

Board of the Week 15

By Dick Chapman

This week I have another hand from a casual online game. You hold this:

♠86432 ♥AK84 ♦10 ♣1053

Imps, you are red and they are not. In third seat, LHO opens 1 diamond, partner 1NT, pass to you. Your call? Decide before reading further.

You are 5-4 in the majors and weak-ish, so it's an easy 2 clubs, right? You will pass 2 hearts and correct 2 diamonds to 2 spades and hope to make. Now Leftie bids 2 diamonds, partner 2 spades. This time your call is not so easy. Think before reading more.

Pass is the first thought. But wait, didn't your hand grow up a bit? You have a 9 card fit and shortness in the enemy suit. Pass seems wrong and blasting game is way wrong. Goldilocks bid 3 spades and her partner bid game. Now let's flip the board:

	♠86432 ♥AK84 ♦10 ♣1053		
♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	D: W V: NS	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
	♠K975 ♥Q10 ♦A8765 ♣AK		
West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	1NT
Pass	2♣	2♦	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All pass			

As declarer, I got the diamond nine. I am probably overruffed on the second diamond but (a) that may not be a bad thing and (b) I smell a rat: I'm not sure East started with 6 diamonds. These are BBO "experts" which means...nothing. This was Board 18 and they had already psyched a couple of times in the session.

I led a second diamond, and my ruff survived. Next, I led a spade up to my king and it held (!), 10 falling from West. A low spade drops the AJ, another happy event. Keep reading, as it gets better.

I won the club return and ruffed the third diamond. Back to the other club winner and ruff the fourth diamond. West discarded a heart (bless his/her heart, but this time it didn't matter).

All trump are in and the position is (next column):

	♠ ♥AK84 ♦ ♣10	
♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	D: W V: NS	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
	♠97 ♥Q10 ♦8 ♣	

With the lead in dummy, I ruffed a club and the final four tricks were three hearts and a spade. In total I won 2 natural trumps in hand, 3 ruffs in dummy, 1 ruff in hand, 3 hearts, 1 diamond, and 2 clubs. The full hand:

	♠86432 ♥AK84 ♦10 ♣1053	
♠J10 ♥J972 ♦93 ♣Q8764	D: W V: NS	♠AQ ♥653 ♦KQJ42 ♣J92
	♠K975 ♥Q10 ♦A8765 ♣AK	

East's 2 diamond call is dubious, but that what we got. A couple more thoughts about the auction. First: should I double 2 diamonds or shoot for a vulnerable game? I elected to shoot and got lucky. In imps games, you want to bid close games, especially when vulnerable, and at the time I rated to gain only 100 or 300 for a double. It's 500 or maybe 800 as I look at the cards now, but we don't get to look during the auction. Second: the invitational call of 3 spades by partner was brilliant; she properly revalued her hand after the spade fit was revealed.

My play at trick 2 worked but wasn't the best. I should have gone to dummy in hearts and led a spade immediately. If the holder of the ace has the short diamonds, there is no ruff. This time, as you can see, East had the ace but had only 5 diamonds. East should jump up with the ace of spades and fire out a club, just in case West had a trick over there. This time nothing matters, and it's cold for 12 tricks.

There is no educational value in the hand other than the good bidding by North. The board was played 16 times and only 4 made it to game. Two (including me) were 680, one 620. One 600 for 3NT making, and most of the rest were in spade partials making 10-12 tricks. 8.9 imps to our side.

Did you notice the 8 card straight flush in spades with the North and South hands? See you at the club.