

# 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♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	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	East	South
	1♣	1♠	2NT <sup>(1)</sup>
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

	North	
	♠ 62	
	♥ Q1085	
	♦ AQJ10	
	♣ 1075	
West		East
♠ KQ10874		♠ J3
♥ K62		♥ AJ974
♦ 4		♦ 9632
♣ 843		♣ J9
	South	
	♠ A95	
	♥ 3	
	♦ K875	
	♣ AKQ62	

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

West dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 62	
	♥ Q1085	
	♦ AQJ10	
	♣ 1075	
West		East
♠ KQ10874		♠ J3
♥ K62		♥ AJ974
♦ 4		♦ 9632
♣ 843		♣ J9
	South	
	♠ A95	
	♥ 3	
	♦ K875	
	♣ AKQ62	

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♠ <sup>(1)</sup>	Dble	Pass
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠ <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	5♣	All Pass	

(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.

In France vs Greece, it went 2♠ : Pass : 3♠ : 3NT, all pass. The French West led the ♠K: two – jack – five(?), a very macho duck. A heart switch would now take 3NT two off and leave South with egg on the face, but that was too hard for West. South won the next spade and had ten tricks, +430. At the other table, it went 2S : Pass : Pass : 2NT, all pass. West led the ♠K. Would you believe that South also risked the contract by ducking at trick 1? South won the next spade and also made ten tricks, +180 but 6 Imps to France.

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

Round 9 : Board 2

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 53	
	♥ AQ62	
	♦ K10	
	♣ K8754	
West		East
♠ J62		♠ AK1097
♥ KJ1074		♥ 8
♦ 9542		♦ 8763
♣ A		♣ 1062
	South	
	♠ Q84	
	♥ 953	
	♦ AQJ	
	♣ QJ93	

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 ♥Q and played a club to the ♣Q and ♣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, ♥J x 1); 19 succeeded (heart lead x 17, 2♠ x 1, ♦5 x 1). N 3NT x 8: 4 failed (spade lead), 4 made it (♠A lead x 2, ♠7 x 1, ♠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.”*