

Board of the Week 1

By Dick Chapman

I asked our club's webmaster if I could post a hand every once in a while, with my very-much-non-expert comments added. Given permission, here I am with the first installment of "Board of the Week." Some of the boards, including today's, will have been covered by The Common Game expert analysis, but I still will post them just for the sake of further review. Here we go:

	♠AQ98 ♥98752 ♦3 ♣532	
♠K10 ♥ ♦AKQJ10976 ♣AQ4	D: S V: EW	♠J763 ♥AKJ3 ♦842 ♣97
	♠542 ♥Q1064 ♦5 ♣KJ1086	

As West, you deal and pick up a freak 2-0-8-3 hand with 19 hcp. Of course you are thinking slam before you begin to formulate a plan. You certainly want to be in game, so without giving the board enough thought, you open 2 clubs.

Oops, you just (potentially) wrong-sided the hand. If you have a slam, do you want to declare? Of course you do: you have the Kx of spades and the AQx of clubs to protect. So if slam is to be had, what is partner's call going to be? 2 diamonds, of course, and instantly you are in trouble.

But all is not lost. Partner bids 2 diamonds, you bid 3 diamonds, now it's back to East. The temptation is 3NT, but what's the rush? Bid 3 hearts. Now West can blast slam or bid 4 clubs. I like 6NT at this point. It's too late to bid 6 diamonds, which from your side is safer than 6NT. TCG's Ed Antosz bids 4 clubs, then 4 hearts by East (trying to ensure West is the NT declarer) then 6NT by West. Ellis Feigenbaum and Marjorie Michelin blast 6NT after 3 hearts.

I'm not an expert, but if you open the hand 1 diamond it won't get passed out and you can declare 6 diamonds when partner shows some stuff. The problem is that a 1 diamond call gets you off to a slow start, and it's going to be very hard to get your hand across to partner after that.

At 6NT, if North leads the spade ace, you are going to have to take the club finesse and hope it works. How do you get to dummy to take that finesse? Your partner was kind enough to hold the 8 of diamonds. Win the first trump with the ace in case the suit is 2-0, then a low diamond to the 8. Discard 2 losers on the

AK of hearts and call for a club. Today you are lucky and it makes 12 tricks.

Let's say North makes a passive heart lead. Play the jack just in case, then ruff the queen. Two trumps ending with the 8. Ace and king of hearts to discard two spades, and take the club finesse. It works, so 12 tricks, losing only 1 club.

If you get to 6 diamonds from the West side by opening 1 diamond, it makes 12 or 13 tricks depending on the opening lead. If East declares 6 diamonds, the pressure is on South to find the killing lead. This non-expert tries to make passive leads against no trump slams, but the same reasoning would apply here. The spade 5 = down 1.

We don't get 8-baggers often, but ironically the West players held two on the same day. The other hand was

♠7 ♥9 ♦Q106 ♣AQ1096532

in a misfit with partner where only 4 clubs can be made. Par on that board was 4 spades by East doubled and down 1 for -100 facing a makeable 4 heart call by NS. Sometimes bridge gives us boring hands, but the West players on this particular day were certainly not bored!

See you next week.