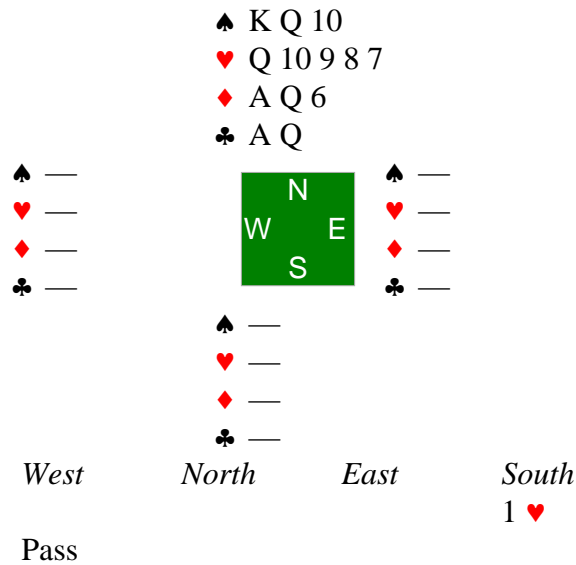


## Hurry Up - Or Wait?

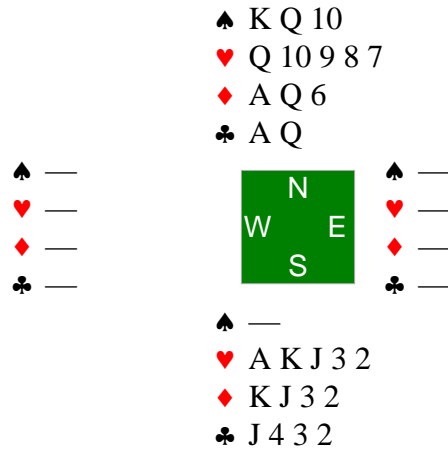


I don't know about you, but I certainly have on many an occasional lived thru the frustration of - "Hurry Up and Wait!" Patience is golden they say, but in the game of bridge, sometimes you have to take bold moves, and sometimes you are better off taking your time. One of the most common decisions - as well as one of the most important - we as bridge players must make time and time again is should we "Hurry Up or Wait". That'll be the theme of today's Shark's Pointers, and we'll look at a variety of hands in which one must either go slow or take quick action in bidding, defense and declarer play. At the end, we should be able to come up with some guidelines that won't be 100% gurarantees, but should help us on a vast majority of these decisions.

In the first hand depicted above, South opens the bidding 1 ♥. Let's say that neither side is vulnerable and we are playing matchpoints. After pass by West to you, it is your call. Before you decide what to bid, I want you to think about the following questions. '

- 1) How many high card points do you have?
- 2) Approximately how many high card points does partner have?
- 3) Based on the total, what level do you belong in, what suit, or NT?
- 4) What info would I like to find out, and how would I best proceed?

## Hurry Up - Or Wait? Early in the Auction



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 NT
Pass	6 ♣	Pass	6 ♦
Pass	7 ♥	All pass	
7 ♥ by South			

As you can see, NS are ice-cold for 7H! While North may think he only needs to know about key cards and kings, on this layout where South has a spade void, it will be very difficult to intelligently bid to the cold grand slam if North is in a hurry and jumps to 4 NT. Many of you have heard me jokingly refer to this kind of abrupt bidding as being in a hurry to "Catch a Bus"!

Here's an expert auction to 7H as shown above that requires some explanation.

2 NT was a forcing heart raise. Most players play this today. South's response of 3S showed spade shortness. North now bid RKCB, and South bid 5 NT which showed an even number of key cards and a VOID. Having started with 19 hcp opposite an opener, North was certainly going to drive to at least 6H. Armed with the knowledge that his partner had the AK of hearts and a spade void. North still has not in a hurry. He now bid 6C, which said, "partner, if you have the K of clubs, bid 7H." South's 6D bid said, "Partner, I don't have the K of clubs, but I do have the K of diamonds". Now North felt he had sufficient information to bid 7H with a great deal of confidence. Either he and his partner had at least 4 sure diamond tricks, or if all else failed, he could fall back on the club finesse,

Slams don't come along very often - especially grand slams. When they do, those who have good bidding tools and understandings will do a lot better than those who don't. Some of the subtleties of slam bidding - especially void showing responses and K asking bids - are important things to review with your favorite regular partners.

