

## SLAMS A'PLENTY

There were good slams to be bid. There were bad slams which were both bid and missed. There were 50% slams where the missing king was well placed for the brave. There was even one lay-down slam in each direction, "lay down" and claim at trick 1. The dealing program was having one of its fairer nights re the distribution of slam opportunities. And then there was Board 28.

You had to be there. The question was "where?" After opening a 12 point 1NT with :

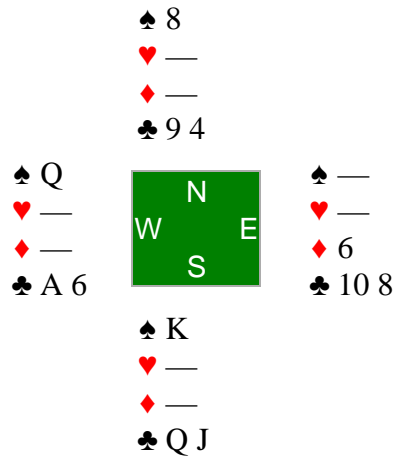
♠ QJ92 ♥ Q5 ♦ K93 ♣ A652, I heard partner transfer to hearts and then force with 3♦. I then took a small fright over my club pips and reverted back to 3♥, thinking we would play in a nice cosy 5-2 4♥ contract. Partner had other ideas as after Key Card, I was left to play in 6♥ with partner saying she had been thinking of grand slam as she put down dummy. "Save such thoughts for another day" I mused, though she had a fair collection:

<u>Board 28</u>		♠ 8 6 5	
West Deals		♥ J 6 3 2	
N-S Vul		♦ J 10 5	
		♣ 9 4 3	
♠ Q J 9 2	N	♠ A	
♥ Q 5	W	♥ A K 8 7 4	
♦ K 9 3	S	♦ A Q 6 4	
♣ A 6 5 2	E	♣ K 10 8	
		♠ K 10 7 4 3	
		♥ 10 9	
		♦ 8 7 2	
		♣ Q J 7	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
6 ♦	Pass	6 ♥	All pass

5♣ showed one key card and 6♦ the ♦K and no other along with the ♥Q. I tell the truth! North led a club. I was down quickly when both the ruffing spade finesse failed and the trump break was unfavourable.

I can take no match-points (actually 2 since they fared worse at the other table) but satisfaction in that I had found a better contract than 6NT which had no play on a spade lead. Yet, which of North's three card suits should they lead against 6NT? The diamond lead is both more attacking and thus more dangerous than a black suit. Who really wants to attack? So, this time a passive unbid major would be my choice, though not if West had shown spades in the bidding.

The diamond was the majority choice and all subsequently failed to make. Indeed, after a diamond lead, the contract is there to be made. Simply play four rounds of hearts and give North the lead. Even a club switch does not hurt West now. Up with the ♣K and cash two more diamonds, the fifth heart and the ♠A. The three card ending is:



The last diamond makes South wish they were somewhere else!

The same squeeze is available in 6♥ and aggravatingly so also in 6 of either minor. 6♥ can also be made on an initial spade lead by playing two hearts finishing in the West hand and throwing East's losing club on the ♠Q. With clubs 3-3, North will never make a heart trick.

Indeed, we are told you can make all 13 in diamonds as you can ruff out the heart loser and then exert the same squeeze. Maybe that was what partner was thinking about in the long hesitation over my 6♦ bid? Maybe not!

*Richard Solomon*