

# Bridge at the Village Lesson Hand—October 15, 2018

Brian Potter, Club Manager and Club Director

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North–South hold a 30 HCP slam on this week’s lesson hand. Bidding this slam, as with many minor suit slams is difficult. The line between a minor suit game and a minor suit slam is often a thin one with little bidding room for discrimination between the two choices.

Board: 17  
Dealer: N  
Vul: None

♠10986  
♥J63  
♦Q94  
♣J98

♠AQ7  
♥A1085  
♦10  
♣Q10642

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠5432  
♥Q72  
♦A7632  
♣3

♠KJ  
♥K94  
♦KJ85  
♣AK75

N	♠	♥	♦	♣	
N	5	3	5	3	6
S	5	3	5	3	6
E					
W					

12  
4 HCP 6  
18

	<b>Possible Auction</b>		
West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♦ <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	1♥ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	1♠ <sup>(3)</sup>
Pass	2♠ <sup>(4)</sup>	Pass	4NT <sup>(5)</sup>
Pass	5♠ <sup>(6)</sup>	Pass	6♣
All Pass			
	Lead: ♠5		

## Bidding Notes—Board 17

- (1) South has the strength for an immediate strong jump-shift, but 1♦ is forcing and lets South hear a natural, low level rebid before forcing to game or driving to slam.
- (2) North rebids without promising extra values. South can stop looking for a grand slam, but slam is still in the picture. North should be unbalanced for the heart rebid (likely shapes: 3=4–1=5, 2=4=2=5, 4=4–1=4, or 4=4–0=5).
- (3) South could bid game or force to game by jumping here, but slam prospects remain. The odd 1♠ rebid is forcing for one round only. It falsely claims a four-card spade suit. South expects to get away with this bald faced lie by seizing control of the auction.
- (4) Now, South knows that North’s distribution is one of 3=4=1=5, 4=4=1=4, or 4=4=0=5. Unfortunately, North will interpret any jump rebid by North as a game invitation or a sign-off in game. North may pass any suit rebid up to 5♣.
- (5) Thus, South goes for the gusto by asking for key cards. If North has two or three key cards, South will gamble on 6♣ in the likely none-card fit. If North has only one key card. South will hope that 5NT is playable.
- (6) North has two key cards (both aces because South holds the ♠K) and the ♠Q, and South follows the plan with 6♣. With only three-card support for South’s “four-card” spade suit and a misplaced ruffing value in South’s first suit, North leaves the contract alone rather than correcting to ♠6.

## Opening Lead Notes—Board 17

- » East has a difficult time picking an opening lead. North–South have apparently bid all four suits naturally. After agreeing on spades, they have settled into club slam. The bidding has been odd. Worse, East has no clues from partner.

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- » East chooses to avoid trumps (Leading the singleton ♣3 may eliminate a possible trump winner in West.) and diamonds (bid over East by the dummy). A heart lead up to declarer's second suit seems imprudent. That leaves a spade from ♠5432 into the teeth of a suit where the declaring side had trump agreement.
- » It matters not. Declarer has twelve tricks no matter what East leads.

Play Notes—Board 17

- » Declarer begins with five trumps (assuming a 3–1 or 2–2 break or the ♣J on side) and five major suit top cards (including an opportunity to discard from South on North's third round spade winner). That gives North ten tricks plus one for a heart ruff in the short (South) hand. A twelfth trick might come from the ♦K if the ♦A is with East (50% chance).
- » There is a better way—ruffing in the long hand. If North looks at South's ♦Kxxx as four losers, a plan to ruff three diamonds in North while winning five top major suit cards and four trumps in South wins twelve tricks losing only the ♦A.

North plays as follows:

- Win the spade in North and exit with the ♦10. Best defense wins the ♦A and exits a trump. The ♣Q in the closed hand wins and the ♣AK on the table take care of the outstanding trumps. Also, the ♦K on the table is now an eleventh trick. Either one heart ruff in the dummy or two diamond ruffs in the closed hand will suffice for twelve tricks. North may pull trumps, discard the heart loser on North's third spade, and ruff a heart in South, discard North's last heart on the ♦K, and the closed hand is high.
- If West captures the ♦K, the ♣10 wins West's trump exit. North plays: small to the ♥K, diamond ruff, small to the ♠K, diamond ruff, top spade, discard a heart in South, top heart, heart ruff, diamond ruff, and the South hand has only high trumps.

Thoughts on Board 17

- » The *dummy reversal* line employed when West captures South's ♦K with the ♦A (not happening on the actual lie of the cards) is worth remembering. Unless there is also a crossruff involved, ruffs in the long hand do not yield extra tricks until after the long hand has ruffed down to the length of the short hand. Nonetheless, if the shortness is in the same hand as the long trumps, the technique can pay substantial dividends.