

London buses

Rakesh Kumar

Perhaps grand slams are a bit like London buses – you wait ages for one and then two come along at once! Certainly after a long break, there were two in the same session on the Monday of the Pairs Qualifying on 7 September, together with a whole lot of other wildly distributional hands. For an example of the latter, take a look at this:

BD: 15	♠AK952	Dlr: S
	♥AJ432	Vul: NS
	♦	
	♣T94	
♠		♠J743
♥KQT76		♥985
♦Q85		♦K62
♣KQ653		♣A82
	♠QT86	
	♥	
	♦AJT9743	
	♣J7	

When is the last time you saw 3 voids in different hands? When South chose to open 3D, that's where North-South played – the contract shouldn't make but it might. North can make 4S on a cross-ruff, but in practice that proved to be too hard for most. On a few occasions, West played in hearts, twice doubled in 4H which went for -800. Ouch!

Neither of the grand slams was particularly easy to bid. There were reasonable prospects of getting to one on this deal but it did depend on your methods:

BD: 8	♠965	Dlr: W
	♥KT986	Vul: None
	♦K92	
	♣85	
♠A8		♠KQJ43
♥AQJ54		♥
♦864		♦AQ
♣KQ6		♣AJT943
	♠T72	
	♥732	
	♦JT753	
	♣72	

If you are happy to open 1NT with a 5-card major and have agreed to play minorwood with 14/30 responses, the auction might be: 1NT-2H (transfer to spades)-

2S-3C (forcing to game)-3NT (or maybe 3H along the way? in either case denying 3-card spade support)-4C (minorwood, much too strong for a mere game, now looking for 6C)-4H (0 or 3 keycards, obviously 3)-4S (do you have the queen?)-4NT (yes, but no outside king)-7C (knowing that ♥A will provide a discard for ♦Q if needed, although this auction might actually trigger a diamond lead into the AQ).

After 1H-1S life is much more difficult. No matter ... ignoring the grand slam in clubs, Margaret Malcolm and Fiona Khoo found their way to the unbeatable 7S!!

In my opinion the grand slam on this extraordinary deal was unbiddable:

BD: 17 ♠	Dlr: N
♥AKJT86532	Vul: None
♦Q73	
♣3	
♠KT543	♠A876
♥7	♥Q9
♦T4	♦J98
♣JT764	♣Q952
♠QJ92	
♥4	
♦AK652	
♣AK8	

Three pairs found their way to the perfectly reasonable 6H. One might get there by opening 1H and feeling happy when partner bids 2D, but unless playing that a 2/1 bid is game forcing the rebid is awkward. One might say "points, schmoints" and open 2C because there are only 4 losers in a heart contract. One might even open 4H – really an underbid – and then partner might decide to move with two ace-kings.

Getting to 7H is quite another story, but Anna Zaranski and Richard Burrells did so. What's more, they were doubled, thus getting their absolute top twice over!!

Distributional hands can be lots of fun ...



Some of the bridge columns published on our club website will now appear on the [bridge page](#) of our regional online newspaper, The Southern Wire. In addition, The Southern Wire will publish columns that will not appear elsewhere.

