

# 229. Short of ideal

By Ron Klinger

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
<i>Igla</i>	<i>Diamond</i>	<i>Piedra</i>	<i>Platnick</i>
	1♠	Pass	1NT <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	3♣ <sup>(3)</sup>	Pass	4♦ <sup>(4)</sup>
Pass	4♥ <sup>(5)</sup>	All Pass	

(1) 5-12 points, forcing

(2) 10-12 points

(3) I wish to bail out. Please bid 3♦.

(4) Happy to play in game in either minor.

(5) That was not my intention.

What would you lead as East from:

♠ 9652  
♥ 92  
♦ AK95  
♣ K76

Today's deal come from Session 2 of the 2017 Spingold (USA Open Teams), the quarter-final match between [DIAMOND](#) and [PIEDRA](#).

Board 27: Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AK874	
	♥ KQ1043	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 108	
West		East
♠ Q103		♠ 9652
♥ J875		♥ 92
♦ Q83		♦ AK95
♣ Q32		♣ K76
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ A6	
	♦ J7642	
	♣ AJ954	

South's dramatic jump to 4♦ should show at least 5-5 in the minors. As South passed North's 4♥, South figures to have more hearts than spades. Maybe South is 1-2-5-5 (as was the case) or 0-2-5-6 or 0-2-6-5. In each case, South can ruff spade losers in dummy. You do not have much in spades, but partner might have spade winners than could need protecting. A trump lead looks like a good idea.

In practice, East led the ♦K: two – eight – ten and the ♦5: jack – queen – ♥3. North played ♠A, ♠K, spade ruff with the ♥6 and cashed the ♣A. After diamond ruff and a spade ruff with the ♥A, North had made seven tricks. When the next diamond was played and West showed out, North had three more tricks with the ♥K-Q-10.

If East begins with a trump lead, declarer can ruff only one spade in dummy and the defence can come to a spade, a club, a diamond and a heart. It would not have helped East to switch to a trump after the ♦K won trick 1. Declarer can win in hand, cash ♠A, ♠K, ruff a spade, ruff a diamond, cash a top trump and play a low club. Declarer has a counter whether East plays low or inserts the ♣K.

Board 27: Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

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	♥ KQ1043	
	♦ 10	
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West		East
♠ Q103		♠ 9652
♥ J875		♥ 92
♦ Q83		♦ AK95
♣ Q32		♣ K76
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ A6	
	♦ J7642	
	♣ AJ954	

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>Lindqvist</i>	<i>Pollack</i>	<i>Brogeland</i>	<i>Fergani</i>
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East led the ♦A and switched to the ♥9: six – seven – ten. Declarer played the ♣8: king – ace – two, followed by a diamond ruff, the ♠A, ♠K, and a spade ruff with the ♥A. After another diamond ruff, this was the position:

	North	
	♠ 87	
	♥ KQ	
	♦	
	♣ 10	
West		East
♠		♠ 9
♥ J87		♥ 2
♦		♦ K
♣ Q3		♣ 76
	South	
	♠	
	♥	
	♦ J7	
	♣ J95	

Declarer claimed 9 tricks, +140, but 7 Imps to **DIAMOND**. It is true that if North plays a spade next or after ♥K, ♥Q, declarer makes only 9 tricks, but if declarer plays ♥K, ♥Q and the ♣10, West wins and has to give declarer a tenth trick with a club. That would have given North-South +170 and a loss of 6 Imps.

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South	What would you lead as West from:
	1♠	Pass	1NT <sup>(1)</sup>	♠ Q102
Pass	2♥	Pass	2NT <sup>(2)</sup>	♥ J875
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT	♦ Q83
Pass	Pass	Pass		♣ Q32

(1) 5-12 points, forcing

(2) 10-12 points

North has at least 10 cards in the majors. South has at least 9 cards in the minors, probably more. Leading into one of South's minors has no appeal. It is a guess which major to choose, but South might well have a singleton spade and so there is more to gain with a spade lead. In that case, which spade? If dummy has ♠A-K-J or A-K-x-x-x opposite J-x or similar, it makes no difference which spade you lead, but what if South has ♠J bare?

	North	
	♠ AK874	
	♥ KQ1043	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 108	
West		East
♠ Q103		♠ 9652
♥ J875		♥ 92
♦ Q83		♦ AK95
♣ Q32		♣ K76
	South	
	♠ J	
	♥ A6	
	♦ J7642	
	♣ AJ954	

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, West led the ♠Q: ace – five – jack. That was a bit of luck for the lead, but not enough as the cards lay. Declarer played the ♣10: king – ace – two and the ♣9: three – eight – seven. A third club would have given declarer 4 clubs, 3 hearts and 2 spades. The defence could take only a club and three diamonds.

However, if clubs were 4-2, declarer could lose two clubs and three diamonds. South therefore opted to try to bring in the hearts. Declarer could have succeeded via ♥A and finessing the ♥10, but ♥A, ♥K, ♥Q did not work. Declarer made 3 hearts, 2 spades, 2 clubs and a diamond at the end. That was one down.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	1NT <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦ <sup>(2)</sup>
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) 15-18 points

(2) No major

What would you lead as West from:

♠ J62  
♥ 432  
♦ 9  
♣ J98654

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

*Grammar humour: The past, the present and the future walked into a bar. It was tense.*