

## §42. Slam Bidding 2. Blackwood 4NT.

**By the end of this chapter you should understand the following terms:**

A **4NT** enquiry: A bid of 4NT **when there is an agreed trump suit** asks partner how many Aces he has. The responses are designed on a step principle:

- 5♣ = 0 Aces (or all four!);
- 5♦ = 1 Ace;
- 5♥ = 2 Aces;
- 5♠ = 3 Aces.

A **5NT** enquiry: A bid of 5NT (when preceded by a 4NT Blackwood bid) guarantees that all four Aces are present and asks for Kings. The responses are similar to that over 4NT, but one level higher:

- 6♣ = 0 or 4 Kings; 6♦ = 1 King; 6♥ = 2 Kings; 6♠ = 3 Kings.

The *Blackwood Convention* (invented by Easley Blackwood, Sr [1903–1992]) is a well-known, but much abused, convention in bridge. It was designed to avoid the trap of reaching a slam contract when missing two Aces.

The basic principle is that *when a trump suit is agreed* a 4NT bid asks for Aces; partner replies on a step principle, so that 5♣ shows no Aces, 5♦ shows one Ace, 5♥ shows two Aces and 5♠ shows three Aces. In the unlikely event that a “Blackwooder” bid 4NT with no Aces and his partner held all four the response should be 5♣, and the previous bidding should remove all ambiguity...

Here are some examples of Blackwood 4NT in action...

| Ex 1.       |               |               |  |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| West        |               | East          |  |
| ♠ A J 9 4 3 |               | ♠ K Q 10 7 6  |  |
| ♥ 2         | N<br>W E<br>S | ♥ A K Q J 9 3 |  |
| ♦ A J 8 2   |               | ♦ 5           |  |
| ♣ A 10 8    |               | ♣ 3           |  |
| Bidding     |               |               |  |
| 1♠          |               | 4NT           |  |
| 5♠          |               | 7♠            |  |
| Pass        |               |               |  |

After West opens 1♠ the only issue that concerns East is how many Aces West has. The leap to 4NT agrees Spades as trumps and asks for Aces (Blackwood). 4NT asks West a simple question – “How many Aces do you hold?”

When the 5♠ response shows three Aces East can count thirteen tricks (five Spades, six Hearts and two Aces). With no further information required, East simply bids the grand slam.

| Ex 2.        |               |               |  |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| West         |               | East          |  |
| ♠ K Q 10 7 3 |               | ♠ 2           |  |
| ♥ A 10 6 3   | N<br>W E<br>S | ♥ K Q 7 5 4 2 |  |
| ♦ 2          |               | ♦ A K 7 3     |  |
| ♣ A Q 10     |               | ♣ K 9         |  |
| Bidding      |               |               |  |
| 1♠           |               | 2♥            |  |
| 4♥           |               | 4NT           |  |
| 5♥           |               | 6♥            |  |
| Pass         |               |               |  |

Here, West opens 1♠ and raises the 2♥ response to game. East now knows that West has a decent hand (15+ points) and that East-West have a solid trump fit. With 15 points and a lovely 6-4-2-1 pattern, East should be slam minded, although there may be two Aces off the hand. Blackwood elicits the information that West has two Aces, so there is only one Ace missing; East therefore settles for a small slam.

Note that it would be a double-cross to chicken out from a slam just because there is an Ace missing. Blackwood should be used to check that two Aces are not missing; that’s all. If you feel that the tricks aren’t there with an Ace missing, then 4NT was probably not the right bid on the previous round.

| Ex 3.          |               |             |  |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| West           |               | East        |  |
| ♠ 2            |               | ♠ K J 4     |  |
| ♥ A K 10 8 6 2 | N<br>W E<br>S | ♥ Q J 9 3   |  |
| ♦ A K Q 10 4   |               | ♦ J         |  |
| ♣ 7            |               | ♣ K 9 8 5 2 |  |
| Bidding        |               |             |  |
| 1♥             |               | 3♥          |  |
| 4NT            |               | 5♣          |  |
| 5♥             |               | Pass        |  |

West might like to open with a stronger bid than 1♥ as he has a very powerful hand; unfortunately for his side, he is playing weak twos. No matter – 1♥ does not end the auction. Indeed, East raises to 3♥, allowing West to visualise a slam if East has the decency to hold an Ace or two. 4NT elicits the disappointing news that East is bereft in the Ace department, so West hurriedly *signs-off* in 5♥.

