## **Open Hands**



### BM – What are they doing?

Brent Manley	This Challenge hand was adapted from a Brent Manley article. <b>So</b> urced from the ACBL Bridge feed website			
North (D)	Standard Bidding			g
▲ AK87	West	North (D)	East	South
♥ K98652	1♥ 2♦ 2♠		2♠	
• K	Pass	4♠	All	Pass
<b>♣ 62</b>				
South		Bidding Notes		
▲ JT642	1♥	1♥ 5+♥, Opening Hand		
♥ J4	2•			
♦ A54	2♠	2		
🔹 AT4	4♠	Fit, to play	y	

You are playing in a Teams Game. The auction was the same at both tables, with the respective Norths stretching a bit to bid game based on their four-card trump support. At both tables, the lead was the  $\mathbf{\nabla}\mathbf{Q}$ , which looked to both the declarers like an obvious singleton. Both declarers played the  $\mathbf{\nabla}\mathbf{K}$  at trick one. The Easts took the first trick with the  $\mathbf{\nabla}\mathbf{A}$ and shifted to the  $\mathbf{\mathbf{A}}\mathbf{K}$ , much to the annoyance of both declarers.

**Preliminary Analysis** 

Top winners 2 + 2 + 1 = 5 A lot of work to do! Should be manageable.

Top Losers: ♥A (lost), But now ♣ loser.

#### **Your Solution**

- T1 West lead the ♥Q, dummy played the ♥K, But East won the ♥A, ♥4 from hand.
- T2 East switched the ♣K, you won the ♣A
- T3 You led, without any discernible thought, a low spade ♠2 to the ♠K. When East discarded a diamond, the contract could no longer be made.

You had to lose a club & 2 spades as EW could force you back to Dummy with a 3<sup>rd</sup> club!

Put yourself in the seat of the expert declarer at the other table.

#### **Expert Solution**

T2 After winning the  $\underline{\bullet A}$  at trick two, what is your plan for getting to 10 tricks?

The expert declarer paused for thought after winning with the ♣A. As the opening lead had clearly been a singleton, declarer's first thought was that, on a vacant-spaces argument, it was four to three that West had the queen of trumps. Then declarer asked himself, "Why hadn't East given his partner a heart ruff at trick two?"

Declarer concluded that West probably had a trump trick and that East believed that his side needed more than just one heart ruff to beat the contract.

- T3 With that in mind, declarer led the <u>▲J</u> from hand and ran it when West played low <u>▲2</u>.
- T45 Then declarer cashed the **<u>AK</u>** spades.
- T6 Declarer playing a low heart back to the **J**. When West accurately discarded a club refusing to ruff
- T7 The declarer returned to dummy to the singleton <u>♦K</u>
- T8 Then lead the ♥9 East covered this with the ♥T and declarer ruffed in hand ♠6. This time, West overruffed with the ♠Q trumps,

But now declarer claimed all but one of the remaining tricks, conceding a club. He made four trumps, two hearts, two diamonds, the A and a club or diamond ruff in dummy, for a total of 10 tricks. The full deal:

	North (D)	
	♠ AK87	
West	♥ K98652	East (D)
♠ Q952	+ K	<b>≜</b> -
♥ Q	<b>♣</b> 62	▼ AT73
♦ J76		• QT9832
🜲 J9853	South	👲 KQ7
	▲ JT642	
4 <u></u> ♦/S	♥ J4	Vul All
Lead VQ	♦ A54	Dir: North
	♣ AT4	



Sourced Bridgefeed

Can the auction make a difference in **holding up** versus winning a trick? How can I tell the difference? Sometimes the bidding will give you a clue about whether you should hold up or win a trick.

	North		
	South ● 9 2 ♥ A K 1 ● Q 8 6 ● A 10	2	
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1 <b>♣</b>
2	2♠	PASS	2NT
PASS	3NT	ALL PASS	

South plays 3NT with the ♥Q lead. West's 2♥ was defined as weak, so South has some hints as to how to play the hand. Note, by the way, that players have their own ideas about what a weak jump overcall looks like. I have seen players bid 2♥ with six to the jack and out, and I have seen players bid 2♥ with ♥AQJ984 and a side king.

