

Board of the Week 58

By Dick Chapman

This week I will give a board with no particular educational value, but you might find it interesting or even fun. BBO casual pairs:

♠98		♠AK65
♥AJ104	V: NS	♥Q6
♦AK97	D: W	♦105
♣A74		♣KQJ83

I sat West and it's a pretty easy auction: 1NT-2C-2H-3NT-all pass. Would you make a slam try with the East hand? My partner did not and I don't find fault with that decision, even with a solid five card suit. You get the spade queen as an opening lead. Unless clubs are 10-9-fifth in South, you have 12 tricks (2=3=2=5). Can you do better? What are your thoughts?

You are going to have to finesse hearts to even have a chance at 13, and you don't want to squeeze yourself playing clubs. You win the opening lead and advance the queen of hearts at trick 2. This holds, so you send a heart over to the jack, which also wins. North followed to both heart tricks. You have not improved from the original 2=3=2=5 12 tricks that you started with...or have you? Can you make 13?

You could lay down the heart ace and try to drop the king, but that's asking a lot of the cards. Besides, what's the rush? You have 6 black winners to play.

I will take over from here. I played five club tricks. South followed to the first two then had to find three discards. I see a diamond, a heart, and another diamond. When South discarded a heart, I knew he started with five (South wouldn't blank the king). I discarded a diamond and a spade on the fourth and fifth clubs.

Now I put down the spade king. Aha! South has to find another discard and I have the complete count of that hand: 1 spade, 5 hearts, and 2 clubs, thus 5 diamonds. From this I can "see" North with an original 6=2=2=3 shape. The only part of North's hand that is relevant is the diamond count (2). The hand now, with only relevant cards displayed:

	♦xx	
♠		♠K
♥A10		♥
♦AK9		♦105
♣		♣
	♠	
	♥K8	
	♦xxx	
	♣	

When the spade is led, South can't discard a heart because this exposes his heart king (I will discard a diamond and claim). So South discarded a diamond. I

discarded a heart and my three diamond tricks came rolling in. The full layout is shown:

	♠QJ7432	
	♥97	
	♦Q4	
	♣965	
♠98		♠AK65
♥AJ104		♥Q6
♦AK97		♦105
♣A74		♣KQJ83
	♠10	
	♥K8532	
	♦J8632	
	♣102	

I scored two spades, three hearts, three diamonds, and five clubs.

Sad to say, our side lost 0.47 imps because three pairs bid slam (two making 13, one 12). Five pairs including us were in 3NT making 13, three made 12, and 3 made only 11. You would have work really hard to make 11, since you can see 2 spades, 3 hearts, 2 diamonds, and 5 clubs from the very beginning. Two pairs were in a suit part score (it's BBO, don't try to figure it out).

Squeezes are always fun. If you are the squeez-er, I hasten to add (the squeez-ee doesn't enjoy it so much). This one doesn't appear until after the heart finesse works. In the end, the heart 10 and diamond 9 are the threat cards. When I lead the squeeze card (the spade king), it's easy to discard the red suit that South doesn't discard.

In these cases, don't worry about terminology (type of squeeze, threat cards, squeeze card, etc.). Just watch the cards and make your best play. Also: don't forget to enjoy the game.

See you at the table.

P.S. I have another Board-of-the-Week with an even neater squeeze, but I broke the cardinal rule and didn't watch the discards carefully. Down 1; sorry partner. It's not nearly the happy story that this week's hand is. Stay tuned.