

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

<p>♠ 10 4 2 ♥ K J 9 5 ♦ J 10 9 6 ♣ 9 8</p>		<p>♠ A K Q 7 6 3 ♥ Q 7 3 ♦ — ♣ A K Q J</p>	<p>♠ — ♥ A 10 8 ♦ Q 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ 10 6 3 2</p>
<p>♠ J 9 8 5 ♥ 6 4 2 ♦ A K 8 ♣ 7 5 4</p>			

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

Auction Commentary: North has a two (two-and-a-half) loser hand and opens 2 ♣. South responds 2 ♦, which is a waiting bid. This bid is NOT alerted (strange, but true). North's 2 ♠ bid is FORCING, South may not pass. With a fit, but without an Ace or a King, South would jump to 4 ♠. This is the concept of fast arrival, it would tell partner not to expect any controls in their hand, only a fit. Since South does have controls, they bid 3 ♠, and the side is in a game force.

North would like to be in slam if South has controls in hearts, but wants to stay out of slam otherwise. Instead of guessing, they can begin cue bidding. North's 4 ♣ bid shows a control in clubs, and asks partner to respond with their own controls. South dutifully bids 4 ♦ to show a control in the diamond suit. North now retreats to 4 ♠. This says, "I don't have a heart control. If you don't either, please pass, otherwise go on." South dutifully passes.

Opening Lead: ♥ A. When the opponents tell you that they don't control a suit, you should lead that suit.

Play Commentary: You will take the last 11 tricks after they take the first two, unless you were lucky to escape a heart lead, in which case you can pitch two hearts from your hand on the diamonds and make 6.

Takeaway: We use Blackwood when we aren't worried about losing the AK of a side suit and when we don't have a void. Cuebidding will often tell us what we want to know. If partner had offered 4 ♥, instead of 4 ♦. We would have taken our chances in slam.

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A Q J 7 6 3		
♥ Q 5 4		
♦ K 2		
♣ 6 3		
♠ 10 5 2	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: green; padding: 5px; margin: 0 5px;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K 9 8 4
♥ 7		♥ J 10
♦ 10 7 6 3		♦ 9 8 5
♣ A 10 9 8 2		♣ K Q 7 4
♠ —		
		♥ A K 9 8 6 3 2
		♦ A Q J 4
		♣ J 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	5 ♥
All pass			

Auction Commentary: It is important for North to support hearts at their second turn; once you have found a major-suit fit, let partner know right away. Do not jump to 4♥ because you have only 12 HCP. Partner has an unlimited hand and may need a little room.

When North opens the bidding AND shows at least 3 hearts, South is well on their way to bidding a slam. However, we don't want to bid a slam and lose the first two club tricks off the top if we don't have to. South cue bids 4♦. Don't cue bid a void in partner's opening suit.

When North hears 4♦ from South, they should suspect that South does not have a club control. Given that, they could easily rebid 4♥ to avoid playing at the 5-level. When they cue bid 4♠ instead, South confirms what North should have known; the side has no club control, by bidding 5♥. North gets the message and passes.

Opening Lead: ♣A. This isn't a situation where we revert to never leading an unsupported Ace. When the opponents are cue bidding, and there is a suit they don't mention before stopping below slam, that is the suit you should lead.

Play Commentary: You will take 11 to 13 tricks depending on whether or not the opponents cash both of their clubs.

Takeaway: Before you understood cuebidding, South might have simply jumped to six and hoped for the best. That sometimes works, but on balance, the opponents are more likely than not to find the killing lead, if there is one. Use cue bids to stay out of bad slams. Blackwood is not useful when you have a void; if partner says they have only 1 Ace, how will you know which it is?

Board 12
 West Deals
 N-S Vul

	♠ 10 8 4 2		
	♥ 9		
	♦ A Q J 10		
	♣ 9 8 5 3		
♠ A K Q	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 6 5	
♥ A K Q J 5 2		♥ 10 8 7 3	
♦ 9 3		♦ 5 4	
♣ K 7		♣ A Q J 10 6	
	♠ J 9 7 3		
	♥ 6 4		
	♦ K 8 7 6 2		
	♣ 4 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	5 ♥	All pass

Auction Commentary: West's jump to 3 ♥ sets the trump suit and is forcing to game. East is required to cue bid a control if they have one, so they dutifully bid 4 ♣. West is worried about the diamond suit, so they cue bid 4 ♠. They are telling partner that they need a control in the diamond suit to bid a slam. East doesn't have one, so they return to 5 ♥, which ends the auction.

Here, West didn't have a void, but it would still have been a mistake to use Blackwood. We shouldn't use Blackwood if we have two fast losers in a side suit.

Opening Lead: ♦ A. This seems like it could give up a trick, but it won't. When the opponents cue bid two suits and stop short of slam, they are telling you they have no diamond controls. The rule about not leading an unsupported Ace goes out the window if there has been cue bidding.

Play Commentary: Nothing to it, the defenders will get their diamonds or they won't.

Takeaway: Use Blackwood when you (1) don't have a void and you (2) don't have two fast losers in a side suit. Otherwise, use cue bids to determine if you should be in slam.