What this means is that you have to keep an open mind about what West may or may not have.

On the **VQ**, East plays a low one. You ask if East would give a count card here and are told that they do not use this kind of signal.

Do you win the first heart and if so, what do you do?

Do you duck the first heart and if so, what is your intent?

When you are thinking of what to do, you must consider the consequences. Let's say you win the first heart and decide that you want one spade trick to give you the nine you need for your contract.

You play the ♠9 toward dummy. West plays low. Do you play low from dummy or do you play the king?

There is a possible bad scenario for each choice. If you play low, East wins the queen and plays a heart. This sets up West's heart suit, and he gets in with the A, which means you are down.

If you play the  $\bigstar K$ , East turns up with the ace and he leads a heart, setting up the suit for West. West gets in with the  $\bigstar Q$  and you are down.

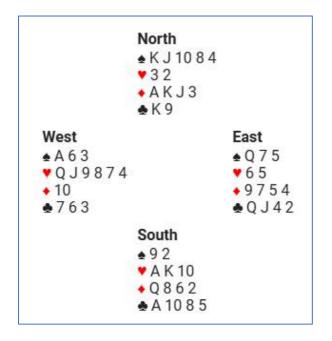
You can see that winning the heart and playing on spades is not a sure thing. Is there a solution? There is one that adds a lot to your chances. Try this: Let the ♥Q win.

You expect West to have six of them, which is useful information. West continues the suit, East following, and you win. Now you play a spade.

## **Open Hands**

If West has six hearts, one thing you can reasonably count on, you are safe. Say you finesse the ♠9 and it loses to the queen. East has no more hearts to lead, so you can win any return and set up more spade tricks. Similarly, if you lead to the ♠K, losing to the ace, East won't have any more hearts, and you can set up the spades, giving you 10 tricks.

Here is one of many possible layouts:

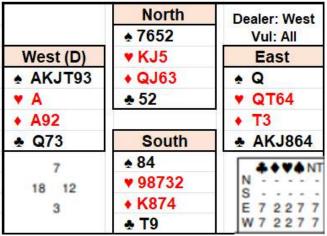


It is true that you can make a winning guess on the first round of spades, but ducking the heart gives you a better result in most cases because it shuts out West's heart suit and gives you the likelihood of 10 tricks.

For the record, the West hand is about par for weak jump overcalls when not vulnerable. I have seen worse, much worse in fact, and I have seen significantly stronger.

#### ♦ JF – Grand Slam

The second se	Julian Foster (many times NSW
A	representative) analysing
124	(bidding & play) on an
	interesting hand from a club
	session. Sourced SBC Wisdom
Julian Foster	articles.



I was asked a question about board 20 in a club game. Specifically, whatever it's possible to bid a grand slam even though EW are missing two kings.

Bidding slams is hard – many are missed even at world championship level. It is not about brute strength or honour cards though – it is more about being able to visualise where you will get tricks from and ensuring you have all suits controlled. Just because we are missing two kings doesn't mean we can't bid a grand slam – we might easily have 13 tricks with two long suits (on this hand we have 14!) Let's have a look and see how we could bid it.

Looking at the results I see two pairs did reach slam in clubs. Both started by opening the West hand 2. (strong). Even though it's a very nice hand I personally would open it 1.

It depends a little on what you play  $2 \clubsuit$  as. These days quite a few pairs agree  $2 \clubsuit$  is an unconditional game force. If you do that then this hand isn't good enough - it has 5 losers and only 7 certain tricks.

Opening 2♣ has another downside - the amount of bidding space it consumes. It's easy to get quite high before you find out what, if any, fit you have. That leaves less room later to judge whether slam is available.

If West had opened 2. I would respond 3. with East - traditionally a positive response. There is no need to jump. Indeed, it's far better NOT to jump. 3. will establish a game force (even if 2. hadn't already) and, as mentioned above, we have already used a lot of bidding space.

Hence you want to leave room for partner to tell you why they opened  $2 \ge \Box$ .

