

288. Preferential treatment

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

North

♠ QJ976

♥ QJ5

♦ 7

♣ QJ64

East

♠ AK

♥ 97

♦ Q542

♣ 109532

West	North	East	South
			1NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	2♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	3♥ ⁽³⁾
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

(1) 15-17 points

(2) 5-card major Stayman

(3) 5 hearts, maximum points

If South had rebid 2♦ (minimum no 5-card major) or 2NT (maximum, no 5-card major), North was planning to rebid 3♥ next as a transfer, showing 5+ spades.

West leads the ♣A, ♣4 from dummy . . . which club do you play as East?

What do you know about partner's lead?

It cannot be from ♣A-K. As you have counted dummy's points (9) and added your own (9) and South has a maximum 1NT (16-17), total, 34-35 HCP, partner cannot have more than 6 HCP. The ♣A lead will be either a singleton or top from a doubleton.

Which is more likely?

Partner would / should be reluctant to lead from A-x into a 1NT opener. It is more likely that the ♣A lead is a singleton.

What will partner want to know?

The location of your entry.

How can you let partner know your entry is in spades?

By playing the ♣10, high card for the high suit, trumps excluded.

When partner plays a spade, what will you do?

Win with the ♠K and return the ♣9, high card for the high suit. With A-K doubleton, one usually plays ace-then-king, but if partner shifts to a spade and you win with the ace, partner will assume you do not have the king, even if you play the ♣9 next.

Might partner misinterpret the ♠10 as encouraging (if you play high-encourage) or as discouraging (if you play low-like) or as a count signal?

Sadly, it is possible for partner to misinterpret any signal. Partner is certainly not interested in how many clubs you have. As for the attitude signal, partner should assume you have read the ♣A lead correctly and accordingly you have given a suit-preference signal.

Dealer South : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ QJ976	
	♥ QJ5	
	♦ 7	
	♣ QJ64	
West		East
♠ 854		♠ AK
♥ 862		♥ 97
♦ J109863		♦ Q542
♣ A		♣ 109532
	South	
	♠ 1032	
	♥ AK1043	
	♦ AK	
	♣ K87	

West leads the ♣A. East signals for spades with the ♣10. West switches to a spade. East wins with the king and returns the ♣9 for West to ruff. East wins the next spade and plays the ♣5 for West to ruff. If West reads East's signals correctly, ♠10, ♣9, ♣5, highest each time, West will play a third spade and East will ruff. That will take 4♥ three down. If West plays anything but a spade at trick 2, South wins, draws trumps and makes ten tricks.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : Nil vulnerable

	North		
	♠ A3		
	♥ K104		
	♦ A5		
	♣ AQ10743		
West			
♠ K75			
♥ AJ52			
♦ Q9743			
♣ 5			
West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Dble	2♣	3♦	3♠
4♦	4♠	All Pass	

1. West leads the ♣5: queen – six – two.
2. Declarer cashes the ♠A: six – two – five.
3. Declarer continues with the ♠3: jack – queen – king.

What would you play as West at trick 4?

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

It's 8.00am . . . my body is up . . . my mind will follow . . . hopefully sometime later today.