

Dir: South		♠ A 8	
Vul: None		♥ 3 2	
		♦ 7 5 4 3 2	
		♣ A 10 8 7	
♠ 9 7 2		♠ K 6	
♥ 9 8 5 4		♥ 7 6	
♦ 6		♦ K J 10 9 8	
♣ K J 4 3 2		♣ Q 9 6 5	
		♠ Q J 10 5 4 3	
		♥ A K Q J 10	
		♦ A Q	
		♣ —	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Dbl	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠

Opening lead: ♦6

Bidding commentary: East's double of North's artificial 2♦ response is a lead-directing penalty double. It shows length and strength. It is not a takeout double. North is strapped for an intelligent rebid after South bids 2♠. A raise to 3♠ is reasonable. Put a club in with your spades if you feel squeamish supporting with a doubleton. As South, you need the ♠K or ♠A in partner's hand to make a small slam a virtual lay down. Although it is likely North has a spade honor, it is not a sure thing. North is allowed to raise with three or four low spades. Worse, Blackwood won't help you. If partner has one ace, it might be the ♣A. Also, finding the ♠K is not so easy either.

There is a way: Exclusion key card Blackwood. After major-suit agreement, a leap over game (must be a leap and must be over game) shows a void in the jump suit. Not only does it show a void, but it also asks partner for aces, excluding the ace in the jump suit. Also included in the response is the king of the agreed suit. All in all, there are four important (key) cards and the response is by steps. The first step, 5♦ in this case, shows zero. The second step, 5♥, = 1. The third step, 5♠, = 2. After North shows one keycard – the ♠K or ♠A – bid the slam. It should be cold. If partner shows two keycards, bid 7♠. Notice that North does not count the ♣A in the response. It is very important when responding to Exclusion Blackwood not to count the ace of the jump suit.

Play commentary: As South, facing the obvious singleton lead, try to think clearly. Don't take the spade finesse. Don't even think of taking the spade finesse! If it loses, the diamond return will be ruffed and down you go. Instead, cross to the ♠A, discard your winning diamond on the ♣A (applause), and lead a spade. South wins and plays a diamond. No problem. Ruff high, draw trumps and claim (more applause).

Defensive commentary: As West, when South leads a spade, first play the 7 and then the 2. A high-low in the trump suit (called the trump echo) shows another trump and the desire to ruff something. The trump echo is often used after leading a singleton.