

Board of the Week 86

By Dick Chapman

I have always seen myself as a systems player. That is to say, I have agreements with partners and try to stick with them. Little or no gambling. Just bid your hand and pay attention to all the information available, and you will get to the right place often enough. The system might be simple or it might be complex, but play it.

Today you get a twofer for entertainment purposes only. There is no educational value. Except "don't do this." In one session I broke system twice and got away with it both times. Here's the first one:

♠K6		♠
♥KQ32		♥
♦		♦
♣AK106532		♣

Partner opens 1NT. What's your call? Decide before reading further. See next column.

Wait. I forgot to tell you this is online imps pairs with a stranger for a partner. Partner was filling in for my regular in our 26 year foursome. Twice a week, 20-24 boards. It's loads of fun and we are great friends. But here is a stranger (to me) who subs when the others are playing and I'm not. No one vulnerable. What's my call?

The correct call, which I did not make, is 2 clubs, Stayman. If you have a fit, bid a game forcing 3 clubs and eventually you might find a heart slam. If no fit, what? I don't know.

My call was not system: 6NT. Yes, this is a tremendous gamble. For the full hand:

	♠843 ♥964 ♦QJ743 ♣Q9	
♠K6 ♥KQ32 ♦ ♣AK106532		♠AQ107 ♥A75 ♦A86 ♣J84
	♠J952 ♥J108 ♦K10952 ♣7	

I didn't say my bid was right. I said my bid worked, as we have 3 spades, 4 hearts, 1 diamond, and 7 clubs for a total of 15 tricks. 6.93 imps, as only 4 pairs bid the slam and only 3 of them made 13 tricks.

The second board is on the next page:

Late in the match we get this:

♠9		♠
♥J753		♥
♦A6		♦
♣KQ10972		♣

This time partner opens two NT. Your call? Give it some thought then proceed to the next column. Again, no one is vulnerable.

Again, it seems Stayman is right. But nooo, I just blasted 6NT again. The combined hands on the lead of the spade ace:

♠9		♠KQ63
♥J753		♥AQ94
♦A6		♦KJ
♣KQ10972		♣AJ3

Oops, we are missing too much. Where is that heart king? A terrible contract, but I don't have to play it and it's not a money game. Actually, I wish it were a money game, because here is the full layout:

	♠J8542 ♥K108 ♦10874 ♣8	
♠9 ♥J753 ♦A6 ♣KQ10972		♠KQ63 ♥AQ94 ♦KJ ♣AJ3
	♠A107 ♥62 ♦Q9532 ♣654	

With luck like this I should bet my 401(k) on red at the nearest casino. Just kidding, I haven't been in a casino in 40 years. It was terrible bridge on my part, and partner wasn't amused. On the first one, 6NT is right spot to land but I should check out the heart fit. In the second one, 6 hearts is fine and stands a good shot to make, but 6NT was just too wild. Even if it did bring in 10.73 imps for us as one of two pairs out of 16 that got to this contract. No one was in 6 hearts.

Club partners, know this: I won't bid like this when you are across the table. I don't think.

See you there.