

## 249. A lucky guess

*By Ron Klinger*

This was yesterday's problem:

Pairs: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

What would you lead as West from:

♠ 10732  
♥ 954  
♦ K108  
♣ J98

When you do not have a very good lead (a singleton or an A-K suit or an honour sequence) against a trump contract, you should start by weeding out the worst choices. Leading from an A-K-high suit is usually an excellent choice. Leading from a suit headed by the ace or king without a touching honour is often a very poor choice. You could delete ♦K-10-8 first. A spade lead, a suit bid by dummy, has no appeal from your holding of 10-7-3-2.

That leaves a trump or a club as likely to be the preferable choice. Both are relatively safe. A trump lead could trap partner's ♥Q-x or ♥K-x, but that holding was probably doomed anyway. The downside of a heart lead is that it gives the tempo to declarer, who might be able to draw trumps and set up a spade winner or two in dummy to pitch a loser or two from hand. Imagine dummy has K-Q-J-x in spades and the ♣A, with the ♣K-Q with East. My vote would go for the ♣8, but on any given day, any of the leads might work.

This was the full deal:

	North	
	♠ AKQ86	
	♥ J3	
	♦ 54	
	♣ Q653	
West		East
♠ 10732		♠ 54
♥ 954		♥ 86
♦ K108		♦ Q7632
♣ J98		♣ AK74
	South	
	♠ J9	
	♥ AKQ1072	
	♦ AJ9	
	♣ 102	

As it happens, declarer makes 12 tricks on any lead but a club. After the ♣8 lead: three . . . East can score a top board by taking the ♣K and ♣A. East should figure that is a good idea, given that South jumped to 3♥ and North has a huge hand including those powerful spades.

The club turned out to be lucky. A diamond lead could have worked if East had the ♦A and South the ♣A. Top East-West was for a club lead, holding South to 11 tricks, +650. Another West also led a club, but East switched at trick 2, South +680. Five other Souths scored 680, three times after a trump lead, twice after a diamond lead. Second top for North-South came for 3NT by South, +690 on the ♠2 lead. The North-South top went to 6♥ by South, +1430, after West led the ♥9.

Pairs: Dealer East : North-South vulnerable

	North	
	♠ AKQ86	
	♥ J3	
	♦ 54	
	♣ Q653	
West		East
♠ 10732		♠ 54
♥ 954		♥ 86
♦ K108		♦ Q7632
♣ J98		♣ AK74
	South	
	♠ J9	
	♥ AKQ1072	
	♦ AJ9	
	♣ 102	

To reach 6♥, North-South would probably have bid something along this line 1♥ : 1♠, 3♥ : 4NT, 5♣ (0 or 3 key cards for hearts) : 5♦ ('Do you have the trump queen?'), 5♠ ('Yes') : 6♥, all pass. Obviously a club lead would beat this. If the auction had gone that way, West can expect North to have strong spades and a club lead or a diamond lead is indicated. After 1♥ : 1♠, 3♥ (15-18 points, usually 6 losers), North with 6½ losers (Q-x-x-x counts as 2½ losers in an unbid suit) is just a touch short of insisting on slam, but success forgives all.

## Problem for Tomorrow:

Teams: Dealer South : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1♥
?			

What would you do as West with:

♠ K10852  
♥ 105  
♦ J654  
♣ KJ

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

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