

11/22/11 Club Championship -- It's a Bitch

**Board 1**  
 East Deals  
 None Vul

♠ Q 2  
 ♥ K J 9  
 ♦ A 8 7 2  
 ♣ A K 10 7



♠ A 3  
 ♥ A Q 5 3 2  
 ♦ J 9  
 ♣ Q J 9 6

West	North	East	South
<i>Ravi Charan</i>	<i>Steve McDevitt</i>	<i>Steve Malcomson</i>	<i>Pete Matthews</i>
		Pass	1 ♥
1 ♠	2 ♠ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	5 ♥ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	5 ♠ <sup>3</sup>
Pass	6 ♣	Pass	6 ♥

All pass

1. Limit raise or better
2. Standard query in this situation: do you have a spade control?
3. Yes, first round (5NT=king, 6♥=singleton)  
 6 ♥ by South  
 Lead: ♣ 8

*(Deal rotated for clarity.)*

Plan the play.

Don't ever waste your efforts at the table this way, but also plan the play at 6♣ on the lead of a diamond and 6NT on the lead of a heart.

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**Board 1**

East Deals

None Vul

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

S 6N; S 6♥; S 6♣; N 5N; N 5♥; N 5♣; S 4♦; N 3♦; EW 1♠

First, 6♣ is virtually cold, with an expected 11 top tricks: win the ♦A and play another diamond. Win the return, ruff a diamond high, pull trumps and claim your 12 tricks. (Dummy becomes good after pitching a spade and a diamond on the hearts.) In some scenarios, you could ruff a second diamond high in hand, making when hearts split 5-1. At least one declarer at the club missed this *dummy reversal*, a common blind spot.

At 6♥ on the lead of the likely singleton club, you could choose to play on diamonds, hoping that the 8 will set up. The chances of this are not strong, but would be improved by the likely lead of the ♦K. One declarer failed on this line, since the ten is well-guarded.

A spade-diamond squeeze is a possibility. Draw trumps and duck a diamond (or duck the opening diamond lead). The best return for the defense is another diamond, likely a top honor to pin the ♦J. This attacks the entry to the diamond threat and breaks up the simple squeeze. It looks like you could play the last trump, and then clubs ending on dummy, but what do you pitch on that trump? Dummy is squeezed. You would have to discard a spade, and hope the ♠3 stands up as a threat. West should guard the ♠J, the only useful card in his hand. So the squeeze only works if West has all three diamond honors, and fails to return one when you duck to rectify the count.

I chose the line that works in 6NT, a *two-suit strip squeeze*, which requires what I had: more than one loser (don't rectify the count, as you must for a simple squeeze). I played for West to have the ♠K and ♦KQ, not too much of a stretch, and a lock for those declarers who got the lead of the ♦K. The approach is to strip West of his idle cards, and then throw him in with a diamond to lead away from the ♠K. I played 5 rounds of trumps and four of clubs. The expected and actual final position was

	North: ♠Q2 ♦A8
West: ♠KT ♦KQ	
	South: ♠A3 ♦J9

The ♦A and another diamond finished West: *the bitch* (playing in hearts) was my twelfth trick.

What could West have done about this?

1. Declarer must have the ♠A, so there is little point in hoping partner can help there. But he could hope partner has the ♦J. With this theory, he pitches away his diamond honors, to assure he does not win the second round of the suit. Hopefully, partner will win the second diamond and either cash a third or lead a spade. Not this time.
2. West can resort to subterfuge, pretending he has six spades and only three diamonds. His discards should be four small spades and one small diamond, retaining ♠K ♦KQT. When a diamond is led to or from dummy, it is important to play a top honor and conceal the ten. Now declarer must guess to drop the ♠K: if he exits in diamonds, West would calmly cash the ten.