

137. Red in my eyes

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥
2♣	2♥	3♣	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 3
♥ AK87
♦ J74
♣ AQJ93

You can make a case for the lead of any suit. A singleton appeals. If partner comes on lead partner can give you a spade ruff. Leading the ♥A will give you a look at dummy and you can decide how to continue, perhaps with three rounds of trumps to remove any ruffing power in dummy. The ♦4, the unbid suit, is not likely to do any damage. You could aim for a forcing defence by leading the ♣A and continuing clubs. Maybe you will end up with more trumps than declarer. Make up your mind before reading on.

Some of these leads have better chances than others. The ♠3 lead could work, but there is nothing to say that partner has an entry. The ♣A lead could work if partner has the ♣K and if dummy has length in clubs and declarer is short in clubs. There is no evidence of that and partner does not need to have the ♣K for the raise to 3♣. The ♦4 lead could destroy a trick in diamonds if, say, dummy has ♦K-x-x and declarer ♦A-10-9. That leaves a top heart, although that could also give away a trick if partner has the ♥10 or the ♥9 and declarer has Q-J-9-x-x or Q-J-10-x-x. No one is handing out guarantees that your lead will hit gold, but a top heart gives you a good idea for your next move.

This deal arose in a Knockout Teams event in a match between an Australian Team and a USA Team in June.

	North	
	♠ Q98654	
	♥ 943	
	♦ 6	
	♣ 1062	
West		East
♠ 3		♠ K1072
♥ AK87		♥ --
♦ J74		♦ Q109532
♣ AQJ93		♣ 875
	South	
	♠ AJ	
	♥ QJ10652	
	♦ AK8	
	♣ K4	

At one table, West led the ♠3: eight – ten – jack. Declarer cashed ♦A and ruffed the ♦8 in dummy. The ♥4 went to the queen and king and West returned the ♥7, taken by the ♥9. After ♠2 to the king and ace, West cashed the ♣Q and the ♣J was ruffed. South lost two hearts and two clubs, one light, East -West + 50.

At the other table, West doubled 4♥ and led the ♣A, followed by the ♣Q, ruffed. South won and played the ♥10 (not best!). West could still have defeated 4♥ by taking ♥K, ♥A and playing a third heart, but played low on the ♥10. Now South realized the error at trick 3 and promptly switched to ♦A and the ♦8, ruffed. After the ♠4 to the ♠J, declarer played the ♥2 and made ten tricks, +590 and +12 Imps. Note that starting with ♥A, ♥K and a third heart should take 4♥ two down. The defence collects 2 hearts, a diamond and 2 clubs.

This arose later in the same match:

Dealer East : Both vulnerable

North

♠ AK
♥ AQJ84
♦ 98
♣ 10932

East

♠ 108
♥ K9632
♦ 1064
♣ J86

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

West leads the ♦2 (fourth-highest): eight – ten – king. South plays the ♥5: ten – queen – king. What do you do now as East?

North

♠ AK
♥ AQJ84
♦ 98
♣ 10932

West
♠ 9642
♥ 107
♦ QJ52
♣ AK5

East
♠ 108
♥ K9632
♦ 1064
♣ J86

South

♠ QJ753
♥ 5
♦ AK73
♣ Q74

At the other table it went:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦ (fourth suit forcing)
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Both Wests led the ♦2. East played the ♦10 and South won. Both Souths took the heart finesse, losing to the king. When East returned the ♦6, South played the ♦3 and West won with the jack. West switched to the ♥10. South was cut off from the ♦K and the spade suit. Declarer cashed ♠A, ♠K and played the ♣10: jack – queen – king. West cashed the ♣A and exited with the ♣5 to dummy's ♣9. Declarer cashed the ♣3 and exited with the ♥4. That gave the defence five tricks and South was one down, –100

At the other table, after winning with the ♥K at trick 2, East switched to the ♣6: four – king - two. That would have worked if West had started with ♣A-K-Q-x, but it worked out badly here. West could have saved the situation by switching to the ♦Q or ♦J, but elected to play East for Q-J-x-6 (unlikely given South's 1♠ opening). West cashed the ♣A and played a third club. South won, unblocked the spades, cashed ♥A. ♥J and returned to hand to reach the spade winners. South made ten tricks, +630 and +12 Imps.

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	?	

What would you do as East with:

♠ K742
♥ --
♦ KQ765
♣ J652

2. Dealer West : Both vulnerable

North
♠ K32
♥ K86
♦ J984
♣ QJ6

East
♠ QJ107
♥ 94
♦ AK107
♣ 1042

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♥ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) 5+ hearts

(2) Maximum pass, heart support

West leads the ♦3: four – king – six. What do you play at trick 2?

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

Seniors' behaviour: Aging has slowed you down, but it hasn't shut you up.