

Bidding and playing a few slam hands

	♠ 9 8 5 2	
	♥ 9 8 7 3	
	♦ 6 2	
	♣ A 5 2	
♠ A 7 4 3	Board 1	♠ K Q 6
♥ Q 6 5	Dealer: W	♥ A K 4
♦ A J 9	All Vul	♦ K Q 4 3
♣ Q 9 7		♣ K J 8
	♠ J 10	
	♥ J 10 2	
	♦ 10 8 7 5	
	♣ 10 6 4 3	

Suggested bidding:

W	E
1NT	6NT

When two hands are balanced, you really need 33 points for a slam (so you are not missing two aces). Here West opens a weak no trump with 21 points balanced can bid the small slam immediately.

The play is simple. There are 10 tricks on top and whatever they lead, declarer can force out the Ace of clubs for two more tricks.

	♠ 6	
	♥ J 10 8 6	
	♦ K 8 6 3	
	♣ K Q 7 4	
♠ A J 9 7	Board 2	♠ K Q 10 8 3
♥ A Q 9 3 2	Dealer: W	♥ K 5
♦ 9 7	EW Vul	♦ A 4
♣ J 3		♣ A 9 6 5
	♠ 5 4 2	
	♥ 7 4	
	♦ Q J 10 5 2	
	♣ 10 8 2	

Suggested bidding:	W	E
	1♥	1♠
	2♠	4NT
	5♥	6♠

Here, once East hears of four card spade support opposite, because he has such good controls a slam looks on. RCKB tells him two are opposite, which must be the two missing aces. So he can bid the slam with confidence.

The queen of diamonds is the likely lead. This will take out declarer's Ace. How does he avoid losing a diamond and a club?

If the hearts break 3-3 he can get rid of a diamond loser on the Queen of hearts, but then there is a danger that the hearts don't break and someone will ruff the third round. Declarer must play three rounds of trumps to draw all the opponent's trumps. A diamond can then be thrown on the queen of hearts safely. But there is now only one trump to deal with his three club losers. After the queen of hearts he must play another heart and ruff it to set up the last heart in the dummy. He then plays Ace of clubs and another club (giving up that trick). Eventually his third club is ruffed in the dummy and his last club goes on the heart he has set up.

	♠ 9 8 7 5	
	♥ J 8 5 3	
	♦ Q	
	♣ J 10 4 3	
♠ A 6 4	Board 3	♠ 3 2
♥ K Q 7 4 2	Dealer S	♥ 9
♦ K 9 8 3	NS Vul	♦ A J 10 7 4 2
♣ 7		♣ A K Q 5
	♠ K Q J 10	
	♥ A 10 6	
	♦ 6 5	
	♣ 9 8 6 2	

Suggested bidding:	W	E
	1♥	2♦
	3♦	4♣
	4♠	4NT
	5♥	6♦

Once East hears of four card diamond support opposite, then a slam is a possibility. There is a danger of two losing spades, so Blackwood is no good if partner has got the Ace of hearts but two or three small spades.

Bidding four clubs encourages, but does not commit the partnership to game, and is probably an advanced cue bid, but West can now bid 4 spades, showing first round control of spades, probably the ace, but denying first round heart control. East now knows they could be missing the King of diamonds and the Ace of hearts. However RCKB (with diamonds agreed) shows the King and East can bid the slam.

If the opposition lead a spade instead of the heart Ace, this gives declarer a spade loser. If he tries to play a top heart to get the ace out so he can discard his spade on the other top heart then the opposition will cash a spade trick. After drawing trumps, declarer must throw the losing spades from dummy on the King and Queen of clubs.

	♠ Q 10 2	
	♥ J 7 6 3	
	♦ J 9 8 6	
	♣ 10 8	
♠ A 8 6 5 3	Board 4	♠ K 7
♥ K 9 4	Dealer W	♥ A Q 10 8 5 2
♦ Q 7 2	Vul: NS	♦ 3
♣ A 5		♣ K Q 4 3
	♠ J 9 4	
	♥ void	
	♦ A K 10 5 4	
	♣ J 9 7 6 2	

Suggested bidding:	W	E
	1♠	2♥
	3♥	4NT
	5♦	6♥

West knows East has a five card heart suit so can support with only three. East just wants to know how many controls West has out of the Ace of spades, the King of hearts, the Ace of diamonds and the Ace of clubs. By bidding RKCB he can find out. If West has only two they can stop in 5 spades, if he has three (as here) they can bid 6 spades (he won't have zero, or he couldn't open the bidding), and in the (unlikely) event he has four they can play in the grand slam.

The contract is easy if you play carefully. Assuming trumps break you have 11 tricks on top and a club can be ruffed in dummy. Even if the trumps are four-nil (as here) you can still make.

The opening lead will probably be the Ace of diamonds. If South continues with a second top diamond, ruff it and then the Queen is good to discard your losing club on.

If South switches to a club, win and play the Ace of hearts learning the bad news. Play King of spades, followed by Ace of spades and a spade ruff. This sets up two spade winners in dummy. Now you can cross to the King of hearts and finesse against the Jack on the way back to hand. Draw the last trump and you can cross to dummy with the Ace of clubs to enjoy the two spade winners (you did win the initial club switch in your own hand with the Queen, didn't you?)

	♠ 10 9 8	
	♥ K J 7 6 3	
	♦ K 9 8 4	
	♣ 10	
♠ K Q 5 3	Board 5	♠ A 7
♥ 9 4 2	Dealer W	♥ 5
♦ A	Vul: All	♦ Q J 10 3
♣ K Q 9 7 6		♣ A 8 5 4 3 2
	♠ J 6 4 2	
	♥ A Q 10 8	
	♦ 7 6 5 2	
	♣ J	

Suggested bidding:	W	E
	1♣	3♣
	3♠	4♣
	4♦	6♣

Three spades is not a cue bid; it is natural and looking towards a possible 3NT. East cannot stop the hearts so goes on to four clubs. West is now looking at five clubs, but can show slightly better values by cue bidding the Ace of diamonds on the way. If East is now brave enough he can bid six clubs - at worst it will probably be on the diamond finesse.

The play is easy. After drawing trumps all the diamonds in the dummy can be ruffed in the West hand, and if the defenders do not cash their Ace of hearts at the start then a heart can be thrown on the Queen of spades and declarer makes all 13 tricks.