

# Board 6

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Dealer East, E-W Vul

An interesting board for those who like gadgetry. You hold: ♠ Q 6 4 3, ♥ J 10 9 4 3, ♦ J, ♣ 9 7 4, and Partner opens 1NT (15-17). What do you think about that?

1NT probably won't make, so wouldn't it be nice if you could find a major suit fit, if there is one. You could bid 2♣, but what would you do if Partner responds 2♦? The answer is to bid 2♥, used by many as Garbage Stayman. It says "I have a weak hand, am running away from 1NT, let's play this in 2♥ or 2♠, you choose which." Garbage Stayman can be useful when Partner opens 1NT and we have a weak hand with at least 4-4 in the majors. About half the time Partner will actually have a 4-card major which will be a great improvement on playing in 1NT. And when she doesn't you'll likely end up in a 4-3 or 5-3 fit. However, on a bad day, you will use Garbage Stayman with 4-4 in the majors, only to find out that Partner has opened 1NT with 2-2-4-5 shape. Not to worry, playing in 4-2 fits can be most character-forming.

	♠ Q 6 4 3 ♥ J 10 9 4 3 ♦ J ♣ 9 7 4	
♠ 5 2 ♥ K 8 ♦ A Q 9 5 4 ♣ K 5 3 2	North West East South	♠ K 10 9 8 7 ♥ A 5 ♦ 10 7 6 3 ♣ Q 10
	♠ A J ♥ Q 7 6 2 ♦ K 8 2 ♣ A J 8 6	

This is the actual layout, and we can see that Garbage Stayman hits the jackpot. 1NT has no play, whereas 2♥ makes on the nose against perfect defense, but is likely to make an overtrick in real life.

But are we sure we want to use Garbage Stayman here? Those robust Heart fillers look awfully persuasive, making a possible 5-2 fit quite playable. In fact, even if Partner has four Spades and two Hearts, we *still* might be better off in 2♥. The percentage bid, we suspect, is a transfer to Hearts. Just because we have a gadget available does not mean we have to use it. Using Garbage Stayman on this board smacks of gadgetitis.

Anyway, this being the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many Wests will get into the auction before North can. A simple and popular gadget for interfering with 1NT openings is DONT (see May 7<sup>th</sup>, Board 2 for more on this). DONT is a handy way of showing two-suiters. Once upon a time "two-suiter" meant 5-5, but standards have dropped. Nowadays 5-4 hands, even 4-4 hands, have been elevated to two-suiter status. So we expect that some Wests will overcall South's 1NT with a bid of 2♣, showing Clubs and another suit. Now (if North is cravenly silent), East bids 2♦, saying she does not like Clubs and would prefer to play in West's second suit, whatever it is. That finds the Diamond fit and 10 tricks are available (by finessing Spades twice and setting up the suit).

But not so fast! North's hand is not too shabby, especially if, as seems likely to him, West's second suit is Diamonds. The auction has gone:

South	West	North	East
			Pass
1NT	2♣	??	

North has the same decision as before. Should he pass? No! Should he double (which is commonly used as Stayman in this situation)? Not our preferred choice, though it works well on the actual deal. Or should he get his Hearts into the auction? Yes! But how? North gets to use a gadget after all! N-S can play "systems on" whenever the opponents overcall 1NT with 2♣ ... Double, as we said, is Stayman, and the rest of the 1NT system is on, including transfers of course. So North bids 2♦, after which East has nothing to say, South declares 2♥, and E-W rue the fact that they have missed their Diamond fit. They have been out-gadged!

# Board 25

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Dealer North, E-W Vul

You are South in third seat, White vs. Red. Two passes to you, and you hold:

♠ Q J 6 4 3 2, ♥ J 8 7 5, ♦ Q 6 3, ♣ --

Do you open 2♠? Some will say that the suit is not good enough, or will complain that we should not preempt with four cards in an unbid major, or mutter something about not bidding Weak Twos when holding a void. These are all feeble objections in our humble opinion, particularly at this vulnerability. Yes, South should get in there with 2♠ and hopefully create some mayhem. Mayhem indeed, because next to speak is West, holding:

♠ --, ♥ A Q 10 4 2, ♦ A K J 10 8, ♣ A J 7

What's your bid? Double is not ideal, you might miss your 5-3 Heart fit. But it's probably the right call.

Actually, there's a gadget for this situation, it's called Leaping Michaels, which works like this:

- Double, 3♥, and 4♥ all have their usual meanings
- 4♣ is 5-5 in Clubs and Hearts
- 4♦ is 5-5 in Diamonds and Hearts
- 4♠ is for the minors, with slam interest
- 4NT is also for the minors, but a lesser hand

How strong for a Leaping Michaels bid? The hand above is certainly enough, and would still be so if it had, say, an Ace or King less. Here's the full deal:

	♠ A 8 7 5 ♥ K 3 ♦ 9 5 4 ♣ 9 8 5 3	
♠ -- ♥ A Q 10 4 2 ♦ A K J 10 8 ♣ A J 7	North West East South	♠ K 10 9 ♥ 9 6 ♦ 7 2 ♣ K Q 10 6 4 2
	♠ Q J 6 4 3 2 ♥ J 8 7 5 ♦ Q 6 3 ♣ --	

South	West	North	East
		Pass	Pass
2♠	4♦	4♠	??

Hmmm. Our bright, shiny new gadget has not worked out very well, has it? The Club fit has been lost. We don't know what East should do now. Double, we suppose, which leads to down three for +500 to E-W. That's less than the value of the E-W game, not to mention their slam.

In retrospect, Leaping Michaels was an excellent convention *not* to use on this board. West would have

done better to double 2♠. He does have support for all the unbid suits, and Double keeps Clubs in the picture. Also, West's hand is so strong, with considerable slam potential, perhaps too good for Leaping Michaels. An alternative auction might be:

South	West	North	East
		Pass	Pass
2♠	Dbf	4♠	5♣
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

6♣ from the East side makes 12 tricks, so N-S would do well to find the 6♠ sacrifice (-1100 instead of -1370). By the way, 7♣ makes from the West side, protecting against a Heart lead.

Here's another possibility. Suppose South feebly passes. West opens 2♣, East makes a positive response of 3♣, after which West may be unable to resist leaping to 7♣! E-W are now cleverly playing the grand from the right side! The play is complicated and we are out of space.