

This Hand Is My Grand

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to this, our 41st edition of Shark's Pointers Online!

Today's presentation is entitled "This Hand Is My Grand". I think today's title - which is a thinly disguised play on words from a popular patriotic tune - is particularly fitting since we have regular visitors from New Hampshire to Florida to even far away Singapore. And like the song goes, this presentation is "made for you and me!"

Before I share my screen, I would like to review a topic we raised last year in one of our online pointers and that was the Gerber convention. If you recall, I espoused a treatment that one of my regular partners, reknowned champion Shome Mukherjee taught me.

We play that our Gerber responses are a variation of our RKCB responses. Our first step over the auctions 1 NT-4C, 2 NT-4C, or 2C-2x-2 NT-4C will correspond to our RKCB response be it 1 or 4 or 0 or 3. How many of you have adopted the popular 1430 RKCB responses?

Yes, that seems to be the most popular, so let's use that as our example. Over the 4C Gerber bid, 4D will show 1 or 4 aces, 4H will show 0 or 3 aces, 4S will show 2 Aces with a minimum, and 4 NT will show 2 aces with a maximum.

How many of you have adopted this variation of Gerber since we presented it here last year?

OK, for those who haven't, what is your way of responding to Gerber?

OK, great. Well, in today's featured hand, we are using the Shome variation, and 4D will show 1 or 4 aces. If time allows after this hand, I would like to review some other advanced slam bidding methods that we raised last year. They are very important, but will certainly take more than one quick intro for everyone to properly understand.

OK, without further ado, let's get started. You're looking at the following hand...

This Hand Is My Grand

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 5 2
♥ Q 7 5 4
♦ 8 5
♣ K J 9 6 2



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 ♦	All pass	

7 ♦ by South

You're holding the West hand, and this is the bidding you hear. What is your lead?

OK, this isn't a trick question. The answer is that against a grand slam in a suit, the normal lead is a trump. The reasons for this are that it is assumed that the opponents have the AKQ of trumps and your lead will not pick off partner's Q. The opponents are also assumed to have all the 1st round controls (aces or voids) in the other suits and you don't want to lead away from any honor. The lead is passive, but also aggressive to the extent that it might save a ruff in dummy needed to score 13 tricks.

So, here's the dummy...

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South Deals
None Vul

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



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 ♦	All pass	

7 ♦ by South

Opening lead 5 of ♦

The 4 ♦ response showed 1 or 4 aces, and since this wasn't doubled, there's a pretty good chance that declarer has all four aces. His NT range is 15-17 so he can have at most an additional Jack.

You can see 3 spades, 2 hearts, 6 diamonds, and 1 club - a total of 12 tricks. You know you are going to feel some pressure in both clubs and hearts.

What is your plan?

Well, it doesn't look good unless partner can guard hearts, so we'll hold onto two clubs and as many hearts as we can. We'll just have to see what happens.

Declarer plays low from dummy, partner plays low and declarer wins the 9. Now he cashes the Ace as partner follows with the J. Declarer now plays 3 more diamonds, following to the third round and pitching two clubs from hand. This is the position....

This Hand Is My Grand

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	1 NT
Pass	7 ♦	All pass	4 ♦

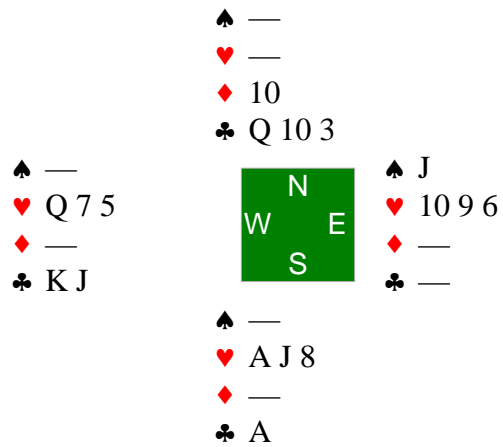
7 ♦ by South

Opening lead 5 of ♦

Declarer now cashes the K of hearts, and plays 3 rounds of spades.

Here's a look at all the cards..

This Hand Is My Grand



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	1 NT
Pass	7 ♦	All pass	4 ♦

7 ♦ by South

Opening lead 5 of ♦

Declarer now cashes the K of hearts, and plays 3 rounds of spades.

Here's a look at all the cards.. Your play..

If you pitch a heart, declarer will play A of hearts and ruff a heart, back to Ace of clubs to cash the J of hearts.


If you pitch a club, declarer will cash the Ace of clubs and ruff a heart to dummy to claim..

Nothing you can do. Making 7 diamonds.

This was the complete deal...

This Hand Is My Grand

South Deals
None Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 ♦	All pass	

Opening Lead 5 of ♦

7 ♦ by South

Ok. Let's start over and change the auction slightly. You hold the same hand..

This Hand Is My Grand

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 5 2
♥ Q 7 5 4
♦ 8 5
♣ K J 9 6 2



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 NT	All pass	

7 NT by South

OK. So this time, you are on lead against 7 NT. What do you lead now....

Well, once again, you see you have 6 HCP and opps bid to 7 NT. Once again, you probably should be passive. So what would you lead?

A low spade or a low diamond?

Well, chances are that dummy will have lots of diamonds. Declarer didn't Texas Transfer to 4 of a major and then bid RKCB. So there is a risk in leading a spade.

Partner could have Jxxx or J10xx and the spade lead might be just what declarer needs to score an extra trick. So the most probably successful lead would be a diamond again.

