13 Tricks

At the end of the evening the chat was “Did you bid the grand?” This was somewhat bemusing, but it transpired that it was Board 8, one of the set we didn’t play.

Everyone played in 6NT with thirteen top tricks available, A combined 35 points between the hands. Can it legitimately be bid?

West as dealer has 21 points and a five-card suit. Most would open 2N, but with crisp values it is not outrageous to open 2C. I suspect that 2N is the common bid. East with 14 points is going to slam. The practical bid is 6N, but is there room to investigate a fit?

With N/S passing throughout, the bidding may start

2N – 3C as some sort of stayman to check for a major fit.

3D denies a major or 3N as part of a 5 card stayman response system. No matter East can bid 4D to show a suit and now agreements come into place. Bypassing 3N should show slam interest. West can accept the invitation by bidding 4H. This cannot be a suit as he has already denied four hearts. It must be a control agreeing diamonds. East can bid 4N (RKCB) in diamonds. West shows four Keycards.

Now is the crux of the problem, can East ask for specific kings?

Say it has continued

4H – 4N

5C (1/4) – 5D would ask for the Q, not needed here, so next step 5H asks for specific kings.

5S shows the KS. Some play 5N here as two kings. That would make it easier to bid. Still the diamonds could be 4-1 missing the jack.

What does East know now? Partner has three aces and two kings= 18 points and anything between two and four more points. He could bid 6H asking partner to did 7D with the KH, but now you are committed to 6N giving up on the diamond fit.

How many sure tricks? 4 spades, 1 heart, 4 diamonds, 2 clubs. He doesn’t know about the fifth diamond and QC which makes the Grand cold.

Could West have wrestled control after 4D? Is 4N to play or KC in diamonds. Even then how do discover has QJ of spades.

Despite and the perceived bidding advantages, it doesn’t get you any nearer than the pragmatist who bid 2N – 6N.

Just because 7N/S/D makes thirteen tricks, it is no disgrace to play in six.