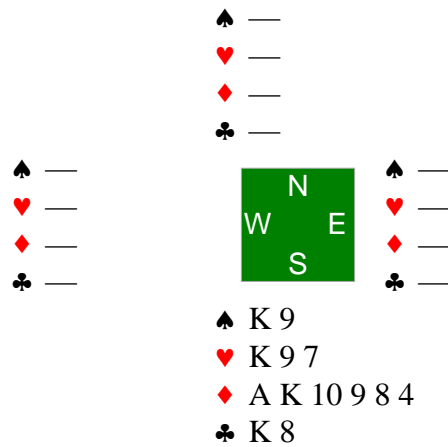


A Baby Grand

Dlr West
Neither Vul



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 NT	Pass	?

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the 24th installment of Shark's Pointers Online. Happy New Year to my Jewish friends, and best wishes for an easy fast this weekend during Yom Kippur.


One of the common sarcastic comments you may hear in a postmortem is that it was "Baby Grand", suggesting that it was trivial to bid a grand slam. Well, the truth of the matter is that sometimes it's not so easy to bid grand slams - even if they are ice cold!

As a matter of fact, I will share with you a hand today that was cold for 7 in which my partner and I scored over 84% - just for bidding 5! So, you don't always have to bid them, but sometimes - especially at IMPS, you will get destroyed by missing grand slams that are bid at the other table.

Take a look at the above hand, partner opens 1 NT and you hold the South cards. If partner has the following hand....

A Baby Grand

North Deals
None Vul

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

You will be ice cold for 7 NT!

On the other hand, if he holds the following hand...

A Baby Grand

North Deals
None Vul

<p>♠ A Q 10 7 ♥ J 8 ♦ 7 3 ♣ 9 6 5 4 3</p>	<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	<p>♠ J x ♥ A Q 6 4 ♦ Q J 6 5 ♣ A Q J</p>	<p>♠ 8 6 5 4 3 ♥ 10 5 3 2 ♦ 2 ♣ 10 7 2</p>
		<p>♠ K 9 ♥ K 9 7 ♦ A K 10 9 8 4 ♣ K 8</p>	

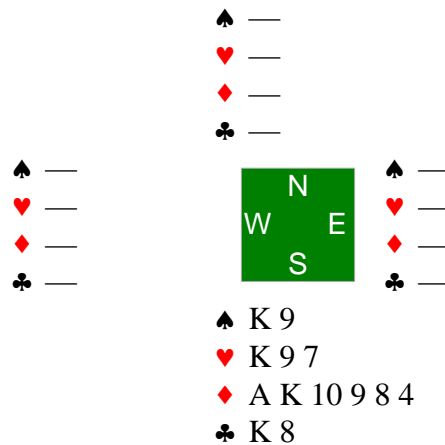
You won't even make 3 NT.

On the other hand, you are ice cold for 6 ♦! - But only from your side!

I'm sure I could construct a number of different hands in which you are off 2 aces, 5D is cold but 3N is down off the top, etc., etc. We can't see all the cards.

A Baby Grand

Dlr West
Neither Vul



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 NT	Pass	?

The challenge when we bid is to think about what level we would expect to play, what are our most likely successful contracts, and determine what info we either hope to gain - or to give partner - so as arrive at the best likely contract - from the right side.

So on this hand, the first thing we would do is add our points to partner's. We have 16 and a good 6 card suit. Partner is showing 15-17, so we are in slam range. We need to know about partner's diamond holding, because if partner has only xx of the suit, we still might have a slam, but a grand slam would be out of the question.

The other thing we need to know is how many aces partner has. Do you and your favorite partner have a way to transfer to diamonds and ask for keycards?