Note this – it is important. By having an agreed trump suit (Hearts in this case) the partnership can terminate proceedings if there are insufficient Aces. This would not be possible after a *quantitative sequence* in No-trumps of, say, 1NT – 4NT as there would be no way of stopping the train once it had left the station.

| Ex 4.       |               |             |  |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|--|
| West        |               | East        |  |
| ♠ A 9 7 4   |               | ♠ K Q 8 6 3 |  |
| ♥ J         | N<br>W E<br>S | ♥ A K 7 4   |  |
| ♦ K J 2     |               | ♦ A 9 3     |  |
| ♣ A Q J 4 2 |               | ♣ 3         |  |
| Bidding     |               |             |  |
| 1♣          |               | 1♠          |  |
| 3♠          |               | 4NT         |  |
| 5♥          |               | 6♠          |  |
| Pass        |               |             |  |

West opens 1♣ and East bids his time with a 1♠ response. West clarifies his opening bid with a jump raise in Spades and East now has to reappraise matters. With 16 points facing about 16 and with a robust 5-4 trump fit the hands look suitable for a slam. To check on Aces (it's just possible that two are missing) East invokes Blackwood and discovers that all Aces are present. Is it worth probing further, looking for a Grand Slam? Probably not, so East settles for 6♠.

There are points about Blackwood that need clarifying.

- Note that 1NT – 4NT (and similar sequences) is **not** Blackwood. As there is no agreed trump suit, there is no way of *signing off* in the event of the partnership having insufficient Aces. (See §41. Slam Bidding Part 1).
- A jump to 4NT often agrees a trump suit *by inference*. Thus: 1♥ – 4NT, for example, would set Hearts as trumps.
- Blackwood should be used when a player is confident that a slam is in the air but that there may be two Aces off the hand. It should not be used as a fishing expedition on a good hand simply because a player can think of nothing better to do.
- Finding out an Ace is missing should not prevent you from bidding a small slam. If 4NT shows you that you have three Aces, then you should be prepared to bid to the six-level. If you are not confident, then you should not have used Blackwood!
- A bid of 5NT following a 4NT enquiry asks for Kings. It is utterly pointless to do so unless you are investigating a Grand Slam. As such, a 5NT bid guarantees that all four Aces are present.

§42. Quiz on Slam Bidding 2. Blackwood 4NT.

In each case you are **South**

What is your best bid after the given auctions?

1.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 1♥    | Pass | ?     |

♠ 2  
♥ K Q 9 7 3  
♦ A  
♣ A K Q J 10 3

2.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 1♥    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♦    | Pass | ?     |

♠ 2  
♥ K Q 9 7 3  
♦ A  
♣ A K Q J 10 3

3.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♥    | Pass | 1♥    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

♠ A K 7 6  
♥ A K J 9 4 2  
♦ 6  
♣ K 4

4.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♠    | Pass | 2♥    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | ?     |

♠ K 9 2  
♥ A K 10 9 2  
♦ 2  
♣ A 9 7 4

5.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♥    | Pass | 1♥    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

♠ Q J 5  
♥ A K 7 4 2  
♦ A Q 10  
♣ K 7

6.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass  | Pass | 1♠    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♣    | Pass | ?     |

♠ A K Q J 9 4  
♥ A K 8 7 4  
♦ J  
♣ 2

7.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 1♣    | Pass | 1♠    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♥    | Pass | ?     |

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

8.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♥    | Pass | 1♥    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

♠ Q 6  
♥ A K 9 6 3  
♦ A K J 8  
♣ Q 7

9\*.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♣    | Pass | 1♣    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

♠ K Q J 9  
♥ K 9  
♦ Q  
♣ A K J 7 6 2

10\*.

|         |
|---------|
| N       |
| W     E |
| S       |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 1♥    | Pass | 1♠    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♥    | Pass | ?     |

♠ A Q 9 7 6  
♥ A 9  
♦ K Q 7 6  
♣ K 4

## §42. Quiz on Slam Bidding 2. Blackwood 4NT.

## Answers

1.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ 2  
♥ K Q 9 7 3  
♦ A  
♣ A K Q J 10 3

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 1♥    | Pass | ?     |

**4NT.** The potential on this hand depends simply on the number of Aces partner has. 4NT agrees Hearts as trumps and asks partner for Aces – should North own up to two of them then you'd surely have a Grand Slam in the offing as you can count your thirteen tricks.

2.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ 2  
♥ K Q 9 7 3  
♦ A  
♣ A K Q J 10 3

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 1♥    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♦    | Pass | ?     |

**6♥.** North's 5♦ reply shows just the one Ace, so a Grand Slam is out of the question as the enemy have an Ace. However, a small slam is still surely cold, so that is what you should bid. You shouldn't chicken out from bidding a slam just because you are off an Ace.

