

40. Starting out

By Ron Klinger

This problem arose in a teams' match on BBO in early April:

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

North
♠ 1052
♥ KJ6
♦ 952
♣ 10876

South
♠ AKJ9
♥ A2
♦ A74
♣ AK54

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

(1) Strong hand, 23+ balanced or forcing to game

(2) Negative or waiting

(3) 23-24 balanced

Suppose West leads the ♦J: two – eight . . . Do you take the ace or duck? Suppose you do take ace. How will you continue?

If you duck at trick 1 (since no other suit is an immediate threat), North continues with the ♦K: five – queen – seven and the ♦6: nine – ♥3 (encouraging hearts) – ace. How would you continue? This was the full deal:

North dealer : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ 1052	
	♥ KJ6	
	♦ 952	
	♣ 10876	
West		East
♠ 64		♠ Q873
♥ 985		♥ Q10743
♦ KJ1063		♦ Q8
♣ J93		♣ Q2
	South	
	♠ AKJ9	
	♥ A2	
	♦ A74	
	♣ AK54	

After the auction above, West led ♦J: two – eight – ace. South played ♣A, ♣K and a third club. West won and continued with ♦K, ♦10 and two more diamonds to take 3NT one off. Had South ducked two rounds of diamonds and won the third, playing ♣A, ♣K and a third club would also fail. Note that even if diamonds are 4-3 (and there is no guarantee of that if you take the ♦A at trick 1), playing clubs still gives you only eight tricks.

You still need a finesse in one major or the other later. Your best chance is to play East for the ♠Q. Win the ♦A sooner or later, cross to the ♥K and lead the ♠10. If East covers you have four spade tricks. If East ducks, the ♠10 wins. You repeat the finesse and you have nine tricks.

This was yesterday's problem:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	2NT (20-22)
	3NT	All Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 64
♥ 985
♦ KJ1063
♣ J93

As you have seen above, at one table West led the ♦J. You never know, partner might have ♦A-x-x and declarer ♦Q-x-x. At the other table, however, West led the ♥9.

	North	
	♠ 1052	
	♥ KJ6	
	♦ 952	
	♣ 10876	
West		East
♠ 64		♠ Q873
♥ 985		♥ Q10743
♦ KJ1063		♦ Q8
♣ J93		♣ Q2
	South	
	♠ AKJ9	
	♥ A2	
	♦ A74	
	♣ AK54	

Trick 1: ♥9: six – three (encouraging) – ace. South played ♣A, ♣K and a third club, won by West as East discarded the ♠7. West continued with the ♥8. Thinking that perhaps West had five hearts and East ♥Q-x-x, South rose with the ♥K. Next came ♠10: three – nine – four, the ♣4 to the ♠10 and the ♠2: eight – jack – six for ten tricks, +430 and +10 Imps.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. South dealer : Both vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	Pass	2♠
Dble	Pass	3♥	Pass
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ Q
♥ K1094
♦ KQ103
♣ AQJ3

2. West dealer : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	Pass	Dble
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♥
Pass	?		

What would you do as North with:

♠ J72
♥ K103
♦ K1072
♣ K108

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

“Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted. (Albert Einstein (1879-1955))