

29. The Play at Trick 3

By Ron Klinger

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

North
 ♠ 10876
 ♥ QJ82
 ♦ Q53
 ♣ J8

West
 ♠ 42
 ♥ K5
 ♦ 1086
 ♣ AKQ1095

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣	3♠	All Pass	

West leads the ♣A: eight – two (discouraging) – four and the ♣K: jack – three – six. What would you play at trick 3?

Practicing on BBO allows you to play deals which arose in major events. Today's deals come from the final of the 2019 Spingold (USA Open Knockout Teams) between [BLASS](#) and [ZIMMERMANN](#).

Bd. 16: West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
♠ 42	♠ 10876	♠ J3	♠ AKQ95
♥ K5	♥ QJ82	♥ 10973	♥ A64
♦ 1086	♦ Q53	♦ AK97	♦ J42
♣ AKQ1095	♣ J8	♣ 732	♣ 64

West	North	East	South
<i>Martens</i>	<i>Driiver</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Brink</i>
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣	2♠	3♣	3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West	North	East	South
<i>Kaliita</i>	<i>Zimmermann</i>	<i>Pszczola</i>	<i>Multon</i>
1♣	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣	3♠	All Pass	

West led the ♣A: eight – three – four and the ♣K: jack – two – six. East-West play reverse attitude, so East's ♣3-then-♣2 denied interest in a club continuation. West switched to the ♦8. East took the ♦K and the ♦A.

	North ♠ 10876 ♥ QJ82 ♦ Q53 ♣ J8	
West ♠ 42 ♥ K5 ♦ 1086 ♣ AKQ1095		East ♠ J3 ♥ 10973 ♦ AK97 ♣ 732
	South ♠ AKQ95 ♥ A64 ♦ J42 ♣ 64	

Declarer still had a heart loser for one down, no swing. There is a natural temptation, given East's 1♥ response, to switch to the ♥K at trick 3. You hope that East has the ♥A and can give you a heart ruff. Neither West did that. Why not?

East's carding, ♣3-then-♣2 were East's lowest cards. With a doubleton club, East would have encouraged clubs as East could then ruff the third club and possibly over-ruff dummy. East must therefore have started with three clubs, 7-3-2. Signalling with the lowest cards each time, giving reverse attitude en route, asked West to switch to the lowest suit, diamonds. If East wanted hearts, East would have played ♣7-then-♣3, the highest clubs each time.

The same applies if you are playing natural signals. With 7-3-2, East's ♣2 denies interest in clubs and the ♣3 on the next round is suit-preference, lowest card for the lower suit, excluding trumps and excluding the suit led, hence a diamond. If wanting a heart switch and playing standard methods, East would play the ♣2 first, not keen on clubs, and the ♣7 next.

West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North ♠ QJ8 ♥ 1032 ♦ KJ84 ♣ J84	
	East ♠ A4 ♥ Q65 ♦ A10976 ♣ 965	
West Pass Pass Pass Pass	North Pass 1♦ 2♣ 3NT	East Pass Pass Pass All Pass
	South 1♣ 1♠ 2NT	

West leads the ♦5: four – six – queen. South plays the ♠3: six – queen – ace. Your agreements include leading top from doubletons, MUD from three or four rags and if you are giving count, lowest shows an odd number, high-low an even number. What would play as East at trick 3?

West dealer : Both vulnerable

	North		
	♠ QJ8		
	♥ 1032		
	♦ KJ84		
	♣ J84		
West		East	
♠ K962		♠ A4	
♥ K987		♥ Q65	
♦ 532		♦ A10976	
♣ 102		♣ 965	
	South		
	♠ 10753		
	♥ AJ4		
	♦ Q		
	♣ AKQ73		

West	North	East	South
<i>Martens</i>	<i>Driiver</i>	<i>Helness</i>	<i>Brink</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	All Pass	

West led the ♣10. South won and played the ♦Q: two – four – ace. East switched to the ♠A, followed by the ♠4 to the ♠K and a spade ruff. South had the rest, +110.

West	North	East	South
<i>Kalita</i>	<i>Zimmermann</i>	<i>Pszczola</i>	<i>Multon</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East led the ♦10: queen – five – four. The ♠3 went to the queen and ace and East shifted to the ♥Q, taken by the ace. South continued with the ♠5: two – jack – four and the ♥3: five – jack – eight. With a spade, a diamond and two hearts in the bag, South cashed the clubs for nine tricks, +600 and +10 Imps.

If East had started with the ♦7 or ♦6, 3NT could have been defeated. After the ♦Q wins and a spade is played, West can rise with the ♠K and return a diamond. East can now set up the diamond suit, no matter what declarer plays from dummy, with the ♠A as entry. If East wins the first spade, East can now play the ♦10 and again the defence prevails, whatever declarer does.

	North	
	♠ QJ8	
	♥ 1032	
	♦ KJ84	
	♣ J84	
West		East
♠ K962		♠ A4
♥ K987		♥ Q65
♦ 532		♦ A10976
♣ 102		♣ 965
	South	
	♠ 10753	
	♥ AJ4	
	♦ Q	
	♣ AKQ73	

This was the auction when this was the played in a practice match:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

West led the ♦5: four – six – queen. South played the ♠3: six – queen – ace. East can beat 3NT by returning the ♦10, but the ♦5 lead turned East off. As the ♦5 was West's highest diamond, that indicated a singleton or top from a doubleton. That meant there would be no future in diamonds.

East switched to the ♥5: four – king – two and West returned a heart. South won and played another spade: two – jack – four for ten tricks, +600.

West could also have defeated 3NT by rising with the ♠K and continuing diamonds. You might wonder why West chose the ♦5 lead when the partnership agreement is to play middle-up-down with three rags. West was reluctant to lead the ♦3, as that looked like a fourth-highest lead and enthusiasm for diamonds. In general, it is better to make the correct partnership lead and let the chips fall where they may. If West leads the ♦3, East might or might not get it right later, but at least you have not misled partner.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. West dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♠	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ AQ72
♥ J9753
♦ AQ5
♣ 7

2. North dealer : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 64
♥ AQJ4
♦ Q872
♣ J98

Why not discuss the problems by phone with your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Hearts are trumps and West, on lead, starts with a low diamond. East has no diamonds and plays a spade, thinking that spades are trumps. Later West gets in and plays another diamond. This time East trumps with a heart. West says, "No spades, partner?"