

April 2026 Hand of the Week 96: 1 in a 100,000



A very strong hand this month which came up in one of the Friday BBO sessions! 29 high card points, how would you bid this?

The place to start is 2♣ showing game going strength, after partner bids 2♦ showing a weak hand what next?

Although the hand is very strong there is some danger as with only 11 points outstanding it is quite possible partner may only have 1-2 points or less, in which case you will have entry problems and find yourself playing away from your hand, perhaps only making 8 tricks. Alternatively, partner might only need the Q♣ for 6NT to be made easily.

The ACOL approach with strong balanced hands is to show points as follows:

- 20-22 Open 2NT
- 23-24 Open 2♣, rebid 2NT
- 25+ Open 2♣, rebid 3NT

After a 2NT rebid there is now spaces for Stayman and transfers.

After 3NT, partner can bid on if distributional or with some high card points. Usually this would be 4♣ as Gerber asking for Aces, and 4NT as a quantitative bid looking for 6NT.

In this case a possible bidding sequence is therefore:

| | |
|-----|-----|
| 2♣ | 2♦ |
| 3NT | 4♣ |
| 4♦ | 5♣ |
| 5♦ | 6NT |

4♣ Gerber- asking for Aces (only used after a natural NT bid, otherwise use Blackwood)

4♦ 0 or 4 Aces (note 4♥ = 1 Ace, 4♠ = 2 Aces, 4NT = 3 Aces)

5♣ Asking for Kings

4♦ 0 or 4 Kings

The full hand:

Dir: West
 Vul: E/W

♠ A K 2
 ♥ A K
 ♦ A K 7
 ♣ A K J 7 5

Optimum
 NS 7N
 +1520

♠ 8 5
 ♥ Q 7 4
 ♦ 10 8 5
 ♣ 9 8 6 4 2

| |
|-------|
| NORTH |
| 16 |
| SOUTH |

♠ 9 7 4 3
 ♥ J 8 5 3 2
 ♦ Q J 4 3
 ♣ - -

| | | |
|---|----|---|
| | 29 | |
| 2 | | 4 |
| | 5 | |

♠ Q J 10 6
 ♥ 10 9 6
 ♦ 9 6 2
 ♣ Q 10 3

| | | | | | |
|---|----|----|---|----|----|
| | ♣ | ♦ | ♥ | ♠ | N |
| N | 13 | 10 | 8 | 13 | 13 |
| S | 13 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 13 |
| E | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| W | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

After partner shows the top 8 honour cards, South can now count 11 top tricks and with good intermediate values the slam looks likely. Can you find the grand slam? It would depend on North bidding 3♣ rather than 3NT to show the long suit- after a blackwood sequence South could then count 13 tricks (4 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds and 5 clubs)

On the night 3 pairs bid the small slam, and the other 2 settled for 3NT+4

The chance of getting dealt a hand with 29 or more high card points is approximately 1:100,000- if you play bridge twice a week this might happen once in 40 years!