

Slams the Allen key *by Derrick Browne*

The interclub Swiss Pairs in Ryde on 6 February was won by Kelela and Tony Allen, thanks largely to these two slams – even though one went down.

Dealer South, EW vul.

NORTH
S AQ
H KQ82
D QJT95
C A9

WEST
S KJT7632
H 73
D A32
C T

EAST
S 54
H 95
D 64
C QJ75432

SOUTH
S 98
H AJT64
D K87
C K86

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Tony</i>		<i>Kelela</i>
3S	4NT	Pass	1H
Pass	6H	All pass	5D

The first question is whether South should open. The hand has only 11 HCP but it does have a 5-card major headed by the A-J-10, plus two kings. The Allens play a strong club system so any opening other than 1C denies over 15 HCP, making it easier to get in on a hand like South's.

Despite the adverse vulnerability, West risked 3S but that only served to make Tony, as North, figure that the spade finesse would work, making slam even more enticing. Kelela showed one ace in reply to Blackwood so Tony bid 6H, figuring the only real danger was that there could be two diamond losers, if Kelela had the Q-J of clubs instead of the DK, for example. West led a club so Kelela did not even need the spade finesse, as she had time to draw trumps then knock out the DA to set up diamonds for a spade discard.

Dealer East, EW vul.

NORTH
S JT9876432
H T
D K82
C -

WEST
S -
H AKJ62
D Q6
C AKJ842

EAST
S K
H Q9543
D AJ953
C Q5

SOUTH
S AQ5
H 87
D T74
C T9763

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	<i>Tony</i>		<i>Kelela</i>
4NT	5S	1H	Pass
6H	Pass	Dble	Pass
Dble	All pass	Pass	6S

Holding a void, West's 4NT for aces is not the way to find out whether to bid small slam or grand; if East has the SA that is wasted, while the DA is gold. Better might be for West to bid 2NT Jacoby (shows game points and 4+ support for opener's major), hoping to then control bid to find out if East has the DA.

Over the actual 4NT bid, Tony was in the unusual situation of starting the bidding for his side at the 5-level, figuring that he would like better spades "but nine cards is nine cards". Against the final contract of 6S, East made the unfortunate lead of the DA, allowing Tony to hold his loss to 300 points, a great sacrifice against a vulnerable slam.

If East-West bid 7H, should North sacrifice in 7S? No – North should double. Known as Lightner, double of a slam asks partner for an unusual lead, generally because the doubler has a void and is hoping to ruff. This happened at one table and South found the club lead, guessing that her long suit was partner's void, allowing the grand slam to be defeated.