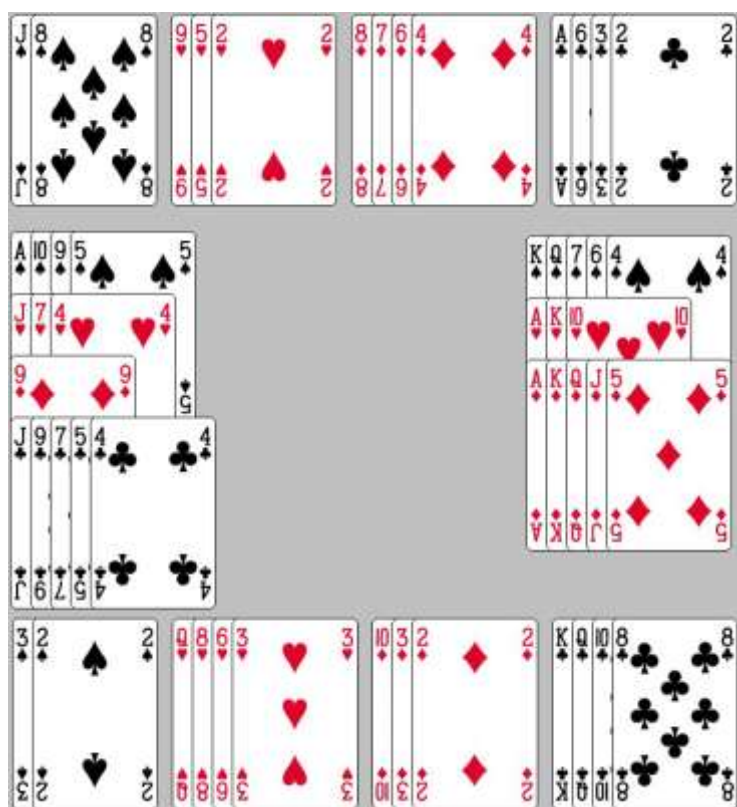


Looking for slam with a void means that the normal Blackwood doesn't provide enough information. Culbertson or Josephine is a technique for getting critical information leading to slams. For example, last Wednesday the following hand, the E/W pair settled for 4S when a grand slam was possible!



East who opened 2C. Partner replied with 2D as she only had 5 HCP.

Auction				
West	North	East	South	
Pass	Pass	2♣!	Pass	
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass	

East re-bid with 2S and partner happily jumped to 4S which remained the contract.

Instead of passing, East should now go looking for slam but 4NT is no good as she has a void. If West answers with one Ace, East doesn't know which one! If it is the Ace of Clubs, it is about as useful as a hip pocket on a singlet. BUT if it is the Ace of Spades, it is worth its weight in gold.

There is a bid called Culbertson or Josephine Grand Slam Force which only asks for the TOP Honour in the trump suit (used mainly for the majors). Here the bid is 5S. It allows the partnership to use jumps to 5 of the Suit above the agreed trump suit, to initiate the Grand Slam Force.

With the Ace of Spades, West would bid 6S and East can calmly bid 7S.

Play				
	West	North	East	South
1	4♣	6♣	*4♠	K♣
2	5♠	8♠	*Q♠	2♠
3	*A♠	J♠	6♠	3♠
4	9♦	7♦	*J♦	2♦
5	4♥	4♥	*Q♦	3♦
6	7♥	6♥	*K♦	10♦
7	5♣	8♦	*A♦	3♥
8	7♣	3♣	*5♦	8♣
9	J♥	2♥	*K♥	6♥
10	9♣	5♥	*A♥	8♥
11	*9♠	9♥	10♥	Q♥
12	J♣	2♣	*7♠	10♣
13	10♠	A♣	*K♠	Q♣

East has 1st, 2nd and 3rd round control in Spades, up to 4th round control in Diamonds, 1st and 2nd round control in Hearts and complete control of Clubs because of the void.

If the King of Clubs had been led (as the most recommended lead), the play would proceed as shown on the left with E/W making a grand Slam.

Unfortunately, no one bid it on the night.

Happy Bridging, Bal