6. Coming, Ready or Not

By Ron Klinger

Try these problems:

1. West dealer : East-West vulnerable

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

(1) Asking for a spade stopper

What would you lead as West from:

- **♦** KQ10874
- **♥** K62
- **4**
- **♣** 843
- 2. North dealer: East-West vulnerable

West	North 1 ♣	East 1♠	South
			$2NT^{(1)}$
3♠	Pass	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

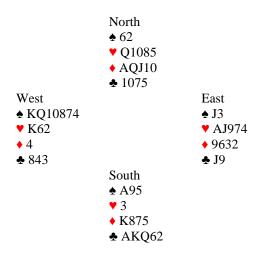
(1) 11-12 points, spade stopper, not 4 ♥s

What would you lead as West from:

- **♦** J62
- ♥ KJ1074
- ♦ 9542
- **♣** A
- 1. This problem arose in the 2018 European Teams Championship. The full deal:

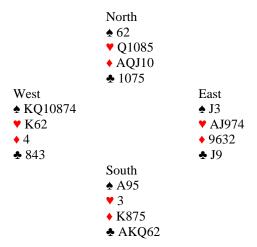
Round 31: Board 5

West dealer: East-West vulnerable



In England vs Russia, after the auction above, England's West led \checkmark 2: five – seven – three. East returned \checkmark 4 to the \checkmark K and back came \checkmark 6 to give England the first five tricks, E-W +50. At the other table, it went $2 \triangleq$: Pass: Pass: $3 \triangleq$, all pass, N-S +130, 6 Imps to England.

West dealer: East-West vulnerable



In Sweden vs Russia, after the problem auction above, Sweden's West also led the ♥2 and East-West took the first five tricks for +50. At the other table, with Sweden North-South:

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	3 ♠ ⁽¹⁾	Dble	Pass
Pass	4♣	Pass	4 ♠ ⁽²⁾
Pass	5♣	All Pass	
(1) A 1.	C 1 .		

- (1) Asking for a spade stopper
- (2) Cue-bid

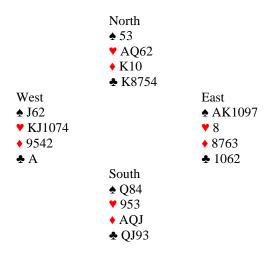
South ducked the spade lead, won the next spade, cashed ♣A, ♣K, ruffed the ♠9 with the ♣10, crossed to the ♦K and drew the missing trump for 11 tricks, +400 and +10 Imps.

The thinking behind the ♥2 lead against 3NT is that declarer is ready for the spade lead. Perhaps declarer is not ready for a heart lead.

2. This problem arose in the 2018 Victor Champion Cup Open Teams:

Round 9: Board 2

North dealer: East-West vulnerable



I was sitting West and thought, as above: 'South is clearly prepared for a spade lead. Maybe South does not have hearts well-covered.' With a sure entry with the ♣A, I hoped partner might have the ♥Q or the ♥A and so led the ♥4.

I was right in that South did not have anything resembling a stopper in hearts, but alas, North was strong in hearts. Declarer finessed the $\triangledown Q$ and played a club to the $\clubsuit Q$ and $\clubsuit A$. He made 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 4 clubs, nine tricks, +400.

As you can see, a spade lead to ♠K and a low spade back defeats 3NT. Ah, well, c'est la vie. You just hope partner is understanding.

Datum: N-S 160. S 3NT x 29: 10 failed (spade lead x 9, \checkmark J x 1); 19 succeeded (heart lead x 17, $2 \spadesuit$ x 1, \spadesuit 5 x 1). N 3NT x 8: 4 failed (spade lead), 4 made it (\spadesuit A lead x 2, \spadesuit 7 x 1, \clubsuit 2 x 1).

"I haven't played bridge for a long time."

"I play three times a week and I also haven't played bridge for a long time."