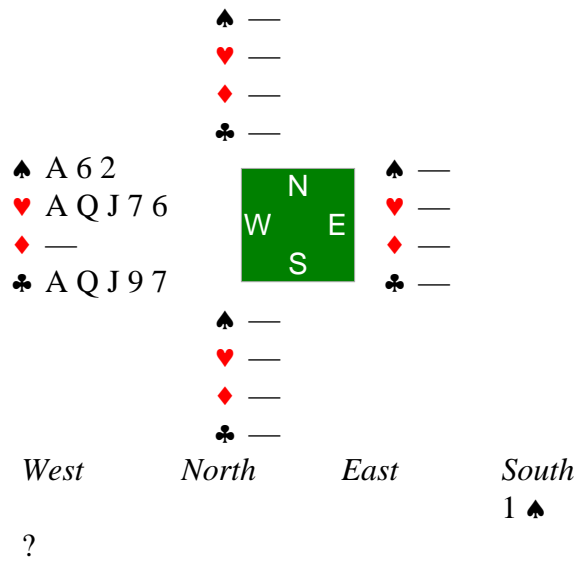
This is not easy. Is 1N-2N-3D*-4D minorwood?

Some might just bid Gerber over 1 NT, and if partner has 3 aces, bid 6D.

There are no correct answers for this hand. It is just not easy.

I'd like to hear your opinions.

A Baby Grand



Here was a hand that came up recently.

South dealt and bid 1 ♠. Your call?

My partner made a pretty good bid, I thought. She bid 2S, showing hearts and a minor, and when I bid 2N, asking for her minor, she jumped to 4C. I raised to 5 and that ended the auction.

This was the complete deal...

A Baby Grand

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 6 2	♠ 10 7	♠ 9 4 3
♥ A Q J 7 6	♥ 10 8 3	♥ K
♦ —	♦ 8 7 6 5 3	♦ K 10 9 4 2
♣ A Q J 9 7	♣ 10 8 6	♣ K 4 3 2
	♠ K Q J 8 5	
	♥ 9 5 4 2	
	♦ A Q J	
	♣ 5	



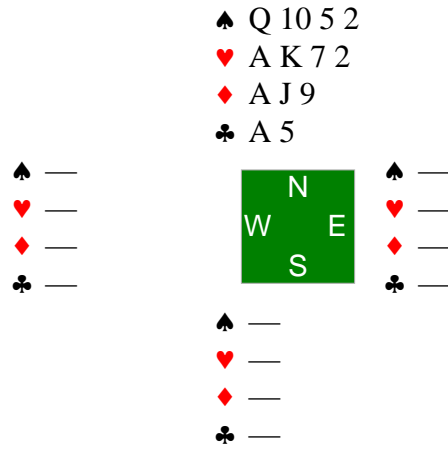
Partner got a spade lead and played it very carefully.

She won the spade ace, and played a heart to the K and now the A and Q of clubs. When South showed out, she stopped playing trumps and played two high hearts, pitching dummy's spades. Now she ruffed a spade, ruffed a diamond, ruffed her last spade with dummy's K, ruffed another diamond, drew the last trump and claimed.

Bidding 5C making 7 was worth 84.1%!

A Baby Grand

South Deals
Neither Vul
Matchpoints



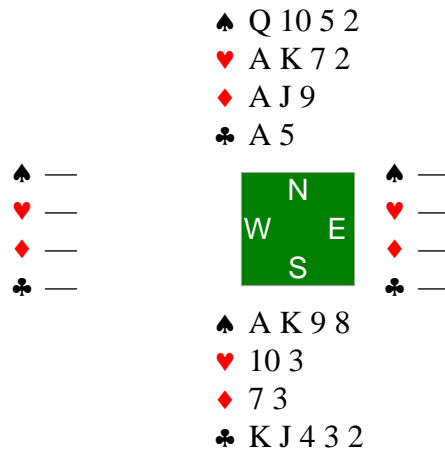
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♣
1 ♥	Dbl	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♥
Pass	5 NT	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	?		

You hold the North hand and are thrilled to hear your partner deal and open the bidding 1 ♣, West overcalls 1 ♥ and you say Double. After pass on your left, partner bids 1 ♠. What's your plan?

First of all, do we belong in a partial, a game, slam, or grand slam? We have 30+ hcp and a 4-4 spade fit, so it looks like we belong in a slam. But wait! Does partner absolutely positively guarantee 4 spades? Well, I suppose if partner has something like AKx xxxx Kxx Kxx, he might bid 1S. But we can afford to bid 2H to hear what partner has to say. When he bids 2S, let's bid blackwood. We're happy to hear partner bid 5H, so we might as well bid 5N to let partner know we have all the keycards.

