			
Neither Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
		1♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

No. 11235

Opening Lead: ♣ 6

Illustrates:  
 Blackwood  
 Shape Balanced  
 Slam  
 Finesse

Bidding Commentary

After East opens 1♠ West can visualise a slam. But how to explore it?

West's best bid is a jump shift response of 3♦. This bid shows 16 or more points in a hand where responder knows where they are going! There are just three possibilities

- 1) A very good 5 card suit in a balanced hand
- 2) A 6 card suit so good that hardly any help required from partner
- 3) A 4 card fit with a good side side suit

Note: some players use this bid with any hand that has lots of points. But this is a very bad idea. Much beter to keep the bidding low until you know where you are going.

On hearing the jump response East does not know what partner has in mind. But their duty is to cooperate by showing something useful unless they are minimum. If minimum they do their best to show this. Often by rebidding their suit.

Here East is very strong and they now know that the partnership has at least 18+16= 34 points plus a fit in two suits. If partner holds the ace of spades they want to be in a slam. By bidding 4NT, the Blackwood convention they can find out.

Defence Commentary

South does not have a good or obvious lead. The ♣8 is probably a sensible choice.

Play Commentary

With an almost certain loser in hearts declarer cannot afford to lose a trump trick. If they break 32 there is not a problem, so it is best to play the suit so that there is the best chance of coping if North has Jxxx.

Declarer should cash the ♠A and notice that the 10 drops. Then cross to the ♠Q, when North shows out. Dummy now leads a small trump towards the K9, finessing South for Jx.

Note: this hand is as played at Bath Bridge Club in Jan 2010. Almost everyone played in a slam of 6♠ or 6NT.

Bath Bridge School

3

♠ K 7 4 2		♠ A Q J
♥ Q 8 5 3		♥ 7 4
♦ K Q 9 3		♦ 8 5 4
♣ 7		♣ 10 8 5 4 2
♠ 10 9 5	N	
♥ 10 6 2	W	E
♦ J 10 7		
♣ A K 6 3	S	
♠ 8 6 3		
♥ A K J 9		
♦ A 6 2		
♣ Q J 9		

Dealer: South			
EW Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

No. 11135

Opening Lead: ♣ A

Illustrates:

He Who Knows Goes  
Shape Unbalanced  
SPS

Bidding Commentary

South has a balanced hand with 15 points, so opens 1♥.

Partner has a 4 card fit and a singleton. The hand has a losing trick count of almost 6, so it is reasonable to jump to game. Without a first round control there is not much chance of a slam.

Defence Commentary

West has a stand out lead with AK in an unbid suit, so leads ♣A.

With a singleton in Dummy and ♠AQ sitting over the Kxxx in Dummy, East desperately wants partner to switch to spades. Spades is the highest ranking of the two suits that partner should consider. (not clubs and not trumps). East should make a suit preference signal for spades. So play the ♠10, the highest (loudest) card available.

On seeing the singleton West will be wondering which suit to lead next, spades or diamonds. Provided that the partnership are on the same wavelength West will take the ♠10 as an unnecessarily high card asking for the highest ranking suit, and lead a spade.

If dummy wrongly plays the ♠K declarer will lose the next 3 tricks.

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<b>4</b>	<p>♠ 8 7 5 3 2          ♥ 3          ♦ Q 10 9          ♣ K J 9 8</p>	<p>Dealer: West          EW Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♥	Pass	7 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
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<p>♠ K Q J 10 4          ♥ K Q J 2          ♦ A K 2          ♣ A</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A 6          ♥ A 10 9 8 7          ♦ 6 5 4 3          ♣ 7 6</p>							
	N																	
W		E																
	S																	
No. 11023	<p>♠ 9          ♥ 6 5 4          ♦ J 8 7          ♣ Q 10 5 4 3 2</p>	Opening Lead: ♣ 8																

Illustrates:  
 Blackwood  
 Opening 2C  
 Slam

Bidding Commentary

West has a strong hand with 23 points, two very good suits, and no negatives, so opens 2♣. East has two aces and a good heart suit. Exactly what East should respond will depend on partnership agreements. Some would bid 2♦, as a relay/waiting bid. Most would bid 2♥ to show a 5 card suit with at least one good honour. Those who had promised partner not to bid a suit without 2 of the top three honours would probably bid 2NT to show a reasonably balanced hand with scattered points. But might risk bidding 2♥.

If East responds in hearts West will know that they have the A, and perhaps the 109. Slam looks certain and Grand Slam possible, so West should use Blackwood.

When West shows two aces West knows that the partnership has 13 tricks,

♠	5	
♥	5	East is known to have Axxxx at worst
♦	2	
♣	1	

If East bids 2♦ or 2NT West will now show the hearts suit and a grand slam should still be reached, but played by the strong hand.

Note: A grand slam is very rare and most players stop in a small slam unless a grand looks watertight.

Defence Commentary

Regardless of who is declarer there is no clear lead. Declarer has shown first round control of all suits and is known to be short in both minors. Perhaps a club is a sensible compromise.