West (D)	North	East	South
1≜	Р	2♣	Р
3♠	Ρ	4♠	Р
4NT	Р	5+	Р
57	Ρ	6*	Р
6+	P	7♠	All P

Returning to the situation where West opens 1♠, East will bid 2♠ (which I am assuming is 10+ points but not game forcing – see advanced section for a bit more about this). Now what?

West should rebid 3♠ in my view. That is game forcing. Why? Because it is showing a better than minimum hand (15+) and partners response showed 10+.

Does it set spades as trumps? No. It just shows 6+ spades (usually fairly good ones – with a broken suit you might choose to bid NT or something else).

West cannot raise clubs because East doesn't have to have more than 4 for  $2\clubsuit$ . What would you respond with a 2434 10 point hand? Back to East. At this point I would raise to  $4\clubsuit$  even though I only have one. That's because it's the  $\clubsuit Q$  which is likely to be very useful to fill in gaps in partner's suit.

Bidding 3NT could be silly as I have nothing in diamonds. If I had a small singleton spade I would probably bid 4 - 4 which should be NATURAL (please don't play 4 - 4 as Gerber ace ask – it is massively inferior, there are so many situations where you need 4 - 4 to be natural, or a cue bid instead). If East does bid 4 - 4 then West can happily blackwood over that and the pair should then reach at least 6 - 4.

Over 4♠ West can also start slam explorations with 4NT key card blackwood. They have an enormous hand, partner has raised spades, they have both red aces and, most importantly of all, they have ♠Qxx in the suit partner bid first which should help to set it up. East will show 1 key card. Som the auction so far has been

West (D)	North	East	South
1.	P	2*	P
3.	P	4.	P
4NT	P	5+	P

(or 5♣ depending on what blackwood responses you play).

Now West should ask for the Queen of trumps and when East confirms they hold that card, West can bid slam. Playing matchpoints you prefer to play in spades – indeed with this auction West still doesn't even know there is a club fit.

Is it feasible to bid to a grand slam? Yes very much so provided you have some more agreements about what happens after blackwood – see advanced section. There is of course nothing to the play on this hand – you have 14 top tricks!

#### Key points to note

- Opening 2 consumes a lot of space and should be reserved for REALLY strong hands
- 2. After a 2 level response, any jump rebid by opener is game forcing because it's showing at least 15 points opposite at least 10.
- Always playing 4♣ as ace ask is not a good method – there are many situations where you want 4♣ as a natural bid or as a cue bid.
- 4. Slam bidding requires partnership trust, an appreciation of the trick taking power of hands, and an ability to ensure you have all the suits controlled.

#### More advanced

First a minor diversion – some pairs play a "2 over 1" method where a 2 level response is itself game forcing. East is worth that here with their good suit. Over that, it is then a matter of partnership agreement whether West should leave more room and just bid 2 or whether they should try and express their extra values by jumping to 3 anyway.

It is important for 2 over 1 players to discuss what bids show extra values and what bids don't.

Let us return to our auction. So far it's

West (D)	North	East	South
1♠	P	2*	P
3♠	P	4.	P
4NT	P	5+	P

Getting to use blackwood is always nice as it means we are near the slam zone. But many pairs don't discuss what happens next. There are many possible schemes but one that is almost universal over the 5♣/5♦ responses is the next bid up (in a side suit – so 5♦ or 5♥ here) asks for the Q of trumps (this is obviously not needed over 5♥/5♠ responses as they already deny and show that card).

There are variations in responses.

A method I play with my regular partner is quite popular and works very well on this hand. It tells partner about the Q but, when I have the Q, I also tell him about my side suit kings. Knowing exactly WHICH side suit king you have can help partner enormously. Responses are:

- Most economical of the trump suit or NT (5<sup>+</sup> here) = Denies the Q of trumps (this doesn't say anything about kings).
- Least economical of the trump suit of NT (5NT here) = Shows the Q of trumps but denies any side suit king.
- Bids of other suits = Show the Q of trumps and the K of this suit (if you are lucky enough to have 2 kings, show the more economical or the one you think will be of most use for partner to know about).

