

IMP Pairs: Charity 03/22/11

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

	♠ J 6		
	♥ 7 3 2		
	♦ K 10 4		
	♣ Q 9 7 4 2		
♠ K 9 4 3	□	♠ A Q 10 8 7 5 2	
♥ A K Q 8 6 4		♥ 5	
♦ 7		♦ A 5	
♣ A 8		♣ 10 6 5	
	♠ —		
	♥ J 10 9		
	♦ Q J 9 8 6 3 2		
	♣ K J 3		

EW 7N; EW 7♠; E 7♥; W 6♥; E 2♣; NS 1♦; W 1♣

West	North	East	South
<i>Pete</i>	<i>Emily</i>	<i>Gloria</i>	<i>Brian</i>
	Pass	1 ♠	3 ♦
4 NT	Pass	5 ♠	Pass
7 ♠	All pass		

7 ♠ by East

Here's a grand slam that's easy to bid, but only one other pair did. First, Gloria opened 1♠. This is absolutely correct, a solid opening bid! She has six or seven playing tricks, and 2.5 quick tricks (AQ=1.5, A=1), in case she has to defend.

Brian made a normal 3♦ preempt. At this favorable vulnerability, I might have tried 4♦, although it might indeed go for a phone number.

Not time to fool around: I launched into Roman Keycard Blackwood. Gloria's 5♠ response showed two key cards (aces or the ♠K), plus the ♠Q or extra length. Small slams are relatively easy - if you have reasonable values and controls, just bid it. The wiggle room of being able to lose a trick usually gives you a play.

A grand slam is much less flexible. Before I bid a grand, I want to be able to either count 13 tricks, or count 12 plus multiple likely opportunities for a 13th. We have all the keycards - how to proceed? One approach is to bid 5NT. This asks for the cheapest king, but more importantly, it informs partner we have all the key cards. That way, partner can jump to the grand with substantial extra strength or an undisclosed source of tricks.

That would be the wrong approach here. Start counting: if hearts run, 6 hearts, 5 spades, and 2 aces is 13. If hearts take a ruff to set up, declarer will get 13 by ruffing a diamond. Yes, this grand is cold when pard has only 5 spades, on 4-x hearts and 3-1 spades. Bid 7♠, the safest!

Emily might have put us to the test with 5♦. We had no agreement; but I would have assumed double=0/3, pass=1/4, bid remaining steps, a treatment called DOP1: 5♠ would again be Gloria's bid - if she were on the same wavelength. (I recommend double=even, pass=odd [DEPO], if the opponent bid 5 of our suit or higher, because it always lets us defend, if we wish.) You should discuss interference over Blackwood with *your* partner.