3.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ A K 7 6  
♥ A K J 9 4 2  
♦ 6  
♣ K 4

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♥    | Pass | 1♥    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

**4NT.** This is a lovely hand, well worthy of a slam facing an invitational raise in Hearts, You will advance to 6♥ unless the reply to 4NT shows there to be two Aces missing. Notice that you have *second round control* in both minors; contrast this with Questions 5 and 8.

4.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ K 9 2  
♥ A K 10 9 2  
♦ 2  
♣ A 9 7 4

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♠    | Pass | 2♥    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | ?     |

**4NT.** This is a very good hand facing a 2♣ rebid, facing a *game-forcing jump* to 3♠, this hand is a whale. 6♠ looks to be odds-on, but you should go via Blackwood to check that two Aces are not missing. Even if one Ace is with the enemy you should still advance to 6♠.

5.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ Q J 5  
♥ A K 7 4 2  
♦ A Q 10  
♣ K 7

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♥    | Pass | 1♥    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

**4♥.** Yes, you have 19 points, but the hand lacks substance. These 5-3-3-2 hands play disappointingly in general as they have too many losers. Also, what would you do if you did apply Blackwood and partner showed one Ace? You could still be missing the ♠A K.

6.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ A K Q J 9 4  
♥ A K 8 7 4  
♦ J  
♣ 2

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | Pass  | Pass | 1♠    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♣    | Pass | ?     |

**5♠.** It is both surprising and irritating that partner has no Ace, but the 5♣ response to Blackwood leaves no room for doubt. With the enemy able to cash the first two tricks the judicious move is to sign-off in 5♠. As the 4NT bidder is *boss of the auction*, North will Pass.

7.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

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

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♣    | Pass | 1♠    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♥    | Pass | ?     |

**6♠.** You are committed to playing in a slam once you have introduced 4NT and have discovered that there are not two Aces missing – that is the purpose of Blackwood. You obviously cannot make a Grand Slam once partner has shown two Aces with 5♥, so 6♠ it is.

8.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ Q 6  
♥ A K 9 6 3  
♦ A K J 8  
♣ Q 7

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♥    | Pass | 1♥    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

**4♥.** As with Q5 you have 19 points, but you lack any sort of *control* in the black suits. The holding of Q x does not pull its weight in general, and you have two of them. Venturing to the five-level (via 4NT) is perilous; you could easily be lacking the ♣A K or the ♠A K.

9.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ K Q J 9  
♥ K 9  
♦ Q  
♣ A K J 7 6 2

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 3♣    | Pass | 1♣    |
|      |       |      | ?     |

**3♠.** Second choice 5♠. This is a textbook Blackwood trap – you cannot afford to bid 4NT as you are unprepared for a possible (indeed, likely) 5♦ response. Knowing that you are missing two Aces where would you go next? You'd be up a creek with no paddle.

10.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | E |
| W | S |

♠ A Q 9 7 6  
♥ A 9  
♦ K Q 7 6  
♣ K 4

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♥    | Pass | 1♠    |
| Pass | 3♠    | Pass | 4NT   |
| Pass | 5♥    | Pass | ?     |

**5NT.** This is the rare King-asking part of Blackwood, bid after the response to 4NT has confirmed that all Aces are present. Here, with a massive hand facing a jump raise, you should be prepared to bid a Grand Slam (7♠) if North shows two Kings with a 6♥ response.

## §42. Example hands 1 to 4.

**Hand 1** Love all, dealer North

|  |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>♠ 5 3<br/>♥ Q 7 3<br/>♦ A 10 5<br/>♣ Q J 10 5 3</p> | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | <p>♠ A K Q 7 6<br/>♥ A K 4 2<br/>♦ 6<br/>♣ K 8 4</p> | <p>♠ 10 9<br/>♥ J 10 9 5<br/>♦ J 9 4 2<br/>♣ 9 6 2</p> |
| N  | E   |   |   |   |   |  |  |
| W  | S   |   |   |   |   |  |  |

| West       | North | East             | South    |
|------------|-------|------------------|----------|
|            | Pass  | 1♠               | Pass     |
| 3♠         | Pass  | 4NT              | Pass     |
| 5♦         | Pass  | 6♣               | All Pass |
| 6♣ by East |       | Opening lead: ♥J |          |

East opens 1♠ and is pleased to see that West makes the limit response of 3♠ (2♦ would be a dereliction of duty!) Now, knowing of a solid nine-card Spade fit, holding a lovely 5-4-3-1 hand with wonderful trumps and a maximum opening bid (19 points) East can visualise a slam. West may have no Aces, though, so Blackwood is required to sort that out. The 5♦ response shows one Ace, so East knows the enemy cannot cash two Aces. 6♣ it is. The hand can always be made by ruffing two Hearts on table, so the count of tricks is **seven** Spades (five in hand and two ruffs in the short trump hand), two Hearts, one (slow) Diamond and two Clubs. 6♣ made.

