

# Board of the Week 32

By Dick Chapman

A few Boards of the Week ago I described a method of finding a missing king for purposes of bidding a grand slam. It's a method that almost never comes up. Except that

- "Almost never" isn't the same thing as "never."
- The situation has come up twice in the past three weeks.

However, it may not come up again for a year. Or two or three.

I often say that you win by playing your cards well, and making the spectacular play isn't necessary at the club level. But perhaps I should say that once in a while it's good to have some expert-level bidding tools available.

Here's your hand:

♠AKQJ109 ♥7 ♦AJ2 ♣A73

Matchpoints, none vulnerable, you have the best 19 you have seen in a long time, but it's not a 2 club opener. One spade.

Partner calls 2NT, a game forcing spade raise. For newer players: the call of 2NT agrees on the major and asks for a further description of opener's hand, specifically whether there is shortness. With the hand you see above, you know you are going to be in slam. You could bid 6 spades right now, but what's the rush? Just answer the question. Three hearts, showing a singleton or void in that suit. You hear 4 clubs from partner, a cue bid showing first or second round control and slam interest. Do you have interest? Ha, ha, just kidding. You were going to slam even if partner had a minimum, and here partner is showing a much bigger hand.

Now you bring out your Roman Key Card ask. 4NT by you asks key cards in spades, you hear partner show one key card. You have them all, so now the king ask: 5NT. You are playing specific kings, so partner bids 6 clubs.

What is your next call?

Try to remember my discussion of a few weeks ago. You have the king of clubs and king of spades, and you don't care about the king of hearts. How do you find the king of diamonds?

(Think then read next column)

The secret is to bid 6 diamonds! As mentioned in the earlier column, once you bid 5NT asking for kings and get a reply (the lowest king), 6 of another suit below trump says: if you have the king of this suit, bid 7 of our suit, otherwise we are stopping at 6.

Now hold the other hand

♠8753 ♥AKQ96 ♦KQ10 ♣K

You hear partner call 6 diamonds, asking you to bid the grand slam if you have the king of diamonds. You have it, so what is your call?

(Think then read some more.)

Did you bid 7 spades like your partner told you to?

NO, you do not. You have the king-queen of hearts and the queen of diamonds, none of which is known to partner. This is matchpoints, so why not use the heavy artillery: 7NT.

The full hand:

	♠62 ♥J82 ♦965 ♣J9852	
♠AKQJ109 ♥7 ♦AJ2 ♣A73	V: N D: N	♠8753 ♥AKQ96 ♦KQ10 ♣K
	♠4 ♥10543 ♦8743 ♣Q1064	

The only mistake in this auction is you didn't bid 8NT. You have the first 14 tricks on high cards: 6 spades, 3 hearts, 3 diamonds, and 2 clubs.

I didn't play this board, but when I bid it with my favorite partner we got to 6 spades. Our partnership bidding arsenal does not include the "6 of a lower suit says bid the grand if you hold the king of that suit" weapon. But it's part of standard expert methods. Remember, I'm not an expert. But I intend to add this to my methods, even if it doesn't come up again for a year. Or two or three.

Congratulations to David C. and Bill J. for finding the right methods to get to 7NT and a cold top. 3 other pairs were in 7 spades (85%), and the remaining 10 pairs got to 6 spades making 7 (35%).

See you next time.