

Mini-buses?

Rakesh Kumar

This column continues the "bus" theme of the previous two – if you haven't seen those, one was about grand slams perhaps being a bit like London buses, with none for ages and then two in the one session, while the other was about missing the bus altogether by not bidding a reasonably straightforward small slam.

This time, the deals from the Monday afternoon session on 21 September are both slams on relatively few high card points, hence the designation mini-buses. In both cases, reaching the slam is in the first instance quite unlikely. However, as low-hcp slams are only ever possible because of distributional hands, there's often quite a bit of competitive bidding, especially if it's hearts vs. spades, which can push the bidding along. That would certainly have applied to both of these deals.

Here's the first example:

BD: 25		♠96	Dlr: N	
		♥T3	Vul: EW	
		♦KJ7642		
		♣Q76		
♠AJ87			♠3	
♥J98652			♥AKQ74	
♦5			♦A93	
♣K8			♣T953	
♠KQT542				
♥				
♦QT8				
♣AJ42				
♣♦♥♠ N T				
N	3	2		6
S	3	2	9	13
E		6	3	12
W		6	3	

If North passes, which is what will happen unless you play a weak 2D opening, East will open 1H and South will overcall 1S. Now there are several possible alternatives. West might jump to 4H, in which case the auction will come to an end. Or West might realise that with only 7 losers, but effectively 5 losers with a known 11-card fit, there is slam potential. Perhaps a 2S bid showing a good raise might work, or maybe a 4D splinter showing a shortage with 4+ support would be even better.

Either way, it's still not an easy slam to bid. Tony Lye and Steve Brabyn were the only ones to reach it.

The second example would have involved much more competitive bidding. If you play 5-card weak two-bids, East has a hand perfectly suitable for such an opening when vulnerable against not vulnerable opponents. If you don't but your opponents do, the South hand is also a great example of a 5-card weak two bid at favourable vulnerability. My partner did open 2H and the opposition bid all the way to 5S, over which I bid 6H as a sacrifice. However, you can see that it turned not to be one!!

BD: 22		♠9	Dlr: E	
		♥KQ7652	Vul: EW	
		♦AK43		
		♣43		
♠AQ87654			♠KJT32	
♥J8			♥	
♦QT			♦J9752	
♣Q8			♣AJT	
		♠		
		♥AT943		
		♦86		
		♣K97652		
		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠	N	
			T	
N	5	6		12
S	5	6		11 10
E		4		7
W		4		

As I said a couple of columns ago, distributional hands can be lots of fun ...



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