

<i>Kaplan</i>	<i>Kent</i>
	1NT
2♣	2♥
3♥	3NT
Pass	

Both pairs did well to avoid the 4-4 heart fit on this distributionally sterile layout.

After the strong 1NT opening, Shapiro made an invitational raise, not even bothering to invoke Stayman. Cohen, with a maximum, accepted.

Kaplan, however, took the Stayman path and upon discovering the heart fit, issued an invitation with 3♥. Kent replied with 3NT to show precisely a 3=4=3=3 pattern. Kaplan, knowing that both hands were extremely flat, chose the logical pass.

Scores: 3NT 12; 2NT, 3♥ 8; 4♥ 3.

Shapiro-Cohen 42, Kaplan-Kent 60

Problem 6

East deals. E-W vulnerable.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ K 9 8	♠ A 6 2
♥ A K J	♥ 6 3
♦ 9	♦ A 8 6 2
♣ A Q 10 9 6 3	♣ K J 7 2

<i>Shapiro</i>	<i>Cohen</i>
	1♦
2♣	3♣
3♥	3NT
4♠	5♣
Pass	

<i>Kaplan</i>	<i>Kent</i>
	1♦
2♣	3♣
4♣	4♥
5♣	6♣
Pass	

Shapiro and Cohen began with a game-forcing two-over-one sequence, followed by a club raise. Shapiro cuebid his heart control (3♥), and Cohen chose the conservative 3NT. Shapiro persisted by cuebidding spades (4♠), but Cohen seemed to take a very pessimistic

view of the situation with his 5♣ call. Shapiro gave up.

For Kent and Kaplan 1♦-2♣ is not 100% game-forcing, but after the 3♣ raise Kaplan wheeled out Roman Key Card Blackwood (4♣) to set the stage for slam.

Kent's 4♥ showed zero or three key cards. 5♣ was "Autowood", meaning that East should pass with zero or continue to slam with three.

Kent, with the higher number, bid the small slam.

Scores: 6♣ 12; 7♣ 6; 6NT 5; 5NT 3; 5♣ 2.

Shapiro-Cohen 44, Kaplan-Kent 72

Problem 7

South deals. No one vulnerable.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ A 9 7 5 4 3	♠ 10
♥ —	♥ Q 10 8 4 2
♦ Q J 10 6 3	♦ A 9 7 4
♣ A 7	♣ K 8 3

<i>Shapiro</i>	<i>Cohen</i>
1♠	1NT
2♦	3♦
4♣	5♦
6♦	Pass
<i>Kaplan</i>	<i>Kent</i>
1♠	1NT
2♦	Pass

This problem hinges on whether East believes he should act after opener's rebid.

After 1♠-1NT (forcing); 2♦, is it right to bid again with the East cards? Should East give opener a "courtesy" raise?

Cohen was not thrilled with his decision, calling it "close" between raising and passing, but the raise is necessary on this layout to avoid the inferior partscore. After Shapiro's 4♣ cuebid, Cohen signed off in 5♦ which Shapiro (with his still undisclosed heart void) overruled as he bid the slam.

After getting to the top spot for six straight problems, the Mixed Pairs champs finally miss the bull's-eye on this one. Kent took the low road over 2♦ by passing

and found partner with an embarrassment of distributional riches.

Scores: 5♦ 12; 6♦ 9; 4♠ 7; 3♠, 4♦ 5; 3NT 1.

Shapiro-Cohen 53, Kaplan-Kent 77

Problem 8

West deals. Both vulnerable.

<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>
♠ 9	♠ Q 10 6 4 2
♥ A K J 5	♥ 10 6
♦ A Q J 10 8	♦ 9
♣ K 5 4	♣ Q 10 8 6 3

<i>Shapiro</i>	<i>Cohen</i>
<i>Kaplan</i>	<i>Kent</i>
1♦	1♠
2♥	2♠
2NT	Pass

The final problem features identical auctions. Note the expert style in responding aggressively to an opening one-level bid, even if it risks getting a bit too high later.

After the 1♦ opening, both Kent and Cohen responded 1♠ with the shapely 4-count. After the 2♥ reverse, which is forcing for at least one round and promises a powerful hand, both East players rebid their spade suit (showing five).

Kaplan and Shapiro countered with the natural 2NT, denying a spade fit, and both East players gratefully passed, relieved that the auction didn't get any higher than it did.

Note that the initial 1♠ response could have paid off in several ways. West could have had a spade fit or a club fit, in which case the contract would undoubtedly be superior to playing in diamonds, which is where you'd be after passing the opening bid.

Scores: 2♣ 12; 3♣ 10; 1♦ 9; 2♦ 7; 2NT 5; 2♥, 3♦ 3; 2♠ 2; 3NT 1.

Final score: Shapiro-Cohen 58, Kaplan-Kent 82

A great performance by the Mixed Pairs champs. The East and West hands for the August issue will appear in the August issue. □