

## Interesting hand 2 : Board 2 Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February.

I have tried to find a hand which carries on a similar theme to our previous analysis so we are looking at cards for E/W this time which will make a grand slam in either spades or no trumps but only one small slam was bid regrettably in clubs going two down!

Are we all missing something? Here we can assume that E will pass (I hope) as will S. He may have 6 hearts but only to the 10 and only 4 HCPs. For these two reasons as well as vulnerability an opening would be wrong.

The buck now passes to W who has 21HCPs. Either through a Benji sequence or as an opening, 2NTs looks obvious, notwithstanding the less than perfect shape. Now it gets more difficult. 10HCPs is not enough for a quantitative 4NTs. Looking for a minimum of 33 for a small slam in No Trumps, at best the pair have 32.

What else? It seems a little defeatist to bid 3NTs although certainly not incorrect. The problem is that the long suit is clubs and a bid of this suit at the 4 level takes the pair beyond 3NTs as 3Cs will be Stayman (see below). I would not recommend the bid but, if it is made, what does W do? A pass is unattractive. 4NTs would be Blackwood. The only viable option is 4S. It would be very daring for E to go on relying on his 3 card support but he just might take the view that 5S is safe if his partner has only two aces. Blackwood would follow such a decision.

If the pair are playing Stayman over 2NTs, E has no 4 card major so 3Cs is not an option. However, there is a convention which can help. Puppet Stayman. This seeks a 5 card major from partner. The sequence following a Puppet Stayman 3Cs can be complex (but easy to remember!). Here it is simple as W will reply with 3S. This of course is the "right" suit! Now with an 8 card fit and at least 31 HCPs (or 30 for the non-Benji players) a slam begins to look possible.

A cue bid of 4H could follow leading to a contract in 6S.

I mentioned last time that the key to bidding a slam is to recognise when a slam is possible and then take steps to investigate. Here the NT route is unattractive but, if the pair have a means of identifying a 5:3 major fit, through design after a puppet bid or by mistake through 4Cs, they may find the unbeatable slam.

In play you use the long club to avoid the diamond finesse.

Dlr: East  
Vul: N/S

♠ 10 4 3  
♥ J  
♦ K 7 6 4 3  
♣ J 10 5 4

Optimum  
NS -1520

♠ A Q 9 7 2  
♥ K Q 6 4  
♦ A Q  
♣ A 3

NORTH  
WEST  
2  
EAST  
SOUTH

♠ J 8 5  
♥ A 9  
♦ 10 8 5  
♣ K Q 9 6 2

5  
21 10  
4

♠ K 6  
♥ 10 8 7 5 3 2  
♦ J 9 2  
♣ 8 7

♠ ♡ ♢ ♣ N  
N - - - -  
S - - - -  
E 5 3 3 7 7  
W 6 3 4 7 7