

Trump Quality ?

Obviously the better the trumps, the better things are.

Losing two tricks in the trumps suit being a definite no-no you better make sure your trumps are something like these holdings if you want to be certain:

i) AKQx xxxx or ii) KQJx xxxx

you might also get away with holdings like these two below but good breaks and/or finesses will be needed :

iii) AQ10x xxxx and iv) AQxxx xxxx

Here are two 6Sp contracts . One makes 12 tricks trivially and one doesn't !

a) KQJx	10xxx	b) KJxx	xxxx
AKx	xx	AKQ	Jx
xxx	AKQJx	xxx	AKQJx
Axx	Kx	AJx	Kxx

Both hands have adequate points { "b" having the edge there }; both hands have sufficient controls { with 1st round control in three suits and 2nd round control in one suit}; only "a" however has good enough trumps to be confident that 12 tricks will make.

You may feel that it will be a Herculean task { and then some !} to have to appraise points and controls and distribution and trump quality before embarking on the slam hunt. Nobody said things were going to be easy of course but at the very least you can use these ideas as pointers to at least keep out of bad slams.

Should the player to bid be thinking of higher things (in a bridge sense that is) ?

i) 1Sp -----3SP	ii) 2NT -----4NT	iii) 1SP -----2H
?	?	4H-----?
KJxx	Axx	x
QJx	KJx	AKQJx
AKQ	KQJxx	Jxx
Kxx	AK	Qxxx
points : yes	points : yes(ish)	points : yes
controls : no	controls : yes	controls : no
distribution : no	distribution : yes	distribution : no
trump quality: no	trump quality : n/a	trump quality : yes

It would be neat if we could say that if you answer "no" to two or more of the key questions then you shouldn't go for a slam ! It probably wouldn't work though and it is better to use it as a guide only when you are unsure what to do.

Lastly { and I know it's a bit mean to throw this thought out right at the end of the page }, it *might* sometimes pay to play in 6NT *rather* than in 6 of (an agreed) trump suit.

e.g AJxx ---KQx -----Ax -- Axxx opposite xxxx ----Ax----KQJx ---KQJ

Here 6Sp has no chance whereas 6NT makes 12 tricks every day of the week. Scores more too.

