

BID TO A GRAND SLAM

You pick up this hand.

S	South
♠	Q
♥	Q5
♦	AKJ7653
♣	AJ6

North is the dealer and opens 1♠. With silent opponents, you respond 2♦. This is a 2 over 1-level bid and in Standard American system promises 10 or more points and at least 4 diamonds. Your partner raises your response to 3♦. This should stop you cold.

You have a nearly solid 7-card diamond suit and an outside ace. Now that partner has supported your diamonds, I would could this hand at about 21 points. There are 17 HCP. Although the double ♥Q might not be worth 2 points, the ♠Q is in partner's original suit and therefore, does carry its weight. After North shows support for your suit, you can add 2 more points for a 7-card suit. The 3 honors in the suit is worth 1 more point. Plus you will be able to ruff partner's spade losers and that counts another 2 points. This should be enough to convince you that a slam is almost a certainty. The only problem is the heart suit. If the opponents have the ♥A and ♥K, you can lose the first two tricks. You should start control suit bidding to check on the hearts. Start with 4♣, the next suit that holds an ace or king. Partner will bid 4♥ showing a heart control. Now you can start a Blackwood sequence. You can assume North holds a spade control.

This is how the hand should be bid:

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♠	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	7♦!

North's 5♠ bid shows two key cards plus the queen of trump. This is the Key Card Blackwood system that uses 5 key cards, including the king of trump. Since you hold the ♦K, North must have the ♠A, ♥A and ♦Q. Since you now have all the key cards and a virtually solid diamond suit, you should look for the grand slam. North's 6♦ response to your 5NT asking bid shows 1 king. Whichever king it is, you now have more than a 50% probability of discarding all your losers on partner's high cards. Remember, he did open!

West leads the ♠9, and this is the full deal:

D		N North		W N E S	
1		♠ AJ1074		1♠ P	2♦
		♥ AJ6		P 3♦ P	4♣
		♦ Q1098		P 4♥ P	4NT
		♣ K		P 5♠ P	5NT
				P 6♣ P	7♣
W West			E East		
♠ 965			♠ K832		
♥ 10742			♥ K983		
♦ 42			♦ 85432		
♣ Q1097					
		S South			
		♠ Q			
		♥ Q5			
		♦ AKJ7653			
		♣ AJ6			
				7♠ S	NS: 0 EW: 0

In a grand slam, it is a good idea to make a passive lead. Leading away from an honor usually gives the declarer an extra trick. A trump lead would also be fine, here.

East most certainly holds the ♠K. As said, West wouldn't lead away from the king. You cannot afford a "practice" finesse. Take the ♠A and pull the two outstanding trump. Then you can ruff out the ♠K by continual leads to the dummy and spade leads. Once East plays his ♠K, your remaining spades will be tricks on which you can park your heart and club losers. When you ruff the spades, ruff high so you can use dummy's trump for any needed entries.

In a duplicate game, many other pairs will be in slam, but only a very few will be in this Grand Slam.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/hbzsrrr> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own

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