

*'It was the best of slams,  
It was the worst of slams'*

Or

## A Tale of Two Grand Slams

*By Neil Kimelman*

Humility in this game is good. Even the best players are not perfect. We all make mistakes at some time. Despite my successes, I try not to over rate my ability, so that these inevitable errors are easier to take.

I also try to take some learning from each session I play, and realistically gauge how well I and my partner/teammates play.

In this case I was playing with a local expert and we bid a grand slam on the first and the last boards of the local matchpoint game. The first one we were off a cashable ace. This was the better of the two...I digress. Let's start at the beginning.

With E-W vul, you hold as south: ♠54 ♥AQ10865 ♦K105 ♣AQ.  
The bidding went:

W	N	E	S
-	1♥	P	2NT <sup>1</sup>
P	3♠ <sup>2</sup>	P	4♣ <sup>3</sup>
P	4♠ <sup>4</sup>	P	4NT <sup>5</sup>
P	5♥ <sup>6</sup>	P	7♥ <sup>7</sup>

All pass

<sup>1</sup>Jacoby

<sup>2</sup>Shortness

<sup>3</sup>Cue bid

<sup>4</sup>Void

<sup>5</sup>Key card

<sup>6</sup>Two keycards

<sup>7</sup>Well that was easy

You are not worried when partner says you have a better hand than he, but you start to clue in when he says to the opponents, 'Sorry guys'. The full deal:

♠ A  
♥ KJ9742

<p>♠ QJ87 ♥ - ♦ AJ987 ♣ Q764</p>	<p>♦ 2 ♣ KJ1092</p> <div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">N W     E S</p> </div> <p>♠ 54 ♥ AQ10865 ♦ K105 ♣ AQ</p>	<p>♠ K109632 ♥ 3 ♦ Q643 ♣ 85</p>
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My expert partner, pulled trumps and quickly disposed of dummy's three diamonds on the good clubs

### The Lessons from Grand Slam I

1. I have always played a 2<sup>nd</sup> cuebid of shortness is a void. Obviously my partner had a different point of view. What is your partnership agreement?
2. Recovering from a bad start or fix. The E-W pair ended up with a good game. One player was experienced enough to realize bad luck happens, even on the 1<sup>st</sup> board. And obviously did enough to instill the same outlook in their partner.
3. Notice the cue bid of 4♣. I realized that partner may have a void in spades, and I wanted to give him an opportunity to show me this feature.

### Grand Slam II

Here was the auction that my partner and I perpetrated:

<p>North</p> <p>♠ K Q 8 7 ♥ 10 3 ♦ A K 5 ♣ A 4 3 2</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ A 5 3 ♥ A K Q J ♦ 10 ♣ Q 10 9 8 7</p>
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W	N	E	S
-	-	-	1♣ <sup>1</sup>
P	1♠ <sup>2</sup>	P	2♥ <sup>3</sup>
P	3♦ <sup>4</sup>	P	3♠ <sup>5</sup>
P	5NT <sup>6</sup>	P	6♣ <sup>7</sup>
P	7♣ <sup>8</sup>	All pass	

<sup>1</sup>A good start

<sup>2</sup>Bidding normally, before the insanity set in

<sup>3</sup>To me rebidding 2♣ is criminal, and 2♠ is highly mis-descriptive.

<sup>4</sup>Thumping of the chest saying, 'I have a good hand!'

<sup>5</sup>Likely 3-4-1-5, 3-4-0-6, or even, 3-3-1-6 shape.

<sup>6</sup>Pick a slam

<sup>7</sup>OK

<sup>8</sup>Well maybe I should show my club support...

After it went all pass I said, 'At least we are not off the ♣A.' LHO with a slight hitch let a diamond. I crossed to the ♥A, led the ♣Q and it went all small! I told partner so far so good, we are halfway there, and led a club to the ace and mighty was the fall, and 2140 was the score.

LHO asked if there was anything she could do better...no I am kidding. But she did ask was there any way she should know to cover the ♣Q.

### The Lessons from Grand Slam II

1. The proper bid at north's 2<sup>nd</sup> round of bidding was 3♣. This shows a game forcing hand with three or more clubs. In that way key card ask could have been employed and if nothing else, avoiding the need to have to embarrass West.
2. West stopped thinking. I had shown my distribution and had only five clubs as I had already shown a diamond at trick one. If I had the ♣J I was going to finesse. Her only chance was to cover.
3. Make sure you understand the opponent's auctions so that you have best chance to find the maximal defence, including any false cards or the like.
4. You should have inferred that I did not react to reaching such a poor slam. I went on to play in a reasonable tempo, as I would any decent contract! (actually being the last hand I was looking forward to my post game drink more than normal!)
5. The longer you stew and think of your arguments and defences to partner's, in the inevitable post-mortem discussion, the sooner the opponents will realize you have a big problem(s)! Try to play normal and hope for a miracle!

### Epilogue


The rest of our game was only fair, but with these two boards we scored 62.29% to trounce the 2<sup>nd</sup> place pair who scored 62.13%. If they read this article they will realize

our victory was not quite deserving. Maybe next time it will be...


### Solution to Play or Defend (advanced problem)?

**Editor's note:** *In these problems you must determine who will prevail if all sides play perfectly, declarer or the defenders?*

**Contract:** 6xCx by South

	xSx 3 xHx K 6 xDx A Q 3 2 xCx K J 10 7 3 2	
xSx 7 6 5 4 xHx 8 7 5 xDx K J 8 7 6 xCx Q		xSx Q J 10 8 2 xHx A J 10 3 xDx 10 xCx 8 6 5
	xSx A K 9 xHx Q 9 5 4 xDx 9 5 4 xCx A 9 4	

At first blush it looks like a simple Morton's Fork Coup. Assume a heart lead, play low from dummy, and East must put in the ten. You win the queen. If you now pitch the xHxK on the xSxAK, you cannot ruff the two diamond losers as east will ruff in. Nor can you pull trump as you have two diamond losers... or do you? Declarer should win the heart, pull trump, take the diamond finesse and xDxA, and run trump to reach this ending:

	xSx 3 xHx K xDx 3 2 xCx 7	
xSx 7 xHx 8 xDx K J 8 xCx -		xSx Q J 10 xHx A J xDx - xCx -
	xSx A K 9 xHx 9 5 xDx - xCx -	

On the lead of the xCx7 east is stymied. If he throws a spade, the nine will be declarer's 12<sup>th</sup> trick. If instead east discards the xHxJ, declarer will throw a spade from his hand, lead the xHxK and score the heart as the 12<sup>th</sup> trick.

**However**, if you chose to declare you chose wrong, as a spade lead will destroy the communication to effect the squeeze. If declarer plays the xHxK early, East

can win and must return the xHxJ. If declarer runs their minor suit tricks this will be the ending:

<p>xSx 7  xHx 8  xDx K J 8  xCx -</p>	<p>xSx -  xHx K 6  xDx 3 2  xCx 7</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center;"> <p>N  W     E  S</p> </div> <p>xSx A 9  xHx Q 9 5  xDx -  xCx -</p>	<p>xSx Q J  xHx A J 10  xDx -  xCx -</p>
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On the lead of the last trump east can pitch the xSxJ. If declarer discards the xSx9, East scores two heart tricks by force. If instead declarer throws the xHx5, east ducks the xHxK, and wins two hearts. If instead declarer tries a sneaky xHx6 east can rise with the ace and lock declarer in dummy with two diamond losers.