## Hurry Up - Or Wait? Late in the Auction

♠ —	♠ K Q 10	♠ —			
♥ —	♥ Q 10 9 8 7	♥ —			
♦ —	♦ A Q 6	♦ —			
♣ —	♣ A Q	♣ —			
<table style="border: 2px solid green; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>			N	W E	S
N					
W E					
S					
♠ —	♠ J 5	♠ —			
♥ —	♥ K J 5 4 3	♥ —			
♦ —	♦ K J	♦ —			
♣ —	♣ K J 10 9	♣ —			

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
Pass	2 NT	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♣
Pass	5 ♠	Pass	5 NT
All pass			
5 NT by North			

Now let's look at a different scenario. Suppose after the auction starts with South opening 1 ♥, North bids 2 NT and South now rebids 4 ♥. This, as you know, shows no shortness and a minimum hand with no singletons or voids. South's bid of 5 ♣ was disappointing to partner as it showed 1 keycard. As you can see, if North bid a slam, he would go down as he is off 2 aces. North's 5 ♠ bid was a relay to 5 NT. It clearly wasn't to play, as North had already promised 4 card heart support. So South, appropriately bid 5N, which North passed. North did take a chance by bidding 5 ♠ instead of signing off in 5 ♥, but, as you can see, he was concerned about protecting his tenaces in 3 suits, and felt the reward of scoring 460 instead of 450 was worth the risk.

Sometimes you have to prudently take your time, and still take a bold bid.

Even with a 5-5 trump fit, sometimes it scores better to play in NT!

## Hurry Up - Or Wait? On Opening Lead

North Deals  
Both Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥
All pass			

6 ♥ by South

On this hand, you are sitting West and have a difficult opening lead problem. It seems clear that you have a trump trick - unless you lead one, so that is not a likely option. The question is should you lead away from one of your kings or lead a club. The first things you should do is ask yourself is what the opps hands might look like, and how many high card points your partner is likely to hold on this bidding. You've got 9, the opps bid to slam, so that wont leave a lot of room for points in partner's hand. From the bidding, the dummy will have 1 diamond, 4 hearts and probably 5 or more clubs. It is not likely he has an ace, He might have the Q of spades, however. If you don't make the opening lead of a spade away from your King - as risky as this might be- any spade losers declarer may have started with are likely to disappear on dummy's clubs.

This is not the time to sit around and wait - you must hurry up and lead a spade!

## Hurry Up Or Wait - During the Play

South Deals  
None Vul

	♠ A Q 10 8 6										
	♥ 8										
	♦ A Q 10										
	♣ K 10 7 5										
♠ 4 3 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ —
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 10 7 6		♥ K J 9 5 4									
♦ 8 7		♦ 6 5 4 3 2									
♣ A 9 8 6		♣ Q 4 3									
	♠ K J 9 7 5										
	♥ A 3 2										
	♦ K J 9										
	♣ J 2										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			

6 ♠ by South

Our final example today contains an extremely important tip that I hope you won't ever have an opportunity to use against me!

After the bidding as shown, West led a heart o the King and declarer's Ace.

As you can see, Declarer's fate will depend upon how he plays the club suit. If he plays up to dummy's K he makes it, if he finesses West for the Q instead, down he'll go!

In a situation like this, you, as declarer need to hurry up and play a club from hand at trick 2! WHY? It seems like you have a guess and half the time you can make it you'll guess right and half the time you'll guess wrong. The key to winning bridge is shifting the odds ever so slightly at times - in your favor. West knows you don't have any heart or spade losers, but on the bidding you very well may have started with a singleton club and from his perspective, you will certainly rise with the K if he ducks. So it is much more likely that West will rise with the Ace of clubs if he has it if you play right away. If he plays low without hesitation, odds are he doesn't have the Ace and finessing for the Q will probably be the winning play. But here's the important tip. Be careful to lead the 2 of clubs from your hand - not the J! If you lead the J, West can see you will have to guess whether to rise or play low. If you lead the 2, it will appear as your only logical play will be the K. If you even draw one round of trumps before clubs, East will be able to signal that he doesn't have the diamond K, and West will know his only chance is to get 2 club tricks.

Hope this helps! To summarize, deciding whether or not to hurry up or wait is critical in many aspects of the game of bridge - bidding, defense, play and opening lead!