Play Commentary

Declarer can win any lead and can then pull trumps, even if they break 40. The little diamond can be discarded on East's last trump.

Bath Bridge School

<b>5</b>	<p>♠ 8 6          ♥ K Q 9 6          ♦ 9 7 6 5 4 2          ♣ 9</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 5 4          ♥ 8 2          ♦ A K 10          ♣ A K J 10 6 3</p>	N	E	W	S	<p>Dealer: East          Neither Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1 ♣</td> <td>1 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South			1 ♣	1 ♠	1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass		
N	E																						
W	S																						
West	North	East	South																				
		1 ♣	1 ♠																				
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass																				
Pass	Pass																						
No. 10668	<p>♠ K 9 3 2          ♥ J 10 5 4          ♦ Q J 3          ♣ Q 4</p> <p>♠ A Q J 10 7          ♥ A 7 3          ♦ 8          ♣ 8 7 5 2</p>	<p>Opening Lead: ♠ 8</p>																					

Illustrates:  
 Counting  
 Partners Suit

Bidding Commentary:

West has a choice of responses. 1NT limits the hand to count and distribution but may lose hearts. A negative double to get hearts into the picture is also flawed. If partner rebids 2♣, a follow up bid of 2NT shows 11-12 HCP. All things considered, 1NT is slightly better. East has an easy raise to 3NT with a "no trump" club suit. (A suit that is likely to run).

Lead Commentary:

Normal. High-low from a doubleton. With 862 or 8632 North leads the 2 if he hasn't supported the suit, the 8 if he has. The lead of a high spot card in an unsupported suit shows shortness. The lead of a low spot card in a supported suit shows an honor. Reread that.

Defensive Commentary:

The outcome of this contract is decided early on, like at trick two! South knows that West has the ♠K to go along with 6 clubs (the queen must drop even if West doesn't have it), plus at least 2 diamond tricks for a grand total of 9 quick ones as soon as West gets the lead. If the hand is to be defeated, it must be defeated in hearts, not spades - and now! The correct defense is to win the SA and shift to a low heart guaranteeing a high honor. Whichever heart West plays, North wins and with three hearts remaining returns his lowest. South wins the ace and returns a heart allowing the defense to take four heart tricks. Down one.

When a defender can count declarer for enough quick tricks in three suits to make the contract, it's not a bad idea to shift to the fourth suit. In fact, it's a very good idea!

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<b>6</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 9 6 5 4          ♥ 8 7 2          ♦ 10 9 5 4          ♣ 9 8</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;">           ♠ Q 3 2            ♥ Q 6 3            ♦ Q J 3            ♣ A Q J 10         </td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">           N            W   E            S         </td> <td style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;">           ♠ K 8 7            ♥ A K 4            ♦ A K 7            ♣ K 5 3 2         </td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A J 10          ♥ J 10 9 5          ♦ 8 6 2          ♣ 7 6 4</p>	♠ Q 3 2 ♥ Q 6 3 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ A Q J 10	N W   E S	♠ K 8 7 ♥ A K 4 ♦ A K 7 ♣ K 5 3 2	<p>Dealer: East          NS Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">Opening Lead: ♥ J</p>	West	North	East	South			2 NT	Pass	6 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
♠ Q 3 2 ♥ Q 6 3 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ A Q J 10	N W   E S	♠ K 8 7 ♥ A K 4 ♦ A K 7 ♣ K 5 3 2															
West	North	East	South														
		2 NT	Pass														
6 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass														

No. 11009

Illustrates:  
 Opening 2 NT  
 Slam  
 Opening Lead

Bidding Commentary

2NT shows 20-22 points. With 14 points West knows the partnership has at least 34 points so decides to try for a slam.

Lead Commentary

Whilst in a suit slam it is not unusual to lead an unsupported A at trick one, here it does not look like a good idea. Firstly the contract is in NT, so it would be unusual for declarer to make their contract without leading spades, and it cannot be trumped! Secondly the ♠A is sitting over the K or any other club honour held by declarer, who has most of the points. So do not lead the ♠A.

A good lead is the ♥J which heads a three card sequence, so it is a very safe lead.

Play Commentary

Declarer is unlucky: it is going to be very hard to avoid two spade losers. There are various tests that declarer can set South. If declarer leads 7 from his hand South must play low (Second hand plays low). If declarer leads K from his hand, South must play A (Cover an honour with an honour). If South passes every test his side will eventually come to two spade tricks. Note that if South wrongly cashes A at trick 1, that is the last trick for the defence. South's A has a role: to kill East's Q.