West (D)	North	East	South
1≜	Р	2♣	Р
3♠	Р	4♠	Р
4NT	Р	5+	Р
57	Р	6♣	Р

Here East now bids 6♣ which shows the ♣Q and the ♣K. This is music to West's ears – they now know they have 6 spade tricks, ♠AKQ and the two red aces. That's 11 tricks already. And whenever East has length in clubs (remember West doesn't know this yet) those are likely to take more tricks.

Note the enormous difference knowing East has the  $\clubsuit K$ . Just knowing East had ONE side suit king is nowhere near as useful – the  $\blacklozenge K$  or  $\blacklozenge K$  will only be worth 1 trick whereas the  $\clubsuit K$ could be worth lots as it will usually make the whole club suit run. Similar principles apply to other blackwood continuations – e.g. a bid that asks for kings (some play this as 5NT, others as the next available side suit step). You can play responses showing the number of kings, or specific kings. The latter is better in my view. In our auction after 6 t is not unreasonable for West to just bid 7 directly – they are effectively gambling that East has at least 5 clubs (so a 5-3 club fit will produce 5 tricks when they split 3-2). 5 clubs, 6 spades and 2 aces = 13.

However if West is concerned that East still might have the 2434 sort of hand shape that I mentioned earlier then they can try something else.

West (D)	North	East	South
1≜	Р	2♣	P
3♠	Р	4♠	Р
4NT	Р	5+	Р
57	Р	6*	Р
6•	Р	7♠	All P

If at this point West bids 6♦ or 6♥ this must logically be a grand slam try. Why? Because if they were only interested in 6♠ they would just have bid that directly. Therefore, when they do something else they are trying to consult their partner about bidding to 7 or not. If East is not interested they should sign off in 6♠. Here, however, East should most definitely accept that offer because they have a good 6 card club suit which partner doesn't know about (yet partner is STILL looking for grand slam all by themselves!)

Note how much trust this requires. East trusts that West would only bid 6+ or 6♥ when they have all the top controls (which West knows following the blackwood response). East also needs to appreciate what they could have had for their bidding to date – and therefore how much better their actual hand is than that! I would actually bid 7♣ over 6+ or 6♥ to try and tell partner I think that might be a playable spot. Now West knows East has long clubs so they can count 13 tricks (6♠, ◆A, ♥A and at least 5♣) and bid 7NT. At matchpoints bidding and making a grand slam always tends to score well but getting the extra 10 points for bidding 7NT is really the icing on the cake!

Open	Hands
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Brent Manle	ada Ma fror web	apted fro nley arti	enge hand om a Brer cle <b>. So</b> ur CBL Bridg	nt ced
North		Standa	rd Biddir	ng
<b>♠ Q</b> 952	West	North	East (D)	South
▼ T2			Pass	1♥
♦ AJT63	Pass	2•	Pass	2♠
	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♥
South	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠
🔺 AKJ8	Pass	5NT	Pass	6♥
▼ AK9653	Pass	6♠	All F	Pass
♦ 4		Biddi	ng Notes	
♣ 84	1 🗸	Openir	ng 5+ <del>v</del>	
	2•	GF 4+4	•	
	2♠	4+♠		
	3♠	Fit (GF	)	
	4♥ Cue			
		4NT Keycard (♠)		
	5♠			
	5NT Grand Interest			
	67	₹K		
	6♠	To Pla	у	

### BM – What are they doing?

Your partner's 5NT bid was asking about kings and guaranteed all key cards and the trump queen. When you admitted to holding the ♥K, North felt he'd done enough because with solid hearts you would surely have bid 7♥ over 5NT. His bid of 6♠ left it up to you to bid the grand. You chose a conservative approach by passing 6♠. Against your small slam, West starts with the lead of ♠Q.

Do you see a way to 12 tricks on this deal?

