224. A case of déjà vu

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East Pass	South 1NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass (1) 15-17 points	Pass	Pass	

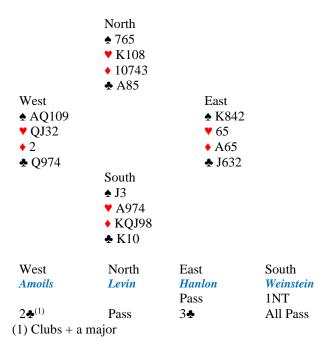
What would you lead as West from:

▲ AQ109
♥ QJ32
◆ 2
▲ Q05 4

♣ Q974

Today's deals come from Session 4 of the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams) Round of 16 match between MITTELMAN and NICKELL.

Board 56: Dealer East : Nil vulnerable



North led the \bigstar 5. South's \bigstar K won and back came the \bigstar 10 to the \bigstar A. North shifted to the \bigstar 10, ace. After \checkmark 5 to the queen and king, North continued with the \bigstar 3: five $-jack - \bigstar$ Q. Declarer played the \bigstar 10 to the \bigstar K and the \bigstar 6: seven -jack - eight. Declarer made nine tricks, East-West +110.

West Meckstroth	North Zatorski	East Rodwell	South Pachtmann
		Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

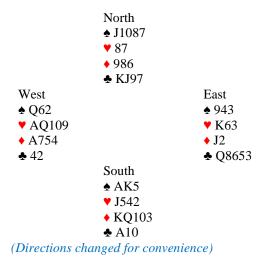
West led the \checkmark 2: ten – five – four. Declarer knocked out the \diamond A. East switched to spades and the defenders took four spade tricks. Declarer made eight tricks, +120 and 6 Imps to MITTELMAN.

When the deal was replayed in a BBO game, Jessica Brake (S) also opened 1NT, all pass. I was West and also led the \checkmark 2: eight – six – four. South knocked out the \diamond A and East returned the \checkmark 5. Declarer won and had three hearts, four diamonds and two clubs, 9 tricks, East-West, –150 and the bottom result out of the three tables.

I could have led a spade and held declarer to eight tricks, but who would lead from A-Q-10-9 against 1NT?

This was the very next deal:

Board 57: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable



East passed and this time I opened 1NT as South, all pass. The answer to the question, 'Who would lead from A-Q-10-9 against 1NT?', the answer (yesterday's problem) is Susan Humphries, West above. Noting the benefit of the spade lead from A-Q-10-9 on the preceding hand, she led the $\mathbf{V}Q$ against 1NT. That won and she continued with the $\mathbf{V}9$ to the $\mathbf{V}K$. Jessica Brake (E) returned the $\mathbf{V}6$: jack – ace – $\mathbf{\bullet}6$. West cashed the $\mathbf{V}10$ and switched to the $\mathbf{\bullet}4$: nine – queen – ace.

The $\diamond 3$ to the $\diamond 9$ was taken by the $\diamond J$. East switched to the $\diamond 4$, ace. After $\diamond K$ to the $\diamond A$, I had seven tricks for +90. That was again a bottom board compared to the results at the other two tables.

West	North	East	South
Levin	Hanlon	Weinstein	Amoils
		Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the \diamond 5: nine – jack – king. South returned the \diamond 3 to the \diamond 8, winning and the \diamond 6: \diamond 3 – \diamond Q – \diamond A. West shifted to the \diamond 4: seven – queen – ace. South made two spades, three diamonds and four clubs, 9 tricks, +150.

West	North	East	South
Zatorski	Rodwell	Pachtmann	Meckstroth
		Pass	1 ♣ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	1 ♦ ⁽²⁾	Pass	1NT ⁽³⁾
Pass	Pass	Pass	
(1) Artificial,	16+ points		
(2) Artificial,	0-7 points		
(3) 16-18 poin	nts		

West led the 4: nine – jack – king. The Q won trick 2, followed by the 3: ace – eight – 46. West exited with the 7: 7 - 43 - 10. Declarer played the 5!: nine – eight – six. West switched to the 2: seven – queen – ace and South had the same nine tricks as at the other table, +150, no swing.

Quite surprising to find two consecutive deals where the best lead against 1NT is from an A-Q-10-9 suit.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2 ♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass
2♠	Pass	3 ♠ ⁽²⁾	Pass
?			

(1) Natural, forcing to game

(2) Strong, slam interest

What would you do next as West with:

▲ AJ9654

♥3

♦ AKQ7

\$97

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Demonstrative definition humour: At the end of the day, a cliché walks into a bar – fresh as a daisy, cute as a button and sharp as a tack.