

Dealer: N

Vul: All

♠ 10972

♥ 865

♦ KQ8

♣ 1072

N	E	S	W
P	1H	P	4C (1)
P	4D (2)	P	4NT
P	5D (3)	P	6H
P	P		

(1) Splinter – 4 card trump support, singleton or void in clubs, enough for game.

(2) 1st or 2nd round control in diamonds and slam interest.

(3) 0 or 3 keycards (obviously 3 on this bidding)

What should South lead against the small slam?

Defence 10 – Leading Against a Suit Small Slam

One of the hardest things in bridge is the opening lead against a suit small slam. It is very easy to give a trick away and allow the slam to make, or to miss a chance to set the slam.

There are 2 strongly opposing considerations:

- (1) The opponents have a massive majority of points and it is very easy to finesse yourself or partner on the opening lead.
- (2) With such massive power, the opponents might be able to set up a suit or suits to get losers away. We might have to lead aggressively to get these losers now.

You have to judge the situation on the bidding and on your hand. A couple of general pointers:

- (1) If you suspect you have most of the points for your side (eg 8 points against the small slam) you probably should go passive/solid as partner has very little and you are likely to finesse yourself.
- (2) If it sounds like there is a long suit in dummy, you might have to try an aggressive lead to try to get 2 tricks now before losers are thrown away on the long suit.
- (3) Banging down an unsupported ace is all the rage in expert circles. It is an aggressive lead, as it could be developing a suit for declarer. I would certainly do it if I had anything which looked like a trump winner ie I want to make sure the ace gets a trick now and hopefully I get an unavoidable trump trick later.

Dealer: N
Vul: All

	♠ Q6543	
	♥ J	
	♦ 6	
	♣ KQ8654	
♠ AK8		♠ J
♥ AQ93		♥ K10742
♦ 109543		♦ AJ72
♣ 3		♣ AJ9
	♠ 10972	
	♥ 865	
	♦ KQ8	
	♣ 1072	

N	E	S	W
P	1H	P	4C (1)
P	4D (2)	P	4NT
P	5H (3)	P	6H
P	P		

On the hand in question, the unfortunate South led the DK. Now declarer only had one diamond loser and made the slam.

The 4D control bid strongly suggesting the possibility of the DA in East's hand should have alerted South to the possibility of getting 2 diamond tricks if they sit quietly. Given the splinter bid showing club shortage and at least 9 trumps held by the opponents, a trump lead looks reasonably safe and might help by cutting down on ruffs.

If South's hand had been:

♠ A972
♥ 865
♦ KQ8
♣ 1072

Then I would certainly have led the DK in an effort to expose immediately a diamond and a spade for the defence.