

SIDING THE CONTRACT

North deals and opens 1NT. You hold this very nice hand:

S	South
♠	AQ107543
♥	5
♦	K4
♣	K109

There are a few things you know. First, you are sure that you are going to be playing in spades and second, you are definitely going to be in game and possibly slam.

The standard response is to transfer into spades by bidding 2♥. Once partner accepts the transfer by bidding 2♠, you can suggest a slam by bidding 3♣. This is a cue bid that shows control of the club suit and asks partner to either continue cue bidding if he thinks slam is possible; or return to 4♠ to suggest stopping in game.

Usually, it is advantageous for the contract to be declared by the stronger hand. That is the reason for transferring. But looking at this hand, it would be better for your hand to be concealed. One reason is that the spade suit is so long; but more important is the location of the two kings. If the lead comes from your left, there is a danger in losing either minor suit king. Better to have the lead come into your hand.

The way to arrange this re-siding when playing reverses is to bid a forcing 3♠ instead of the 2♥ transfer bid. That is a game forcing bid and is considered "slammish." If you only wanted to play in game you would have simply transferred. This bid gets two messages across: you want to declare and you want to invite a slam.

Partner rebids 4♦ to show control of the diamond suit but deny club control. You have controls in all the suits so you launch into blackwood. You are playing Roman Key Card Blackwood which reports on 5 controls; the 4 aces and the king of spades. Partner shows 3 key cards. You now have all but one key card so you can settle on 6♠.

West leads the ♣Q. Now you can plan the play:

N North
♠ K98
♥ AKJ4
♦ A532
♣ 83

West leads ♣Q

S South
♠ AQ107543
♥ 5
♦ K4
♣ K109

The lead of the ♣Q indicates you needn't have worried about the ♣A being in West. You are now assured of a club winner when East wins the ♣A and returns a club. You can pull trump with no losers in spite of a 3-0 split. You discard the losing club on the ♥K and claim you slam.

This is the entire deal:

D 9	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ K98		1NT	P	3♠
	♥ AKJ4		P	4♦	P
	♦ A532		P	5♦	P
	♣ 83		P	P	P
W West		E East			
♠ J62		♠			
♥ 9732		♥ Q1086			
♦ 106		♦ QJ987			
♣ QJ72		♣ A654			
	S South				
	♠ AQ107543				
	♥ 5				
	♦ K4				
	♣ K109				
			6♠ S	NS: 0	EW: 0

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

<http://tinyurl.com/y94ycupz> , 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.