

Learning Points – When You’re in 6 – Part I

by Steve Moese (Mike Purcell ed.)

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Slams LEVEL: Basic

East Deals
Both Vul
MPs

♠ A1092	N W 10 E S	♠ 7
♥		♥ KQJ8
♦ K10985		♦ Q42
♣ AJ105		♣ K9854
♠ KQ853		
♥ 76		
♦ AJ76		
♣ Q7		

Mike

Monday Evening November 27, 2009 ACBL Charity Pairs,
Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper
Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . Mr. Mike Lipp,
Director. All hands played in this pairs event are summarized in
the hand record provided by the ACBL. Today my partner is
Mike Ma. We play Precision.

♠ J64
♥ A1095432
♦ 3
♣ 62

♠ 7
♥ KQJ8
♦ Q42
♣ K9854

Steve

East	South	West	North
1♣	1♠	3♥ ¹	4♥!
Pass	4N	5♣!	6♠
	All Pass		

West leads ♥A

1 = Weak

Slam bidding in a competitive auction is rare. Successful slams when opponents open and find a fit are rarer still. When both sides are bidding strongly, there is likely sufficient distribution to justify both pair’s optimism.

The Bidding

West’s jump-shift in competition was weak and natural. North made a control showing bid with slam aspirations. South judged all 12 HCP were working (no lost values in ♥). West stirred the pot with 5♣ - a 2nd suit fit to encourage a sacrifice from partner. North chose to bid the slam as we hadn’t talked our agreements when opponents interfere in our RKB auctions.

The Play

A ♣ lead would be more challenging. The ♥A left the door open for declarer to make 13 tricks. However with a void and a total of 24 HCP between the 2 hands, making 12 tricks having bid slam should score very well indeed.

Ruffing the 1st trick in dummy South leads a trump to hand to take the 2nd ♥ ruff. While the ♦Q has to be with E for opening count reasons, stranger things have happened. Is there a completely safe way to ensure the contract?

South chose to secure 12 tricks by drawing trumps ♠A then ♠K, then ruffed the 2nd ♥. A low ♦ to the ♦A allowed the 3rd trump to be drawn followed by the ♣ finesse. Whether the ♣ finesse won or lost East is helpless. South’s ♦ losers go off on the winning ♣ in dummy. Note: if East withholds the ♠K, South must rely on the ♦ finesse through East to make the hand.

Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MPs	0.63	6.25	4	2.31		4	6.25	0.63	7.94	
Score	-100	1430	680	620	----	-680	1430	-100	1460	---

Post Mortem

Since this is Match Points, perhaps South should take the ♦ finesse through East as this is the only path for all 13 tricks. Here the cost was 1 Match Point. In an IMPS team game, the safety line would be superior to the ♦ finesse. Partner’s 4♥ cuebid is an excellent example of declaring a fit with all strength working. Partners void, primes (A’s and K’s) and 109 combinations all contribute to make this hand worthy of a slam invitation opposite an opening ♠ hand.

If partner held ♥AKx instead of a ♥ void, a cue bid would be ineffective and misleading. Partner would have 7 HCP too many in opponent’s suit – and therefore 7 HCP too few in suits we need to develop to take tricks.

After this hand, partner and I agreed to lay step responses to RKB interference. We play 1430, so if opponents interfere: Double = 1 or 4, Pass = 0 or 3, single step overcall = 2 without the Queen, 2 step overcall = 2 with Queen. Some like to switch the meaning of Double and Pass to fit the DOP1 mnemonic.

Learning Points

1. Think working points when supporting partner. No values opposite partner's shortness in their suit means your side can make slam on $\frac{3}{4}$ of the normal strength.
2. Be sure to talk how you will continue when opponents interfere over your conventions. Hopefully you'll be prepared for hands like these in advance.
3. Don't be off put when opponents and partner are bidding strongly and you have a good hand. Trust partner to bid what s/he has.

Key Words: Cue bid Slam invitation, interference over RKB.