

Board of the Week 57

By Dick Chapman

I keep writing about bad results, but occasionally we have good results to discuss. I did not say "good bridge." We got to the right place the wrong way. This hand was played in a recent club game, with me as West and an occasional partner in the East seat:

♠A7 ♥AQ1093 ♦84 ♣AQJ3	V: NS D: E	♠KQ1094 ♥KJ86 ♦KQ105 ♣
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Our Auction

West	East
	1 ♠
2 ♥	3 ♥
4NT	5 ♣
5 ♥	6 ♥ (!)

How many errors did you spot? Thankfully, this was a The Common Game analysis hand and we have that young kid Michael Berkowitz trying to give us old timers some advice. Suggestion: when YKMB gives you some advice, take it.

We play kickback for key cards in hearts, but I wasn't sure a bid of 4 spades by me wouldn't be taken as a reversion to partner's suit. Later, partner assured me that once hearts had been reached, we aren't interested in spades and 4 spades is indeed the key card asking call. At any rate, I used 4NT because I knew the answer can't be 5 spades ("two with the queen") and we can't get too high.

After my 4NT, should partner bid 6 clubs ("odd number of key cards with a useful void")? I don't know. Entire libraries are made up of stuff I don't know about this game. Anyway, I tried to put on the brakes. As you can see, partner had other ideas.

Generally, in a game force the slow auction shows additional strength, but YK says East should splinter 4 clubs rather than bidding 3 hearts. I can see the wisdom of that: you are getting to game in hearts anyway, so there is no down side to showing your shape along the way.

After 4 clubs, YK says my hand now has an interesting call. Readers may recall that when I blew a slam in the sectional by foolishly using the principle of restricted choice after my RHO preempted. The after-article discussed my partner's unforced bid of 5 of our suit. I mentioned that this means "bid slam if you have first or second round control of the opponent's suit." I had a singleton of their suit and did bid the slam, which I should have made.

The advice of YK is for West is similar: bid 5 hearts over the partner's club splinter. There is no "opponent's suit" here, so what is 5 hearts in the context of an uncontested auction? YK says it is "bid slam if you have first or second round control of the unbid suit." Holding KQ of diamonds, East would bid 6 hearts in the context of the 5 heart call by West.

YK's Auction

West	East
	1 ♠
2 ♥	4 ♣
5 ♥	6 ♥

Now let's look at the play. North has no good lead, but I got the diamond 9 and dummy's king lost to the ace.

South knows that partner can't ruff anything so tried a spade. I won in hand and led a low club to ruff. Back to hand with a trump and oops, trumps are 4-0. It's a bit of a dance now, but not overly complicated.

Diamond queen and a diamond ruff, ruff a second club, and draw trump. Finally, the ace of clubs and that beautiful spade 7 is a vehicle to get to dummy's KQ.

The losing club disappears on the third top spade. Here's the full hand:

	♠J865 ♥ ♦J9632 ♣8754	
♠A7 ♥AQ1093 ♦84 ♣AQJ3	V: NS D: E	♠KQ1094 ♥KJ86 ♦KQ105 ♣
	♠32 ♥7542 ♦A7 ♣K10962	

I really don't like online play when compared to the enjoyment we have at the club. But I do like to review auctions at other tables, and this is only possible online. For this board, six pairs got to 6 hearts making but I don't know how they did it. One pair went down and five pairs were not in slam. Making was 77% at the club and 90% across The Common Game field.

I do enjoy reading The Common Game expert analysis, even from Young Kids. You should read Berkowitz' monthly column in the *Bridge Bulletin*. He has learned a few things from a couple of players I have heard are pretty good (his father David and some guy named Larry Cohen).