

28/03/18 Presentation – Forcing Bids

Mon 26th March 2018

Hand 14 – Dealer East at Love All

♠ 7 3
♥ 8 5
♦ 10 9 7 2
♣ Q J 8 7 3

♠ A K J 10 6
♥ J 9 2
♦ A
♣ A 10 9 6

♠ 5 2
♥ A K Q 10
♦ K Q J 8 6 5
♣ K

3
17 18
2

♠ Q 9 8 4
♥ 7 6 4 3
♦ 4 3
♣ 5 4 2

Double Dummy Analysis

East/West make 13 tricks in NTs, Spades, Hearts or Diamonds but only 10 tricks in Clubs

Actual Results

Board 14 - Love all							
NS	EW	Contract	By	NS	EW	MPs	
4	3	3NT+4	W		520	11 15	
3	1	3NT+4	W		520	11 15	
2	7	6D+1	E		940	4 22	
1	5	4H+1	E		450	24 2	
7	2	3NT+3	E		490	21 5	
6	8	3NT+3	E		490	21 5	
5	6	3NT+4	W		520	11 15	
8	4	6NT+1	W		1020	1 25	
11	10	6NT+1	W		1020	1 25	
10	14	4S+3	W		510	18 8	
9	12	3NT+4	W		520	11 15	
13	9	3NT+4	W		520	11 15	
12	13	3NT+4	W		520	11 15	
14	11	5D+2	W		440	26 0	

This was played 14 times but only two pairs found 6NT and only 3 pairs in total bid a Slam despite having 35 HCPs between them!

I can't see how two East pairs played in 3NT but the other six might have got there like this:

North	East	South	West
	1♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Surely West will have made an initial **Game Forcing** jump-shift response but then has not planned that East can Pass 3NT – **Oops**

One possibility is that perhaps East players have underestimated West's jump-shift. Players who jump-shift with any old opening hand cannot expect their partner to know when their hand is this good!

Using standard method tactic it is not too difficult to find the Slam. East has a good hand but strict Benji Acol bidders might think it does not qualify for making nine playing tricks with Diamonds as trumps. It looks like eight and a half. There are two possibilities for East to open the bidding.

- Pessimists might open 1♦ with a view to reversing in 2♥.
- Optimists will open 2♣ with a view to rebidding 3♦.

Either way has merit and we should still be able to bid the Slam

If East starts at the one level:

North	East	South	West
	1♦	Pass	2♠(1)
Pass	3♥(2)	Pass	4♣(3)
Pass	4♦(4)	Pass	4NT(5)
Pass	5♦(6)	Pass	5NT(7)
Pass	6♠(8)	Pass	6NT(9)

- 1) Minimum 16 HCPs with a good suit – **GAME FORCING**
- 2) Cue bid control
- 3) Cue bid control – forcing East to bid again
- 4) Confirming Diamond suit – no other first round controls
- 5) Straight Blackwood
- 6) One Ace
- 7) Blackwood

8) Three Kings

9) We have all of the first and second round controls. There may still be a Spade or a Club loser. It is easy to develop an extra Spade trick and this provides opportunity to discard West's losing clubs if there are any. So surely 6NT is fairly solid?

Using optimistic Benji Strong 2 and Straight Blackwood

North	East	South	West
	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	?

3♦ is not Game Forcing but promises 9 tricks if Diamonds are trumps. What does West bid now?

North	East	South	West
	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♠	Pass	6NT

The two most important bids are:

West 3♠ should be taken as positive and forcing for one round.

East must be prepared to bid 4♥ expecting that his partner already knows his primary trump suit is Diamonds.

For beginners and improvers this might seem a demanding auction but East has opened strong and must have playing strength.

West needs to be in control of the auction

My preferred method is that East opens strong 2♣ with positive response option and using Roman Key Card version of Blackwood :

For this method I prefer to play that a responder bid of 2♦ shows less than 8 HCP or less than an Ace plus a King. All other bids meaning at least that much and **Game Forcing**. This is a method that is similar to the traditional ACOL Strong 2♣ method.

Setting up a Game Force early has its advantages.

North	East	South	West
	2♣	Pass	2♠(1)
Pass	3♦(2)	Pass	4♣(3)
Pass	4♥(4)	Pass	4NT(5)
Pass	5♠(6)	Pass	5NT(7)
Pass	6♥(8)	Pass	7NT(9)

- 1) Minimum 8 HCPs natural – **GAME FORCING**
- 2) Promising 9 playing tricks in Diamonds
- 3) Cue bid control
- 4) Cue bid control – partner already knows the preferred trump suit is Diamonds
- 5) Roman Key Card Blackwood with Heart King as the fifth key card (I prefer always the last bid suit is the ‘key’ suit as this is less stressful)
- 6) Two key cards plus Queen of the key card suit
- 7) Asking about the other three Kings
- 8) Two more Kings
- 9) If partner can make nine tricks in Diamonds I’ve definitely got another four and we have all of the first and second round controls

With all of this information 7NT looks solid. I don’t normally recommend bidding Grand Slams but with this auction showing this amount of detail the Grand looks certain

I have to give 9.5 out of 10 for 6NT though.



Conclusions

Partnerships should develop understanding regarding **FORCING** bids. With a disciplined approach you can then take advantage of the bidding space. The Slam is therefore not too difficult to bid with these hands.

After a one level suit opening bid I like a jump shift response to show a good hand with a good suit. Experts often recommend such a hand ought to have at least 17 HCPs. I think 16 is good enough because it is in keeping with the general principle that 16 HCP is a good hand and so the concept is easier to grasp.

After a Benji Acol 2♣ opening bid I prefer that all response bids other than 2♦ are positive and **GAME FORCING**.

Roman Key Card Blackwood has advantages over the straight version and most players are switching over to use this method. Here there is a clear advantage that at no extra cost you find a third round control in Hearts. That dramatically improves the trick making potential in that suit. For RKC Blackwood make sure you agree how to know which is the ‘key’ suit in your method.

