

## 244. Bridge for tailors: Suit combination

By Ron Klinger

You are South, declarer, playing no-trumps

North  
J86

South  
KQ43

West leads the five (fourth-highest): six – ten . . . With which card do you win the trick? Suppose you win and return the four. West plays the seven. Which card do you play from dummy?

A defender generally wins with the cheapest of equally high cards. A declarer will do best most of the time by winning with the highest of equally high cards. South should win trick 1 with the king, though it almost certainly makes no difference here.

If declarer returns the four and West plays low (the seven, as above), South should finesse dummy's 8. There are two reasons to support this. What are they?

1. When playing third hand high, a defender plays the cheapest of equally high cards. When East played the ten, it denied the nine. Placing the nine with West entitles you to finesse dummy's eight.

2. The Rule of 11 comes up with the same answer. Rule of 11: Deduct the card led from 11. If the lead is fourth-highest, then the answer is the number of cards higher than the card led in the other three hands. West led the 5, fourth-highest.  $11 - 5 = 6$  cards higher than the 5 in dummy, East and declarer. South can see five cards higher than the 5 (K, Q, J, 8 and 6). Therefore the 10 is East's only card higher than the 5 and you can finesse the 8.

This was yesterday's problem:

Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

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

(1) 11-14 points

What would you lead as West from:

♠ J  
♥ A975  
♦ KJ976  
♣ J87

Your long suit is diamonds, but as South opened 1♦, a diamond lead does not appeal. A low heart is certainly an option, but another lead is also attractive. North would have had methods to find 3-card support from South if North had five spades. It is reasonable to infer that North has four spades. South would have raised spades with four spades and so South has at most three spades. That means partner will have five spades or more and the ♠J, leading through dummy's length might be helpful for partner.

The deal arose in the 2019 Vanderbilt (USA Knock-Out Open Teams) Round of 32 match between [SPECTOR](#) and [ZIMMERMANN](#).

Bd. 27: Dealer South : Nil vulnerable

	North
	♠ AQ54
	♥ J86
	♦ A10
	♣ A1065
West	East
♠ J	♠ K10963
♥ A975	♥ 102
♦ KJ976	♦ 32
♣ J87	♣ 9432
	South
	♠ 872
	♥ KQ43
	♦ Q854
	♣ KQ

West	North	East	South
<i>Glukowski</i>	<i>Wolpert</i>	<i>Gawrys</i>	<i>Spector</i>
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

(1) 11-14 points

West led ♥5, 4th-highest: six – ten – king. South returned ♥4: seven – eight – two. Without that lead, South has only two heart tricks. The heart lead gave South a third heart trick. South continued with ♥J: ♦3 – ♥3 – ♥A.

West switched to the ♠J: queen – king – two. East returned the ♠9: seven – ♥9 – ♠A. South crossed to the ♣Q, cashed the ♥Q and ♣K and played the ♦4 to the ♦A. When the ♣A dropped the ♣J, dummy's ♣10 was high for declarer's ninth trick, +400. South made 3 hearts, 4 clubs the ♠A and the ♦A.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
<i>W'dridge</i>	<i>Gromov</i>	<i>Hurd</i>	<i>Dubin</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass <sup>(1)</sup>
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) You do not see many top players passing a 12-point hand any more, even ace-less ones.

North's 2♠ bid ruled out a spade lead from East, who began with the ♣4, taken by the ♣Q. The ♥3 went to the ♥J and after ♥6: ten – king – ace, West returned the ♥9: six – ♠3 – ♥Q. This set up West's ♥7 as a winner. Declarer made the ♠A, 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 4 clubs, one light, East-West +50 and 10 Imps to SPECTOR.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

What would you do as South with:

West	North	East	South	
		Pass	1♥	♠ KQ52
Pass	4♣ <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	?	♥ AQ976
				♦ --
				♣ AKQ4

(1) Splinter, 11+ HCP, 4+ hearts, 0-1 club

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

*Before the crowbar was invented, crows had to drink at home.*