

Bid That Slam -- Problem

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

♠ 3
 ♥ K Q 8 6
 ♦ A Q J 10
 ♣ Q J 4 2



West	North	East	South
	<i>Al</i>		<i>Pete</i>
		1 NT	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
?			

Take the West seat in a club matchpoint game, against me and my partner, Al Muggia. You are playing with your favorite partner.

Partner opens 1 NT, you bid Stayman, and partner bids the right major!

[If at any time you ask for keycards, partner shows two without the queen of trump. What would you do next?]

1. Playing your system, what would you do next?
2. Playing old expert standard, you could bid 3 ♠ (the other major), which sets trump, and starts a slam exploration. If you had this tool, would you use it? Definitely, because playing this way, you cannot even ask for keycards without setting trump. Suppose you bid 3 ♠. What would you do over 3 NT? 4 ♣? 4 ♦?
3. Playing "Reverse Baze," which of these bids would you choose?
 - a. 3 ♠ sets trump, and shows a singleton or void somewhere. Suppose you do that. Partner bids 3 NT, asking where. You answer 4 ♥ (low-medium-high) to show the spade singleton. Partner passes - are you happy? Suppose partner bids over 4 ♥. What now?
 - b. 4 ♣ sets trump, with a balanced hand. (This is the "reverse" part. In original Baze, we would have used 4 ♦ to send this message. 4 ♣ lets partner bid 4 ♦ here.) If you choose this bid, partner does bid 4 ♦. What now?
 - c. 4 ♦ asks for keycards in hearts.

Bid That Slam -- Solution

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ Q J 7 4 2										
	♥ 9 7 5										
	♦ 8 7 4										
	♣ K 6										
♠ 3 ♥ K Q 8 6 ♦ A Q J 10 ♣ Q J 4 2	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 10 6 ♥ A J 3 2 ♦ K 9 2 ♣ 8 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 9 8 5										
	♥ 10 4										
	♦ 6 5 3										
	♣ A 10 9 7 3										

EW 5N; EW 5♥; EW 5♦; EW 3♠; EW 3♣; Par -460: EW 3N+2

West	North	East	South
	<i>Al</i>		<i>Pete</i>
		1 NT	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♥	Pass
6 ♥	All pass		

East-West were a strong pair having a bad day. They were apparently playing original Baze, but after a long pause, West bid 4 NT to ask for keycards. East almost passed, but decided to answer keycards. Against a matchpoint slam, it is almost always correct to lead an ace, so you don't lose it - even though it reduces the chance of setting the slam. After that, unless the king of the suit is visible, it's automatic to lead another. Two other pairs in slam went down, but three pairs in heart *games* made six, and two pairs in notrump made five.

1. Playing your system, what did you do next?

2. Playing old expert standard, you could bid 3 ♠ (the other major), which sets trump, and starts a slam exploration. If you had this tool, would you use it? Definitely, because playing this way, you cannot even ask for keycards without setting trump. Suppose you bid 3 ♠. What would you do over 3 NT? 4 ♣? 4 ♦?

3 NT could be an offer to play, with spades double-stopped. If you pass this, you get an average (lead clubs up, twice, and make five).

4 ♣ should show first *or second* round control -- ask for keycards. (Change now, if you only bid an ace!)

4 ♦ shows a diamond control, but *denies a club control*. Sign off in 4 ♥ for a good score.

3. Playing "Reverse Baze," which of these bids would you choose?

a. 3 ♠ sets trump, and shows a singleton or void somewhere. Suppose you do that. Partner bids 3 NT, asking where. You answer 4 ♥ (low-medium-high) to show the spade singleton. Partner passes - are you happy? *Definitely on this hand*, but not if you were exploring for a grand - I think that hand should bid 4 ♠, not 4 ♥. If partner asks for keycards, reply, of course. If partner bids something else, cue bid 5 ♦, highlighting the club problem. Do not ask for keycards.

b. 4 ♣ sets trump, with a balanced hand. Nah, not doing this. Show the singleton.

c. 4 ♦ asks for keycards in hearts. Definitely the wrong choice. Bid 3 ♠ and find out if clubs are safe.

Bid This Slam! -- Problem

Board 17
 North Deals
 None Vul



♠ A K Q 5 2
 ♥ A K J 5
 ♦ Q 10
 ♣ J 6

West	North	East	South
	<i>Al</i>		<i>Pete</i>
	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 NT ¹	3 ♣	?	

1. Jacoby 2 NT, forcing to game with 4+ card support.

Another possible slam for our opponents. What would be your plan as East?

Bid This Slam! -- Solution

Board 17
North Deals
None Vul

	♠ 9		
	♥ Q 9 8 4 2		
	♦ 6 2		
	♣ A Q 10 9 8		
♠ J 10 6 3	N	♠ A K Q 5 2	
♥ 6	W	♥ A K J 5	
♦ A K J 7 4 3	S	♦ Q 10	
♣ K 7	E	♣ J 6	
	♠ 8 7 4		
	♥ 10 7 3		
	♦ 9 8 5		
	♣ 5 4 3 2		

West	North	East	South
	<i>Al</i>		<i>Pete</i>
	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 NT ¹	3 ♣	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♣ ²	Pass	6 ♥	All pass

1. Jacoby 2 NT, forcing to game with 4+ card support.

2. 1 or 4 keycards (1430).

