

400. A curiosity

By Ron Klinger

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ A1087643
♥ J762
♦ 4
♣ J

Suppose you have chosen 1♣. The auction continues:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2NT ⁽²⁾
Pass	3♣	Pass	?

(1) 5+ clubs, 4+ diamonds, 16+ points, forcing

(2) Weak hand, up to 7 HCP, 4+ spades, puppet to 3♣ unless opener has 19+ points

What would you do now as South?

The deal arose in a quarter-final match in the 2020 Spingold (USA Knock-out Open Teams):

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ --	
	♥ AK104	
	♦ KQ65	
	♣ K7642	
West		East
♠ Q95		♠ KJ2
♥ 3		♥ Q985
♦ A1083		♦ J972
♣ A10953		♣ Q8
	South	
	♠ A1087643	
	♥ J762	
	♦ 4	
	♣ J	

At one table, it went Pass : 1♣ : Pass : 3♠ (natural, pre-emptive), all pass. West led the ♥3, ace. Declarer played the ♦K: nine – four – ace. West returned the ♦3: queen – two – ♣J. Next came the ♣2: queen – ♠3 – ♣3. Declarer continued with the ♠A and the ♠4: nine – ♣6 – ♠J. East switched to the ♥5, West ruffed and exited with the ♦8. South ruffed, but still had a spade and a heart to lose, one down, – 50.

At the other table, North-South were playing a strong 1♣ opening (16+ points) and so North opened 1♦:

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Hearts stopped, 14-15 points

The play began the same way: ♥3 lead, won by the ♥A; ♦Q to the ♦A; ♦3 returned: king – two – ♣J; club ruff; ♠A, followed by the ♠8: nine – ♦5 – ♠J. East did not piece together South's hand pattern and returned a club. South ruffed and played another spade, won by East. South ruffed the diamond return, crossed to the ♥K and played another heart. South lost 2 spades, a heart and a diamond, but did not suffer a heart ruff. That was nine tricks, North-South +140 and +5 Imps.

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ --	
	♥ AK104	
	♦ KQ65	
	♣ K7642	
West		East
♠ Q95		♠ KJ2
♥ 3		♥ Q985
♦ A1083		♦ J972
♣ A10953		♣ Q8
	South	
	♠ A1087643	
	♥ J762	
	♦ 4	
	♣ J	

This was yesterday's question:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Any weak hand, up to 7 HCP, 6-8 total points, 4+ spades

What would you lead as West from:

♠ Q95
♥ 3
♦ A1083
♣ A10953

South's 3NT was highly optimistic. Leading a spade, South's suit, is out of the question. The hearts figure to be well held between North and South (no 1♥ overcall by East). That cuts out a heart lead. North has 4 diamonds sitting over West's diamonds and 5 clubs sitting over West's clubs.

As South was more likely to be short in clubs than in diamonds, West opted for a club lead. Which club would you have chosen if you play fourth-highest leads?

From this combination one might lead the ♣10, top of an interior sequence. With North holding 5 clubs, that does not look like a good idea. You could certainly lead the ♣5. No one would chide you for that. West actually chose the ♣3. In theory this would be consistent with lead from a 4-card holding, but (a) West did not want South to know the actual length and so chose the ♣3 as a deceptive lead and (b) East could not reasonably expect that West would lead a club from a 4-card holding with dummy showing 5+ clubs.

When the deal was replayed in a game on BBO, West led the ♣3 – two – queen – jack against South's 3NT. East could read the club position as ♣J-10 with South and ♣A-9-5-3 with West or ♣J singleton with South and ♣A-10-9-5-3 with West. East shifted to ♦2: four – eight – queen. Declarer cashed the ♥A and exited with dummy's ♣4: eight – ♠6 – ♣5.

East switched to the ♠J. South took the ♠A and continued with the ♥2: ♦3 – ♥K – ♥5. Declarer played another low club from dummy. West's deceptive lead had fooled South. West won with the ♣9, cashed the ♦A and the ♣A and exited with the ♠9. Having discarded the ♠2, East won with the bare ♠K and cashed the ♥Q. That was three down, East-West +150. How much better for South if 3♠ had been bid instead of 3NT.

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Dble	?

What would you do as South with:

♠ 3
♥ 943
♦ J
♣ AKQ76542

What about if the auction had started:

West	North	East	South
1♦	2♠ ⁽¹⁾	Dble	?

(1) Weak jump-overcall

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

I hate double standards. Burn a body at a crematorium and you are 'being a respectful friend'. Do it at home and you are 'destroying evidence'.