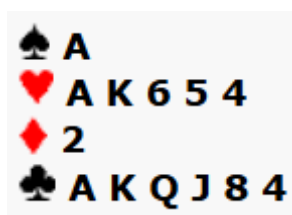


June 2026 Hand of the Week 100: Grand slam



To celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> edition of hand of the week we are looking at a grand slam! This hand came from an evening where 3 slams were made NS.

This is a very strong hand, 21 points but only 2 losers. The opening is a straightforward 2♣.

What happens next will depend on your partnership agreements. Some players require partner to respond 2♦ as a forced relay, giving opener the opportunity to describe their hand. Others use 2♦ as a weak response showing <7 points and/or no Ace. With stronger holding responder bids their 5 card suit or quantitative NT- in most partnerships 2NT would be 6-9 points, 3NT 10+.

We play the latter system, partner responds 3♦ showing 6+ points and a 5+ card suit. You could either ask for Aces at this point or show your club suit. The problem with bidding 4NT would be that if partner shows 1 key card you won't know if it is the Ace or King of diamonds, plus partner won't know about your club holding and there is a chance they could 'take out' a 6♣ bid into their diamond suit. Alternatively 4♣ takes up quite a bit of bidding space and hands the initiative to partner who probably won't recognise how strong your hand is- for example if they bid 5♣ you won't know whether to go for the small slam or the grand slam.

This demonstrates why using the relay bid is helpful as it would allow opener to respond 3♣ which leaves room to find a heart fit or explore a slam in NT. The bidding would likely go:

2♣	2♦*
3♣	4♥**
4NT***	5♣****
?	

\* Forced relay

\*\* Splinter- agrees clubs and shows singleton or void in hearts

\*\*\* Roman Key card blackwood

\*\*\*\* 1 or 4 key cards

7♣ seems likely now as you should be able to ruff out the hearts

The full hand:

Dir: East  
Vul: N/S

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

Optimum  
EW 7Sx  
+1700

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

NORTH
2
SOUTH

♠ Q J 9 6 4  
♥ Q J 8 3  
♦ J 9 4  
♣ 5

7	
5	7
21	

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

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
N	13	12	11	7	11
S	13	12	11	7	11
E	0	1	2	6	1
W	0	1	2	6	1

Declarer wins the lead, draws 2 rounds of trumps and can throw 1 heart on the K♦ and ruff the other 2. If the trumps split badly there is an option to establish the diamonds but declarer will need to be careful managing their entries. Well bid if you got there!