Now let's look at the very same hand we just viewed.

This Hand Is My Grand

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 5 2 ♥ Q 7 5 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ K J 9 6 2	♠ K Q 6 ♥ K ♦ K Q 10 6 4 3 ♣ Q 10 3	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; background-color: #008000; color: white; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ J 10 8 7 3 ♥ 10 9 6 2 ♦ J 2 ♣ 8 4
♠ A 9 4 ♥ A J 8 3 ♦ A 9 7 ♣ A 7 5			

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 NT	All pass	

Opening Lead 5 of ♦

7 NT by South

Once again, declarer has 3 spades, 2 hearts, 6 diamonds and 1 club - 12 tricks.

As declarer, you are now all very familiar with the S-H-A-R-K squeeze technique.

I'm not sure many of you will be able to **See** the ending here, but you do know you have to **Hold** onto your threats and **Always** play **All** your winners. Since you have 12 winners, the count is already **Rectified**, so you just have to make sure you **Keep** your **Kommunications** open.

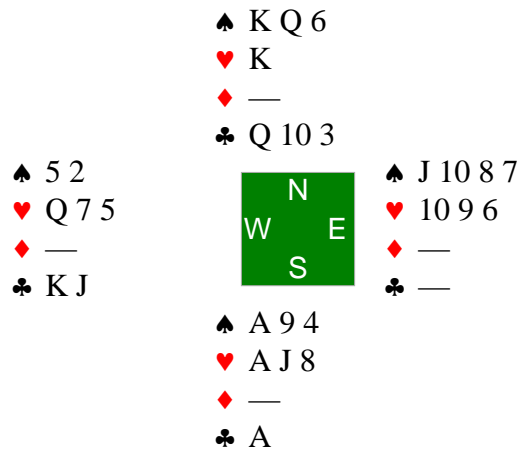
You have 3 more diamond winners in dummy than in your hand.

What can you pitch from hand without disturbing your threats?

Two clubs and 1 heart is the correct answer.

Let's play **All** our diamond winners and get to this end position...

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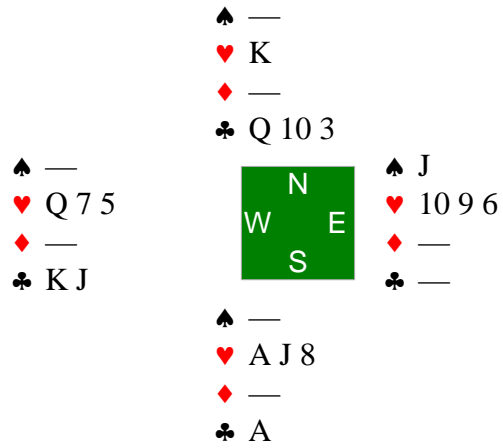
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	1 NT
Pass	7 NT	All pass	4 ♦

Opening Lead 5 of ♦

7 NT by South

Now declarer plays 3 rounds of spades ending in hand.

This Hand Is My Grand



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	1 NT
Pass	7 NT	All pass	4 ♦

Opening Lead 5 of ♦

7 NT by South

Now declarer plays 3 rounds of spades ending in hand. Your play...

Once again you are in trouble. If you pitch a heart, declarer can cross to the dummy's K, and back to the Ace of clubs to cash 2 hearts.

If you pitch a club, declarer can cash the Ace of clubs and back to the K of hearts to cash the last 2 clubs.

So, why did I bring this hand up?

Here's the entire deal again...

This Hand Is My Grand

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 5 2 ♥ Q 7 5 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ K J 9 6 2	♠ K Q 6 ♥ K ♦ K Q 10 6 4 3 ♣ Q 10 3	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; background-color: #008000; color: white; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ J 10 8 7 3 ♥ 10 9 6 2 ♦ J 2 ♣ 8 4
	♠ A 9 4 ♥ A J 8 3 ♦ A 9 7 ♣ A 7 5		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 NT	All pass	

Opening Lead 5 of ♦

7 NT by South

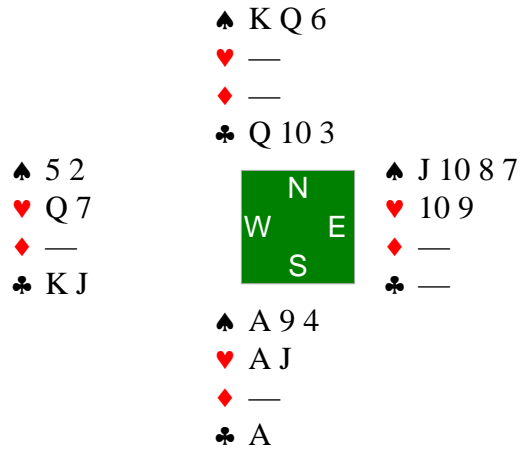
Can anyone see how to defeat 7 NT?

While it is true that a passive lead is generally correct, sometimes the rules don't apply.

Look what happens if you should lead a heart...

When you get down to the end position as before....

This Hand Is My Grand



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	7 NT	All pass	

Opening Lead 5 of ♦

7 NT by South

Without the K of hearts in dummy, the squeeze cannot operate, and South has to go down in 7 NT but is still cold for 7D.

So there are two good pointers for today.

Lead and play according to the odds and most of the time you will succeed - but not always.

Given a choice of 7 NT or 7 of a suit, you have to use a lot of discretion. Look at features like blocking cards when making your decision..

See you next week...