

## Board of the Week 23

By Dick Chapman

Everyone likes long suits. Sitting West in a recent club game (matchpoints), I held this hand:

♠A94 ♥9 ♦92 ♣AKQ10975		D: W V: EW	
West	North	East	South
1♣	2♠	3NT (!)	Pass
??			

Pause before reading further, and consider your call. You are playing with someone who hasn't been your partner for a couple of years but there is a fair amount of agreement on system.

My call was 4 clubs, which I intended as a key-card ask in that suit. The response was 5 clubs, and now I'm in a pickle. It's clear partner isn't in on my Minorwood call and was bidding what he hoped we could make.

Your call? You are in the match, so no silly gambles. Play your game. Pass? Bid more? What?

My call was 6 clubs, but I didn't give it enough thought. Almost as soon as I made the call I thought I should bid 6NT, but you have to play what you bid. If partner is bidding NT showing spade stoppers and I have three spades, how many spades does South have?

		♠6 ♥ ♦ ♣	
♠A94 ♥9 ♦92 ♣AKQ10975		D: W V: EW	
		♠KJ73 ♥A10 ♦A10854 ♣42	
		♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
West	North	East	South
1♣	2♠	3NT (!)	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♣	All pass		

I know South will ruff the opening spade lead, so I don't waste the jack. Indeed, South ruffed and it was all over. There are only 3 trumps remaining, so I can win any lead and count 12 winners: 7 clubs, 3 spades with the marked finesse, and 2 red aces.

How would the play go in 6NT? Let's see the full hand:

		♠Q108652 ♥Q54 ♦KJ73 ♣	
♠A94 ♥9 ♦92 ♣AKQ10975		D: W V: EW	
		♠KJ73 ♥A10 ♦A10854 ♣42	
		♠ ♥KJ87632 ♦Q6 ♣J863	

South's opening lead is a bit of a problem, but let's go passive with a club. Win the ace and see the marked finesse coming up on the next club lead from hand. Now ace of spades and see the marked finesse the other way in that suit. Now all the clubs, 2 more spades, and 2 red aces. 12 easy tricks. The opening lead doesn't matter, as you can see from the diagram.

Our 1370 was a top so the denomination didn't matter this time. I'm not gloating for a several reasons. First, I was in the wrong contract. Second, I made 6 horrible plays (that I know of, probably more) in the match. Third, it wasn't my great bidding that got us to slam. It was East's 3NT call that made it easy for me. Yes, it's a bit of a gamble, but look at the East hand. What else can you do? 2NT? The spades are too good and the diamond suit is too long for this. Afterwards I didn't ask East what his reasoning was, but surely he was thinking "all in." My thinking as West was if he can make 9, I have a bunch of tricks to add to that total.

It was a fun hand for us, but those errors I mentioned offset the one good score several times over. To win you have to be consistent, and I certainly was anything but that. Thanks to my partner Skip H. for (a) bidding 3NT and (b) putting up with my bad play throughout the match.

See you at the club.