Bath Bridge School

<p><b>7</b></p> <p>♠ K J 10 6 5 2          ♥ 10          ♦ J 10 7 6          ♣ 10 5</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>W E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	<p>♠ 7 4          ♥ A 3 2          ♦ K 5 3          ♣ K J 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ 8 3          ♥ Q 8 7 6 5 4          ♦ Q 9 8 4          ♣ 7</p> <p>♠ A Q 9          ♥ K J 9          ♦ A 2          ♣ A Q 9 8 6</p>	<p>Dealer: South          Neither Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>4 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>5 ♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6 ♣</td> </tr> </table>		West	North	East	South			4 NT	Pass	2 NT		Pass	5 ♥	Pass	5 ♣		Pass	Pass	Pass	6 ♣
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		4 NT	Pass	2 NT																						
	Pass	5 ♥	Pass	5 ♣																						
	Pass	Pass	Pass	6 ♣																						
<p>No. 10994</p>	<p>Opening Lead: ♦ J</p>																									

Illustrates:

- Blackwood
- Control Bid
- Shape Balanced
- Slam
- End Play
- Finesse

Bidding Commentary

South has a 5332 shape and 20 points, so opens 2NT. North can figure out that the partnership has 31 to 33 points, and is in the slam zone. North has a good club suit and suggests a slam by bidding 4NT.

Although South has only 20 HCP it includes three aces, and the king of hearts, plus a nice club suit. South should bid 5♣ to suggest a possible slam in clubs.

North can now envisage a slam and should bid 5♥. By bidding a new suit north sends a multi-part message to partner.

Firstly it encourages the idea of a slam in clubs. (A NT bid would be discouraging)

Secondly it shows a first round control of the bid suit (hearts). Moreover because it bypassed diamonds it denies control of that suit.

South knows partner has a balanced hand, so the control bid must show possession of the ♥A.

With this information South can bid 6♣.

Note: if playing Roman Key Card Blackwood North can use 4NT. Partner will respond 5♥ which confirms possession of the ♥A and ♣K.

Defence Commentary

It is not clear that the opponents hold all the aces so diamonds and spades suggest themselves. But on the basis of the cards held it seems more likely that partner has a

the ♠A. So leading the ♦J looks to be a reasonable lead

Play Commentary

The best line of play is:  
 Draw trumps  
 Eliminate diamonds: ♦A then ♦K and ruff a diamond.  
 Play the ♥9 to ♥A to cross to dummy.  
 This leaves in hand  
 ♠ AQ  
 ♥ KJ  
 ♦ void  
 trumps  
 Then finesse in spades, covering whatever East plays.  
 East is now end played

Note: by eliminating diamonds you avoid the possibility of West having a safe exit card. If they lead spades or hearts you are last to play, and very happy. If they lead diamonds you can ruff in one hand and discard in the other. By ensuring that you lose to West when they have only losing options, you gain an extra trick. This technique is type of end play called an "elimination and throw in".

Comment

The bidding and play of this hand are not simple. However the bidding demonstrates several important principles in slam bidding.

- 1) Investigating the possession of Aces is very important
- 2) Bids can have subtle meanings
- 3) Control bids implicitly show interest in a slam.
- 4) Control bids that bypass a suit imply a lack of control in the bypassed suit.

<b>8</b>	<p>♠ 8 6 3          ♥ 9 6 3          ♦ Q 8 6          ♣ Q J 6 5</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♠ 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♥ Q J 10 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">E</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♦ A 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">S</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♣ A K 8 7 4 2</td> </tr> </table>	N	♠ 7	W	♥ Q J 10 4	E	♦ A 5	S	♣ A K 8 7 4 2	<p>Dealer: West          Neither Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass		
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5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	Pass																												
Pass	Pass																														
No. 11234	<p>♠ AK952          ♥ AK52          ♦ J72          ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ Q J 10 4          ♥ 8 7          ♦ K 10 9 4 3          ♣ 10 9</p>	Opening Lead: ♣ Q																													

Illustrates:

- Blackwood
- Shape Unbalanced
- Slam

Bidding Commentary

West makes a routine opening of 1♠. Partner has opening strength but facing a bad misfit bids 2♣. And South now shows their second suit.

East should now be excited and start to wonder if a slam is possible. Using the losing trick count West has only 5 losers. This translates to two tricks better than a typical opening hand. So a slam looks to be a good possibility.

Without advanced bids investigating a slam is not straightforward. Slam looks to be a good risk if partner has both aces, but if they hold the ♠A and not the ♥A it is less certain.

However since a contract at the 5 level looks OK one can use Blackwood. The idea is that if partner shows 2 aces you bid 6♥, but if they show 0 or 1 you bail out in 5♥.

When West responds to 4NT Blackwood with 5♥ they are showing 2 aces. So East bids the slam.

Play Commentary

West can win any lead. Unless trumps break 5-0 declarer can pull trumps. The only potential losers are 2 diamonds.

One can be discarded on the ♠K. The other can be ruffed in dummy after discarding the ♦5 on the ♠K.

Declarer makes all 13 tricks

Comment

Bidding slams is not easy. But the rewards, emotionally and point wise, are such that

most players try to bid slams when they have the chance. At basic level the two important tools are cue bids and Blackwood. The latter is more misused than well used. The important caveat is this: Do not use Blackwood unless you know what you are going to do if you get a disappointing reply.