Partner bids 5 ♣ to show the King of ♣, now what? We probably should sign off at 6 ♠ now, but if we want to be very aggressive, we could cater to partner having something like AKJx x Kx Kxxxxx. We could bid 6 ♦, and if we did, partner will bid 6 ♠, which we happily pass.

A Baby Grand



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♣
1 ♥	Dbl	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♥
Pass	5 NT	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	6 ♦	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			

6 ♠ by South

OK, let's play the hand after West leads the K of diamonds. What's your plan?


We have a diamond loser. Our clubs are not solid. The suit is more likely to split 4-2 than 3-3. We can cater to 4-1 spades in either hand. This is a pretty complex hand, but the kinds of different things we have to consider are not unusual on many hands.

The only thing we know for sure is that West has at least 5 hearts and the KQ of diamonds. Since he has the heart length, we should play spades in such a way as to protect against West holding a singleton spade. We play Ace of spades and a spade towards the Q - and West indeed shows out. We certainly don't want to finesse a club because if it loses, the opps will cash a diamond and you are down. So you play, Ace of clubs, club to the K and a third club and great news! West follows with the Q! You ruff in dummy with the 10, so you can finesse a spade back to hand, draw the last trump.

You know where the heart length is and where the Q of diamonds is. So, you simply run your clubs and squeeze West making 7! Another baby grand! Here was the full hand...

A Baby Grand

South Deals
None Vul

<p>♠ 7</p> <p>♥ Q J 9 6 5</p> <p>♦ K Q 8 5</p> <p>♣ Q 10 6</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 5 2</p> <p>♥ A K 7 2</p> <p>♦ A J 9</p> <p>♣ A 5</p>		<p>♠ J 6 4 3</p> <p>♥ 8 4</p> <p>♦ 10 6 4 2</p> <p>♣ 9 8 7</p>
	<p>♠ A K 9 8</p> <p>♥ 10 3</p> <p>♦ 7 3</p> <p>♣ K J 4 3 2</p>		

One of the key plays was to ruff the third round of clubs with dummy's 10. If you lazily ruffed low, you actually would go down in 6! You'd be stuck on the dummy!

OK let's look at one more "Baby Grand"!

A Baby Grand

Dealer East
 EW Vul
 IMPs

♠ —	♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
♠ —	♠ —	♠ K Q J 4	♠ K Q J 4
♥ —	♥ —	♥ 9 8 3 2	♥ 9 8 3 2
♦ —	♦ —	♦ K 6 4 3 2	♦ K 6 4 3 2
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
♠ —	♠ —	♠ —	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —	♥ —	♥ —
♦ —	♦ —	♦ —	♦ —
♣ —	♣ —	♣ —	♣ —
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Pass	?	

When this hand was played recently, East routinely responded 1 ♥. Now, when partner bid 2 ♣, East jumped to 3 ♦, invitational. West bid 4 ♣, and now East jumped to 5 ♦. West bid 6 ♦, and that ended the auction.

Here was the complete deal...

IMPs
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

A Baby Grand

♠ A 9 6	♠ 10 8 7 3	♠ K Q J 4
♥ —	♥ K Q 7 4	♥ 9 8 3 2
♦ A J 10 9 8	♦ Q	♦ K 6 4 3 2
♣ A K 10 4 3	♣ Q J 9 8	♣ —

♠ 5 2	♠ 5 2	♠ K Q J 4
♥ A J 10 6 5	♥ A J 10 6 5	♥ 9 8 3 2
♦ 7 5	♦ 7 5	♦ K 6 4 3 2
♣ 7 6 5 2	♣ 7 6 5 2	♣ —



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
4 ♣	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
6 ♦	All pass		

6 ♦ by West

EW had no problem winning all the tricks - and losing 13 IMPs in the process!

Notice how easy it would have been for EW to bid the grand if East had "lied" and bid 1 ♠, instead of bidding 1 ♥.

This was the the best grand we have seen today - and a simple bid at the 1 level made all the difference in West understanding the full strength of his hand.

So, hope you enjoyed today's hands - each of which actually - or potentially could have resulted in your side scoring all 13 tricks. I just hope you'll bite your tongue before calling any of these a "baby grand"!