**Hand 2** North-South game, dealer East

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>♠ 5<br/>♥ K J 8 7 6 2<br/>♦ A K Q 10<br/>♣ K 3</p> | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | <p>♠ 10 9 8 6 2<br/>♥ None<br/>♦ 9 5 3<br/>♣ Q 10 9 6 2</p> | <p>♠ A 7 4 3<br/>♥ Q 10 4<br/>♦ 8 7 6 4 2<br/>♣ 5</p> |
| N   | E   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W   | S   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

| West        | North | East              | South |
|-------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|             |       | Pass              | 1♣    |
| Pass        | 1♥    | Pass              | 3♥    |
| Pass        | 4NT   | Pass              | 5♥    |
| Pass        | 6♥    | All Pass          |       |
| 6♥ by North |       | Opening lead: ♠10 |       |

South opens 1♣ and North responds 1♥ for now. South's **limit raise** to 3♥ (showing four-card support and around 16 points) comes as a pleasant surprise. Where are North's losers? Only in Aces, so he applies Blackwood to see how many are missing. **One** is the answer (the 5♥ response shows two of them), so North bids the small slam. Any problems in the play after the ♠10 lead? Well, it's only a case of drawing trumps. *How*, though? You must cash the Ace first – if East has ♥Q 10 × then the slam can't make; if West has them there is a *marked finesse*. A Heart to the ♥J followed by the ♥K makes life easy.

**Hand 3** East-West game, dealer South

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>♠ A K 8 4 3<br/>♥ K 9 2<br/>♦ 2<br/>♣ A 9 7 4</p> | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | <p>♠ Q 10 9 2<br/>♥ 6 4 3<br/>♦ 9 8 4 3<br/>♣ 6 3</p> | <p>♠ J 6<br/>♥ 8<br/>♦ Q J 10 7 5<br/>♣ K J 10 8 2</p> |
| N  | E   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| W  | S   |   |   |   |   |   |  |

| West        | North | East             | South |
|-------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|             |       |                  | 1♥    |
| Pass        | 1♠    | Pass             | 3♥    |
| Pass        | 4NT   | Pass             | 5♥    |
| Pass        | 6♥    | All Pass         |       |
| 6♥ by South |       | Opening lead: ♦Q |       |

South opens 1♥ and rebids 3♥ over North's 1♠ reply. Now, facing a jump rebid, North has a whale of a hand; he has prime trump support, two Aces and a side-suit singleton to boot. The hand is worth much more than a feeble raise to game – a slam is surely in the offing. Although unlikely to be missing two Aces, North does best to wheel out Blackwood before bidding 6♥. After the ♦Q lead, South simply has to ruff his Diamond loser on table before drawing trumps. Twelve tricks come from **seven** Heart tricks, two Spades, two Diamonds and a Club. Note that ruffing Spades in the closed hand is the wrong play.

**Hand 4** Game all, dealer West

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>♠ A 9 6 5 2<br/>♥ 9 4<br/>♦ J 10 9 7<br/>♣ 7 4</p> | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table> | N | E | W | S | <p>♠ 4<br/>♥ A Q J 8 3<br/>♦ A 6 3<br/>♣ K Q 10 8</p> | <p>♠ K Q J 10 8<br/>♥ 2<br/>♦ K Q 2<br/>♣ A J 9 3</p> |
| N   | E   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W   | S   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

| West       | North | East             | South    |
|------------|-------|------------------|----------|
|            |       | 2♥               | Pass     |
| 1♠         | Pass  | 4NT              | Pass     |
| 3♣         | Pass  | 6♣               | All Pass |
| 5♦         | Pass  |                  |          |
| 6♣ by West |       | Opening lead: ♦J |          |

This hand illustrates two important points. One is that a 4-4 fit can often generate an extra trick, the other is that by bidding 1♠ and following with 3♣ West is making a *high-level reverse*. Here, then, after the start of 1♠ – 2♥ West's 3♣ rebid is forcing to game and shows 16+ points. Knowing of a good fit (and of 32+ points) East should be sniffing a slam. 4NT elicits the information that an Ace is off the hand, so East settles for 6♣. After a Diamond lead West can draw trumps and set up the Spades. The 5-2 split is disappointing, but the last Spade can be ruffed on table. Declarer makes **five** Club tricks (four plus a ruff), three Spades, one Heart and three Diamonds.

