

Board of the Week 44

By Dick Chapman

Nothing educational this week, just an interesting hand to show. It was played in a LRDBC virtual club game on BBO. I'll show the entire hand because the auction is anyone's guess:

	♠K1076 ♥954 ♦A73 ♣J42	
♠83 ♥KJ63 ♦4 ♣AK10875	V: EW D: N	♠A9 ♥AQ10872 ♦Q10982 ♣
	♠QJ542 ♥ ♦KJ65 ♣Q963	

In second seat, East 1 heart. Would you overcall 1 spade? Bad suit, but non-vulnerable. If pass, West's call depends on system. If playing mini-splinters it's an easy 3 diamonds showing a good heart raise with short diamonds. If Bergen, it's 3 diamonds showing 10-12 points and four hearts. If 3 diamonds is a weak or strong jump shift, you fall back to your standard limit raise, 3 hearts.

I like mini-splinters and this is a textbook case. Now East might light up and get the pair to 6 hearts knowing there is one or zero diamond losers and a 10 card heart fit. Today let's play any number of hearts. 1 heart, 6 hearts, it doesn't matter. Can you make 12 tricks?

Unfortunately, the cards are not face up on the table. But here's a line of play that might work. We got a diamond from South (why not a spade?) and North produced the 10 of spades at trick 2. What next?

Win the spade and ruff a diamond. Ace of clubs (discard spade). Ruff a spade, ruff a diamond. Club king (discard diamond). Ruff a club. Now ruff a diamond with the king of hearts, overtake the jack of hearts with the queen and claim 12 tricks.

That wasn't too hard. Admittedly, things could have gone wrong at any of several points in this line of play. Also, there are variations in the order of play.

The initial thinking is to set up the club suit and arrive in dummy with a heart. But if you find the heart suit breaking 3-0, this line won't work: you don't have enough entries to set up and access the club suit. But the diamond-club cross ruff will work even if the hearts are 3-0, assuming the club suit breaks normally (which it does in today's layout).

So, choose your methods: try to make the trump suit break 2-1, in which case you can set up and access the club suit, or make the club suit break 4-3, in which

case you play as above, to ruff out the diamonds then draw trump in your hand (discarding one diamond on the second club, of course). Today the latter line of play works.

Here is the traveler for the board in the 7 table game.

4♥E+2	680
4♥E+2	680
4♥E+1	650
4♥E+1	650
4♥E=	620
5♥E-2	-200
5♥E-2	-200

Readers know that I love playing at the club and can barely tolerate being online for serious play (it's great for casual play, mind you). It just doesn't feel the same, even when you are "seeing" your friends. Out of necessity, the club played a few days online, which is certainly better than no bridge at all. But I was ready to get back to our beautiful Curtis Finch Bridge House, weren't you?

See you at the table.