

Board of the Week 28

By Dick Chapman

This doesn't really rise to Board of the Week standards, but I'll show it because the field got it right and that's a good thing.

♠Q1065		♠A72
♥A	V: N	♥KQ542
♦QJ109754	D: N	♦AK32
♣5		♣Q

North	East	South	West
1♣	1♥	Pass	2♦
3♣	3♦	4♣	4♦
5♣	5♦	All pass	

I was West. My 2 diamond call is a bit rich but there it is. In fact, the entire auction was full of bidding and it turns out every call has some amount of justification. The next time I bid 2 diamonds in an auction like this I will go for -300 in a save against a potential 130.

I get the ace of clubs and now the contract is 100%. Here comes a heart. The trumps are 2-0. Now in dummy and the heart king-queen eliminate two spades. Ruff the fourth heart, return to the dummy with a diamond, and voila, the fifth heart is good as the third spade in hand disappears. Ace of spades and all trump, making 6.

As reported above, the nice thing is the bulk of the field got to the right place. The top EW pair of 13 bid and made the slam (did someone bid 6 clubs?), and seven others were in game making 6.

I have a Summer Symposium presentation in the can, subject: "Using Long Suits to Eliminate Losers." This board will go in that lesson. The general theme is: if you have a long suit that can be set up, and can get to the established cards, the hand will play for more tricks that at first appear. Today's layout:

	♠KJ4	
	♥J93	
	♦	
	♣AKJ7432	
♠Q1065		♠A72
♥A	V: N	♥KQ542
♦QJ109754	D: N	♦AK32
♣5		♣Q
	♠983	
	♥10876	
	♦86	
	♣10986	

You see that the enemy hearts divide 4-3, so if you can ruff South's 10 then get back to the fifth heart in dummy, that card becomes a place on which to park the last losing spade. We score 1 spade, 4 hearts, and 7 diamonds.

Was North justified in bidding 5 clubs? I can't answer that question. When you have a pair at 4 of a minor, you need to think about the consequences of a push. Like Darrell Royal said about passing, three things can happen and two of them are bad. Here, it's 3 out of 4: yes, you might make, but a push of 5 clubs can put the opponents into a making game they might not bid freely, or you might go for -300 against their -130, or you might be able to set 4 of their minor. Lots of factors rushing around in your head!

Double dummy enthusiasts will see East bidding 6 diamonds and cruising to 920, right? Wrong. As long as we are playing double dummy, we might as well have North-South come back at 7 clubs, down 4 for -800. This reminds me of a story, which may or may not be true but it's so good that we can pretend it is true. An auction goes something like 1♠-2NT-3♠-4NT-etc. up to 6♠, whereupon Al Childs comes in for his first call: 7♦. Down 1400 for a cold top for his pair. Everyone else in the field was in the spade slam for 1430. I sure hope that's a true story because I tell it often. I miss Al.

A few reports ago I discussed getting fixed. In the same game I was the victim:

	♠	
	♥KQ82	
	♦KJ8	
	♣AKQJ96	
♠K87	V: NS	♠Q654
♥A53	D: E	♥106
♦Q7652		♦1094
♣72		♣10843
	♠AJ10932	
	♥J976	
	♦A3	
	♣5	

1 spade by South, 4NT by North, 5 hearts by South, 6NT by East. Now I, as West, pulled out my fancy tool, the Lightner Double. This says "partner, make the lead you wouldn't normally make. i.e. "lead dummy's first suit." Sure enough, partner led a low spade for a quick down 1. NS had bid a no trump slam with a void and missing an ace and side king-queen.

Wait, wait! I said I got fixed, didn't I? Yes, I did. That's because the hand you see isn't what we held. The actual EW hands were:

♠Q87		♠K654
♥A53	V: NS	♥106
♦Q7652	D: E	♦1094
♣72		♣10843

I had the queen of spades, not the king, and didn't have the courage to double for a spade lead. So I won the ace of hearts only. Our score on the board? 0.5 matchpoints on a top of 13 (another pair got the same fix). That's bridge. The two 6-heart bidders sitting NS were in an unbeatable contract. See you next time.