## §42. Example hands 5 to 8.

**Hand 5** North-South game, dealer North

♠ A K 9 7 4  
 ♥ Q J 5  
 ♦ K 8  
 ♣ A Q 10  
  
 ♠ None  
 ♥ A 7 3 2  
 ♦ Q 10 5 4  
 ♣ 8 7 6 3 2  
  

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | N |   |
| W |   | E |
|   | S |   |

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

| West        | North | East              | South |
|-------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
|             | 1♠    | Pass              | 3♠    |
| Pass        | 4♠    | All Pass          |       |
| 4♠ by North |       | Opening lead: ♥10 |       |

Hands 1-4 show how to use Blackwood correctly; Hands 5-8 show you how to avoid using Blackwood on inappropriate hands. Cautionary tales, if you will. Here, North opens 1♠ and sees his partner make a limit raise to 3♠ – what next? Well, 5-3-3-2 hands do not play particularly well as they have too many losers. Blackwood here would be in the nature of a fishing expedition as there is no guarantee that the number of Aces partner held would clarify whether a slam would be available. Further, it is entirely possible that the enemy have the ♥A K. With two red lights (*poor shape, a lack of controls*), 4♠ is the prudent call. Even 4♠ takes care and attention, note. Now compare this 19-count with East of Hand 1.

**Hand 6** East-West game, dealer East

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

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | N |   |
| W |   | E |
|   | S |   |

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

| West        | North | East             | South |
|-------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|             |       | Pass             | 1♠    |
| Pass        | 2♦    | Pass             | 3♣    |
| Pass        | 4♠    | All Pass         |       |
| 4♠ by South |       | Opening lead: ♣Q |       |

Reverses (cf Hand 4) show very good hands; it is important not to get carried away, though. South opens 1♠ and is excited when partner responds 2♦; is there a good fit in that suit? A game-forcing *high-level reverse* of 3♣ follows – what should North bid next? Now, as described in an earlier lesson, 3♣ by North would be **forcing** and show a good hand; were North to bid that South would have every justification in forging his way to a slam. Instead, North jumps to 4♠ (**not** a selfish 3NT!), saying that he has no further interest in the hand (*the principle of fast arrival*). Having been given a warning to shut up and Pass, South does precisely that. Even 4♠ is a struggle.

**Hand 7** Game all, dealer South

♠ K 7 6 2  
 ♥ None  
 ♦ 9 7 5 3  
 ♣ J 10 9 8 4  
  
 ♠ A 9 8  
 ♥ K Q 9 8 7 5  
 ♦ Q 4  
 ♣ A K  
  

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | N |   |
| W |   | E |
|   | S |   |

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

| West       | North | East             | South    |
|------------|-------|------------------|----------|
|            |       |                  | Pass     |
| 1♥         | Pass  | 4♥               | All Pass |
| 4♥ by West |       | Opening lead: ♣J |          |

What's the point of this deal? Well, what precisely does it mean when 1♥ is raised to 4♥ (or, come to that, when 1♠ is raised to 4♠)? Some partnerships play such a raise to mean 13-14 points, but that is outdated nowadays. In the modern game, most players regard jumps to game in a major as showing lots of trumps (usually five or more) and not much else – the purpose of such bids is to *steal the deal*. Here, East is fearful that South would bid Spades if the auction went more slowly and that North-South might bid and make 4♠. As it is, they can't, but that doesn't make 4♥ the wrong call. What it does do is make West's next bid more difficult. If he knows 4♥ is a pre-emptive jump he should Pass. Quickly!

**Hand 8** Love all, dealer West

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

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | N |   |
| W |   | E |
|   | S |   |

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

| West       | North | East             | South    |
|------------|-------|------------------|----------|
| Pass       | Pass  | 1♠               | Pass     |
| 3♠         | Pass  | 4♠               | All Pass |
| 4♠ by East |       | Opening lead: ♦2 |          |

This deal features a fatuous auction that led to a disaster. The recommended bidding is above; East should content himself with 4♠ on the second round as he lacks *red-suit controls*. At the time East opened 1♠ and West replied 2♦. East rebid 3♣ and West, instead of trying to close the auction down with 4♠, bid an encouraging 3♠. East, duly encouraged, bid an uncouth 4NT (his side might have been missing the ♥A K) and rapidly signed-off in 5♠ after the 5♣ response. Even 4♠ can be beaten (Diamond lead, Diamond ruff, Heart to the Ace, Diamond lead) and 5♠ went two down. "I had to show you my Diamonds", whined West, pathetically. "I'd have seen them when dummy went down", snapped East.