6 ♥ by East

Lead: ♣ 3

Down 1

These two opponents love the game and have been playing together for about a decade, but usually finish in the bottom half of the field. With 20 HCP, East figured there was a slam, and tried 3 ♥, which both agreed was natural.

It's wise to have some agreements for interference here. A good one is, pass denies a control in their suit, and bidding promises a control. Even with 20 HCP, East probably should pass, agreement or no. They are forced to game - there is no rush.

The key here is to cue bid until the partnership knows all suits are controlled, and then ask for keycards. And since the ♣ K is unprotected, West must declare. That means playing in notrump (which West has already bid) or in diamonds (which West decided not to show).

When 3 ♣ comes around, West will bid diamonds, and East hearts. West then should show the club control with 4 ♣, and East takes charge with 4 NT. The coup de grâce is delivered by East, bidding 6 NT, not 6 ♥, given the likelihood that the club control is only the king. North must take his ♣ A, or lose it!

Board 22
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

Squeeze -- Problem

♠ 10 5 2
 ♥ 9 3
 ♦ A J 10 9 8 2
 ♣ 10 5



♠ K J
 ♥ A 10 4
 ♦ K Q 6
 ♣ A Q 7 6 2

West	North	East	South
	<i>Al</i>		<i>Pete</i>
		1 ♠	Dbl
2 ♠	3 ♦	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
3 NT by South			
Lead: ♠ 3			

Join me as South for this deal. Our hand seems a tad strong for a 1 NT overcall, so we double. Expecting to run the diamond suit, we bid the obvious game. Plan the play.

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We have a spade, a heart, six diamonds, and a club or two -- a great contract. East takes the ♠ A, and after some thought, switches to the ♣ 4. What do you make of that?

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:

It looks like East has given up on spades, and hopes to run his own club suit. We play small, West plays the ♣ 9, and dummy's ♣ 10 wins this trick. We lead a club to the queen, which wins. East still has the ♣ K-J. Now what?

:
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:
:

Dummy has: ♠ 10 5 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A J 10 9 8 2 ♣ -

We have: ♠ K ♥ A 10 4 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ A 7 6

We have lost the ♠ A and are now to get one spade, one heart, six diamonds, and three clubs, for 11 tricks. We have exactly one loser. When this situation arises -- or we can contrive it by "rectifying the count" -- think squeeze. How would you go about it? What will be your threats?

Board 22
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

Squeeze -- Solution

♠ Q 8 3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A 9 7 6 4
♥ K J 7 2		♥ Q 8 6 5
♦ 7 5 4 3		♦ —
♣ 9 3		♣ K J 8 4

♠ K J
♥ A 10 4
♦ K Q 6
♣ A Q 7 6 2

West	North	East	South
	<i>Al</i>		<i>Pete</i>
		1 ♠	Dbl
2 ♠	3 ♦	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
3 NT by South			
Lead: ♠ 3			

Dummy has: ♠ 10 5 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A J 10 9 8 2 ♣ -

We have: ♠ K ♥ A 10 4 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ A 7 6

The threats are ♠ 10, ♥ 10 and ♣ 7. We need an entry to each of these threats.

Start by cashing the ♠ K, an unblocking play called a Vienna coup, to get out of the way of the ♠ 10. Then cash the ♣ A, which is not itself an entry, since there are no more clubs on dummy -- discard the ♥ 3. Now run five diamonds, reducing us to the position below. We are in dummy so we can cash the ♠ 10 if the jack is discarded. We have the ♥ A as entry to the two threats in our hand.

♠ 10	♥ 9	♦ 9	♣ -		♠ -	♥ Q 8	♦ -	♣ K
♠ Q	♥ K J	♦ -	♣ -		♠ -	♥ A 10	♦ -	♣ 7

When we lead the ♦ 9 from dummy, East must not discard the ♣ K, or our ♣ 7 will be good - East is squeezed out of the ♥ 8. We now discard the now-useless ♣ 7, and the pressure is on West. West must keep the ♠ Q, or we will cash the ♠ 10, and so West discards the ♥ J. We lead to the ♥ A, the king and queen come crashing down, and the ♥ 10 wins our twelfth trick. Congratulations - a double squeeze!

Interesting points: After the opening lead, East knows the spade suit is blocked -- West must retain the ♠ Q at trick two -- East made a desperate, costly shift.

This squeeze is 100% safe. If neither the ♠ Q nor the ♣ K has appeared, we just play the hearts and see if the 10 is good. I run a lot of squeezes, many with threats much weaker than this. Sometimes, like here, there turns out to be a real squeeze, and all the opponents can do is squirm. The rest of the time, far more often than you might expect, somebody makes a mistake under what feels like real pressure.