

## START WINNING

### Chapter 2: Simple Bidding

Here is an example of simple bidding, with a description in “English Speak” of every bid made. Bidding Grand Slams can be exciting, which is why I have used this example as a prelude to the next chapters. You won't be learning to bid many grand slams but rather than that, you will learn how to handle the more basic deals, in both “Simple” bidding as well as in the ACOL system and one or two other systems that will be mentioned in passing.

Winning results in the first sessions that you will play at your bridge club depend more on knowing your basic bidding and play, rather than more sophisticated methods that you will learn in my next book, “Keep Winning”. So here we go, with the Grand Slam for starters, and how you can think about the hand you are dealt, and how you can talk to your partner by making some simple to convey and understand bids using bridge terms rather than the English language (forbidden at the table!). To experienced players, there is very little difference.

Board 10 Dealer E All Vul

♠ 987642	
♥ Q965	
♦ 3	
♣ Q9	
♠ AQJ	♠ 10
♥	♥ AKJ742
♦ A1098752	♦ KJ64
♣ A63	♣ K10
♠ K53	
♥ 1083	
♦ Q	
♣ J87542	

This is how the bidding should go. Let's look at it like a discussion between East and West.

East opens 1H: “I have an opening bid, with at least four hearts”.

West isn't overly excited, having a void in partner's suit, but nevertheless dutifully bids 2D: “I have 10+ high card points and at least four diamonds”.

East now does get excited and bids 4D: “I have great support for your diamonds and a much better hand than just an opening bid. I also have at least five hearts, and the ball is now in your court, partner”.

*(hands repeated for convenience)*

Board 10 Dealer E All Vul

♠ 987642

♥ Q965

♦ 3

♣ Q9

♠ AQJ

♥

♦ A1098752

♣ A63

♠ 10

♥ AKJ742

♦ KJ64

♣ K10

♠ K53

♥ 1083

♦ Q

♣ J87542

East's jump raise in diamonds now does get West excited. They must have a huge diamond fit, at least an eleven card fit! East must also have at least five hearts as well as at least fifteen points for the jump raise in diamonds.

West now sees that there should be more in the hand than just game, and 5D would be very much an understatement of the value of the combined hands.

West therefore bids 4NT: The 4NT bid is "Blackwood" which you should know about. It is a way of finding out how many aces partner has. In this sequence, what it says is: "I have heard you, partner, and am delighted. Tell me how many aces you have". East bids 5D: "I have one". This is a step response, 5C, the lowest step, being none, 5D one, 5H two, and so on.

West is now looking further than a small slam and bids 5NT: "We have all the aces between us and I would like to investigate a grand slam. Please tell me how many kings you have."

In response to West's 5NT asking for kings, East bids 6S: "I have three kings". West can now see that the grand slam, in diamonds, is almost 100% to make, whichever three kings East has, and confidently bids 7D. After East's response of 6S, 7D is inevitable anyway, but West still had the option of signing off in 6NT if East had shown only two kings.

Grand Slams are not going to feature in many of the coming deals. There is more to be gained by bidding correctly to lower level contracts at the start of your bridge career, but I do hope that this deal will have shown you what partnership bidding is about, discussing things in a proper manner.

The above deal arose in a lower grade session. Two Easts were in 6H down one. One East was in 3H making four, and one in 4H making five. One in 3D making seven and two actually got as far as 5D. One West was in 3NT, no doubt encouraged by the saying that nine tricks are easier than eleven. Something to be said for that, but this is not a hand you play in less than a slam, when you should be able to work out, with a cooperative partner, that twelve or thirteen tricks can be made in *Diamonds* (yes, also in NT as it turns out).

It seems that most of those who played this particular deal had a lot to learn about bidding as a partnership. Talk to your partner, and when you then end up as declarer in the proper contract, that is when you can show how you can manage things on your own. The following chapters will take you through the process of communicating with partner in a simple and easy to understand way. If you can appreciate the bidding, both in bridge terms and “English speak” as I call it, you will be a long way towards getting to the correct contract. Then, you will need to have some basic expertise in handling dummy when you are declarer.

And if an opponent is declarer...

Defence is also a part of the game where you need an understanding with partner, so keep it very much in the forefront of your mind:

***Bridge is a PARTNERSHIP game.***