

# Student Partner. . .with John Koch

Playing with a student partner in a pairs' game, I hold:

♠A Q 8 5 ♥A J 9 7 2 ♦10 4 ♣Q 3

With both sides vulnerable, partner opens **one club**. East passes, and I respond **one heart**. West passes, and partner goes into a huddle and finally emerges with **four hearts**. Our methods are standard and this shows 20 points, so I have too much to pass. With another partner, I might try four spades at this stage, showing slam values and a control in spades, but here I take charge by bidding **four notrump**—Roman Keycard Blackwood. If we have two losers in a minor, I will just take responsibility. Partner bids **five diamonds**, showing three key cards. Now five hearts would ask for the queen of trumps. If partner shows up with the queen and both black kings, we might even reach seven hearts. But I am not going to risk five hearts with this partner, so I simply jump to **six hearts**. Once again partner goes into a huddle. Beads of sweat glisten on his forehead. Finally I hear **six notrump**. Everyone passes. The full auction:

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	6NT	All Pass	

I stare glassy-eyed as partner puts down prime values:

♠ K 4  
♥ K Q 3  
♦ A K 7 6  
♣ A 8 7 5

♦ Q led

♠ A Q 8 5  
♥ A J 9 7 2  
♦ 10 4  
♣ Q 3

## Preliminary analysis:

Partner has only three hearts and no doubt concluded he had distorted the bidding by jumping to four hearts. Six hearts would be routine, but chances in six notrump are problematic, perhaps depending entirely on the location of the king of clubs. Well, at least this will be a lesson about respecting the Blackwood bidder's final decision. About the only time dummy is justified in even *considering* overruling the Blackwood bidder is when he has a void, and most of the time that ends in committee.

Time to concentrate on the play—I win in dummy as East plays the 2. There are 12 tricks if East has the ♣K, so I try a club to my queen. Unfortunately West wins his king. West is normally a fast player but he settles back in a pronounced trance. If he returns either minor, my chances will be slim. Finally, West exits with the ♥8. That at least keeps me in the ballgame. I win the king and play four more rounds of hearts, throw-ing a club and diamond from dummy. West makes three discards—a spade, diamond and club. East discards two diamonds.

From the discards, it appears that East has a stopper in spades, West one in diamonds, and both have something in clubs. This is my picture of the hand:

	♠ K 4	
	♥ —	
	♦ A 7	
	♣ A 8	
♠ x x		♠ J x x x
♥ —		♥ —
♦ J x		♦ —
♣ J x		♣ 10 3
	♠ A Q 8 5	
	♥ —	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 6	

I simplify by leading a diamond to the ace. West follows and East throws a club. Now I play three top spades ending in my hand. On the third spade, West must choose between his minor suits. He throws a club and my ♣8 wins the last trick.

The full deal:

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

## Points of Interest:

- In standard RKB, when the agreed suit is hearts and the response is five diamonds showing three (1430) or four (3014) key cards, five hearts asks from the trump queen and the lowest-ranking king. In this case, partner bids five spades with the queen of hearts and the king of spades. Now six clubs asks for the club king, which might have led to seven if the minor kings were reversed.

- The defense could have much improved if West had returned either minor suit. He apparently was troubled by the location of the minor-suit 10s.

- Declarer's method was described by Clyde Love as a "compound squeeze" because East initially had guards in three suits but was forced to give up a control in one of the minors, converting the position to a routine double squeeze