

## An interesting hand

This month's hand is taken from a Chairman's Cup teams event. As South you hold:

**S** 8  
**H** KJ874  
**D** KQ7  
**C** Q1095

and East passes as dealer on your right. Your first decision concerns whether you open or pass. You are not vulnerable but your ace-less hand has a number of 'holes' in it and, East having passed, you are sitting under some presumed strength with West. On balance, you decide to pass, West also passes and North opens 1H. You feel the need now to catch up so you jump to 4H and, after some thought, your partner uses RKB to identify your two kings. Not knowing about the spade singleton, he contents himself with 6H. This is passed out and East leads H10. Not much more than a minute later your partner has racked up all 13 tricks.

Worse still you see from the full hand below that all 13 tricks were available in either hearts or no trumps. Should you have been in the grand slam?

	<b>North</b>	
	<b>S</b> AJ109	
	<b>H</b> AQ62	
	<b>D</b> A3	
	<b>C</b> AK8	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
<b>S</b> K7532		<b>S</b> Q64
<b>H</b> 3		<b>H</b> 1095
<b>D</b> 10986		<b>D</b> J542
<b>C</b> 632		<b>C</b> J74
	<b>South</b>	
	<b>S</b> 8	
	<b>H</b> KJ874	
	<b>D</b> KQ7	
	<b>C</b> Q1095	

Let's go back to the bidding. There are a number of instructive points. First, the decision by South to pass looks a little conservative. He has 11 high card points, all of which are in his long suits. With the opportunity to open 1H and rebid 2C over the (most likely?) 1S response, not to mention the extra value of a singleton, I think the balance of advantage lies with South opening in second position. We'll come back to how the sequence might have gone if he had done so. The second point concerns South's response to North's 1H opener. Whilst he is well worth his 4H raise, the singleton spade might be important, so he should perhaps have considered a splinter bid of 3S (see last month's tip). The splinter makes it much easier for North to see the potential for all 13 tricks via RKB as before or via a cue bidding sequence such as: 1H 3S 4C 4H 5D 6D 7H.

However, as indicated above, perhaps the ideal sequence follows a decision by South to open in second position. If North goes quietly, initially by responding 1S, South can rebid 2C showing his 5-4 in hearts and clubs. Then, if North sees the advantage of using 4<sup>th</sup> Suit Forcing with 2D, South can complete the picture of his hand by raising to 3D, showing at most a singleton spade. This view of South's distribution together with reasonable assumptions about where his points are for an opening bid, enables North to 'see' very good prospects for all 13 tricks via five hearts, seven tricks in the minors and SA. Playing pairs, he would certainly bid 7NT but at teams he would bid 7H to give himself the additional chance of a spade ruff if that were to be needed for the 13<sup>th</sup> trick. North's 'quiet' initial sequence represents an important lesson. Providing you use bids which are forcing for at least one round it often pays to go quietly in the early rounds to allow your partner the opportunity to describe their hand accurately and, in turn, you the opportunity to judge the final contract with greater confidence.

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