



Gunnar Hallberg

# Play a slam with me

Seniors World Champion Gunnar Hallberg shares his expertise

YOU have reached 7♦ as South and West leads the king of spades. Plan the play.

♠	A J 6 3 2
♥	A Q 4
♦	Q J 5
♣	J 6
♠	4
♥	8 7
♦	A K 10 9 7 6
♣	A K Q 5

Being 26 years old and suffering from hubris, I had no problem reaching 7♦, after partner opened 1NT (15-17). The bidding hadn't been very scientific, so I was lucky to find a very useful dummy.

Before playing from dummy, spend some time counting your tricks and form a plan. Many a contract has gone down, and many a pound has been lost at rubber bridge, by not sticking to this habit.

Here you count to twelve tricks – a good start. Where to find a thirteenth trick?

The possibilities are:

1. Heart finesse.
2. Trumps 2-2 (draw trumps, discard heart losers on your clubs, and ruff a heart in dummy).
3. Spades 4-3 (ruff spades good).
4. Something else might develop.

An experienced player knows that if you approach your tasks in the right order, something good and unexpected may come your way. That is what happened to me on this deal.

Looking at the possibilities for developing a thirteenth trick, where to begin? You are in dummy after winning the first trick with the ace of spades. If you want to set up a spade trick, you'd better start now before you run out of entries, so you try that line first. Spade ruff, both follow; a trump to dummy's queen – West plays the eight, East the four. Another spade ruff, this time with the ace of trumps, East throwing a heart. Big or small, ignore it – the point is that spades are 5-2! Another trump to dummy's jack reveals that the eight was West's only diamond. At this point, you should see the significance of that eight of diamonds: East started with ♦4-3-2!

You ruff another spade in hand, go back to dummy with a heart to the ace in order to lead dummy's last spade and ruff it with your last trump, then you re-enter dummy with a club to the jack to reach this ending:

♠	—
♥	Q 4
♦	5
♣	6
♠	—
♥	8
♦	—
♣	A K Q

Not without excitement, you draw the last trump with that beautiful five of diamonds! Discarding the heart eight leaves you with nothing but winners in your own hand.

As East turned out to hold the king of hearts and only three clubs, no other line would therefore have worked.

West, who led a 'safe' king of spades from ♠K-Q-10-9-7 was unfortunate to find that any other suit would have beaten the grand slam! □

## PETER THOMPSON 1929 – 2010



PETER THOMPSON died last March, following a long period of being unwell. He was a co-founder of Tewkesbury Bridge Club nearly fifty years ago, and during that time had been Treasurer, Scorer, Secretary, Chairman, Chief Tournament Director and finally President. He had also been an active member of Cheltenham Bridge Club and virtually single-handedly formed the Gloucestershire Teams-of-Four League in 1977; there are now over forty teams playing in five divisions. Peter also started the U3A group in Tewkesbury in 1993, which now plays twice a week.

Peter received the Dimmie Fleming Award in 2007 in recognition of his services to bridge over many years.

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