## Solution 4<sub>\*</sub>/S

- T1 West Leads ♣Q, taken in dummy perforce
  ▲A. You saw that if trumps split badly 5-0 you would be able to make the contract only if hearts were 3-2.
- T2 So, you played a low trump ♠2 from dummy to your ♠A. Relieved that the trumps were at worst 4-1
- T3 You then cashed the <u>VA</u>
- T4 You were about to play the ♥K when a thought flashed into your head: "What happens if the hearts are 4-1?" You pushed the ♥K back into his hand and continued instead with a low ♥3. West took this with the ♥J and East signalled for a Diamond.
- T5 In response to East's signal, West exited with the ◆9. You won with the ▲A. and asked yourself whether anything could be done if East had started with four trumps headed by the 10.
- T6 Demonstrating that there was an answer to this problem, declarer called for dummy's **≜9** and won the trick with his **▲J** discovering the 4-1 trump break!
- T7 You then ruffed a heart with dummy's high  $\underline{\diamond Q}$ ,
- T8 You then led the preserved **◆5** towards your **◆K8** and simply covered East's card, drew the last trump and claimed the balance.

Making four trumps in hand, four hearts, a heart ruff and three tricks in the minors.

The full deal:

	North	
	♠ Q952	
West	♥ T2	East (D)
<b>≜</b> 4	+ AJT63	▲ T763
♥ QJ87	🛧 AK	<b>¥</b> 4
♦ 972		♦ KQ85
🞍 QJT73	South	♣ 9652
	🔺 AKJ8	
6 <b>≜/S</b>	♥ AK9653	Vul NS
Lead &Q	♦ 4	Dir: East
	<b>♣</b> 84	



This article was derived from Bridgefeed Website

You are declarer, as South, in 6♣ in a team game.

T1 West leads the **•K**. You win the **•A** 

T2 You play the  $\underline{\ast K}$ , with both opponents following.

If you find the proper line of play, you can claim. Can you see it?

## **Best Solution**

- T3 Draw the last trump with the **<u>AQ</u>**
- T4/5 Cash the **▼AK**

T6 Now play the  $\bullet J$ , discarding the  $\bullet 3$ . West, who you know has the  $\bullet Q$  from the opening lead, wins the trick, but is endplayed.

- T7 A spade return will run round to your **▲AQ** tenace,
- T7 Whilst a diamond return will allow you to ruff in dummy and pitch the **▲Q** from your hand.
- T7 What about a heart return? If West leads the ♥Q, you can just ruff in the closed hand,
- T8 cross to dummy with the trump ace,
- T9 pitch the **▲Q** on **♥J**.
- T7 If West instead tries to get out with a low heart, cover it with the ♥J.
- If East plays the ♥Q, the heart suit was 3–3: Simply ruff, cross to dummy and take a spade pitch on a good heart.

Else pitch **AQ** if the **YJ** holds

• Thursday Comp Night –Q4 2023

The Next Event is the XMAS Teams in December



Then the 2024 Calendar starts on 28/dec with the Summer Imp Pairs (2 nights.. Canberra Warm-up}.



### 2023 Q4 Comp Night Program

2024 Q1 Tentative Comp Night Events Program						
Start Date	Ven	Туре	Grade	CC Event Name		
Thu-28-Dec	RB	Pairs	Open / Restr	Summer Imp Pairs		
Thu-25-Jan	RB	Teams	Open	Summer Teams		
Thu-07-Mar	RB	Pairs	Open	Club Mixed Pairs Championships (State Qual)		





### 2023 NSBC Congress Programme





Separate Rookie/Restricted session

#### 17 Dec RB Festive Congress Swiss Teams



## 🔶 2024 Q1 Congress Program

2024 Q1 Tentative Congress Events Program						
Dates	Ven	Туре	Grade	CC Congress Name		
Sun-7-Jan	RB	Teams	Open	Summer Teams		
Sun-28-Jan	RB	Pairs	Open	Aust Day Weekend Swiss Pairs		
Sun-11-Feb	RB	Pairs	Open	Online Swiss Pairs		
Sun-10-Mar	EL	Pairs	Open	Pauline Evans Swiss Pairs		
Sun-21-Apr	RB	Pairs	Open	Online Autumn Swiss Pairs		

#### 🔶 7 Jan RB Congress Swiss Teams





### 11 Feb RB Congress Swiss Pairs

