

Board of the Week 31

By Dick Chapman

In my column, I try to have a bridge tip or something worth learning, even when the point is "don't do what I did." But today it's strictly entertainment.

First, a preliminary story. I don't have the actual layout, but there was a top-tier team in a big tournament. They were down at the break and agreed they would try to get a big swing to get back into it. Soon enough, the big hand appears.

Opener: 1 Spade

Responder: 5 Hearts

Opener thinks: I know my partner wants me to bid the heart slam, because we are shooting. But I have a stiff heart and I just can't do it.

Opener: Pass

Responder thinks: I just made an Exclusion Blackwood call of 5 hearts, telling partner I have a big spade fit, a void in hearts, and please respond with key cards other than the ace of hearts.

As they ended up playing a 1-0 trump fit, you might not be surprised the contract didn't make. At the other table it was a placid 6 spades making 7. During the review everyone agreed that had opener recognized Exclusion Blackwood, this pair (needing a swing) would have bid the grand and picked up 13 IMPS. As it was, they lost 19 or 20 when the opponents cross-ruffed the hand. Oops, sorry partner.

Today's story is even better. Reported in the *Daily Bulletin* for the Chicago NABC (currently underway), this is the layout and auction: (next column):

		♠2 ♥6 ♦QJ93 ♣KJ109532		
♠AQJ9 ♥KQJ742 ♦A106 ♣		D: W		♠K543 ♥A983 ♦K8752 ♣
		♠10876 ♥105 ♦4 ♣AQ8764		
West	North	East	South	
1♣ (a)	2NT (b)	3♣ (c)	4♣ (d)	
5♣ (e)	Pass	Pass (f)	Pass (g)	

- (a) Precision (16+, any shape, forcing)
- (b) Clubs or any two-suited hand that doesn't include clubs
- (c) Diamonds
- (d) Pass or correct
- (e) First round control
- (f) System collapse (or perhaps "I think North has a two-suiter that doesn't include clubs, thus my partner's 5 clubs is natural"). Remember that at this point, neither North nor South has made a natural club bid.
- (g) I don't know what's going on, but I think we have a bit of a chance to beat this contract ☺

Here they were, EW playing in a 0-0 fit. Guess what? It didn't make.

At the other table, EW bid to 7 hearts. Because of the mirror hands and the diamond loser, this contract is doomed, right? Not so fast, gentle reader. What's the secret to making 7 hearts? Don't think too hard, because you need a nice present from the opponents. Sure enough, you get a club lead. The diamond loser in the West hand disappears and the slam rolls in: 4 hearts, 6 hearts, and 2 diamonds.

Wait, that's only 12 tricks.

Did I say 2 diamonds? Make that 3. Draw trump, AK of diamonds, ruff two diamonds as needed, use a trump or spade to get to the good fifth diamond in East, the 13th trick. Ok, there's the bridge tip I said I wouldn't have today: occasionally you can gain a trick if you can set up a long side suit and get to it.

Justice prevailed: although the self-inflicted wound cost their team 21 IMPS, the 5 club bidders won the match by 5.

Not going to the Nationals? Neither am I, but I read the *Daily Bulletin* each day. Sadly, Eddie Kantar's column isn't there, but you get Frank Stewart and other good writing. On a good day you will see some LRDBC names when they score well.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the Chicago bulletins.