

Unit 191/119 Mentor-Mentee Game September 17, 2025

5 Tables

Boards 1-4 Glen Anderson

Board 1 NS, EW non-vulnerable, North deals

North deals and passes, East bids 1S with 13 HCPs and 5-4-2-2 shape. South passes and West, with 13 HCPs will respond 2D playing 2/1 or Standard American, North passes and East now bids 2H showing 4+ hearts (but longer or equal length in spades). East-West should be in game with 2 8+ card major fits and 26 HCPs.

At all the tables, East-West played in spades – 4 times in 4S and once in 3S. Generally, 4-4 fits play better than 5-3 fits and the long side suit provides the potential to pitch losing cards in the minors. Also, the other reason for West to jump to 4H instead of 4S is that East may have 5 hearts instead of 4 hearts, hence a 9-card fit.

The play of the hand: The safest lead for South is a club – which club is led is a matter of style – 3rd and 5th or 4th best leads – some will lead second best (6 from 96543) from the South holding to discourage partner from returning the suit and leading another suit. In 4S, the lead of a low heart or the Heart Queen could cost a trick.

Planning the play in 4S: Counting losers with normal splits

– 1 spade, 1 heart, 1 club and potentially 1 diamond. It turns out that the spade QJ is doubleton and the play of the Ace and King will bring in the suit. After drawing trumps, declarer should work on diamonds to provide at least one heart discard, but there is a serious blockage problem in spades, limiting entries to the West hand. Normally with plenty of entries, the Queen of diamonds would be led from the West hand – if North has the king, there are no diamond losers but 2 heart losers. But if the Ace of hearts is used as an entry to the diamond queen, the suit will block when South has the diamond king and declarer will lose a club, diamond and two hearts. The transportation problem can be circumvented by leading diamonds at trick 3 or 4, drawing just one spade with the King.

When a spade is led from the West or East hand, South has an automatic false card with the spade Queen to tempt East to finesse spades. Defensively, you should randomly play the Queen sometimes and Jack other times. The other common false card is the King from King-Queen doubleton.

Planning the play in 4H: Even though this is the preferred contract, it doesn't make on this hand – 2 heart losers, one diamond and one club. Unlucky. Even if East peeks at South's heart holding, South always gets two heart tricks because of the "8" spot – try leading the 10 of hearts from the East hand if you are not convinced.

Board 2, East deals, NS vulnerable, E-W non-vulnerable

East deals and should pass – yes there are 11 HCPs but the QJ of hearts is not pulling its weight, plus with a good 5-card spade suit and 5 clubs, East may be able to compete later in the auction. South passes and West will likely bid 1D or 2D depending on 3rd seat and preempt style. 2D opening is likely to be passed out and after 1D, East will bid 1S, West will bid 2D and that should be the end of the auction.

Planning the play in 2D or 3D (East -West should not be in 3D, but in the game three pairs played in 3D): This is not a happy contract as there are no entries to the East hand. North would likely lead the ace or king of hearts and switch to a diamond and West would capture the singleton King. How should West play after winning the diamond Ace? West has to lose two diamonds and at least 2 clubs – if North can be end-played the heart nine may set up or North may have to lead a spade to the East hand. As the card lies, West can lead the club King and smother the club queen and force North to ruff a club to prevent an entry to East. The way I would play this hand is to play four rounds of diamonds. North is in trouble when she wins the 4th diamond. If North cashes her 5th diamond, all leads are bad: heart 10 sets up West's nine, club queen actually works wonders – South ducks to West's K and now can take 2 clubs and lead a heart through West. I would

expect best defense to defeat 2D two or 3 tricks. In the game, 3D was down 4, 2 twice, and 2D made at one table, likely after a spade lead that provided two discards for West.

Board 3, South deals, NS non-vulnerable, E-W vulnerable

South opens 1D, West passes, and the spotlight is on North's response options. Playing inverted raises (showing 10+ and 4+card diamond support), North will bid 1NT showing 6-10 HCPs and denying a 4-card major. This bid guarantees that North/South have an 8-card fit in one of the minors (since North denied a 4-card major). East may choose to bid 2S over 1NT – this works out fine on this hand but could go minus 200 if South has spades. Over 2S, South is strong enough to make a free bid of 3C and North should prefer diamonds and bid 3D. South is strong enough to bid 4D and with nothing wasted in spades, North can raise but 5D only makes because the king of diamonds is onside.

Two North/South pairs went on to 5D, one pair played 3D, and another pair played 4D. One pair played 3NT.

There is not much to the play of diamond contracts – the king of diamonds comes down on the diamond lead from dummy, clubs are friendly so there is only one heart and one club loser. 3NT also makes as the card lie but has no play if the diamond king is offside.

Board 4, West deals, NS vulnerable, E-W vulnerable

West deals and passes as does North. East will open 1D (if you use the rule of 15, you have 13 HCPs and two spades. South will pass and West should bid 1NT. North has a 2D Michaels bid showing 5-5 in the majors (with 5-4 in majors and 3 clubs, North can double 1NT as takeout). At two tables, North passed and East/West made 8 tricks. Over 2D, East should double and with a clear preference for spades, South should bid 2S. At this point, the hand becomes pretty competitive – West should bid 3D (which became the final contract at one table), but South has enough to bid 3S. At one table the final contract was 3S and at the other table, 4S which looks to be pretty aggressive and in an open game would likely be doubled for 200 or 500.

There is no way that North/South can keep West from making 8 tricks in NT – low spade lead from North, North/South cash 5 spade tricks and East-West claim the rest – 2 hearts, 5 diamonds, and a club. 3D by West will make 10 or 11 tricks depending on the opening lead and the play in hearts (if North has shown 5-5 in the majors, there will be no heart loser – heart to the King, Jack of Hearts, covered, 10 of heart winning, heart ruff.

The declarer play in a spade contract played by South is interesting. West leads a diamond to East's Jack. East has three options at trick 2: continue diamonds, switch to a trump or switch to the 10 of clubs. Mentees can play the

hand with each of these continuations - which one will allow South to make the most tricks?

Boards 5-8 John Cobb

Board 5 N/S Vulnerable, North deals

Both North and East have clear Passes. The practical bid with the South hand is 1D. It is definitely not strong enough for a 2C opener. Some pairs in a large field will find a 2NT bid with this hand, even with a singleton heart King, trying to get the strength of the hand of their chest. One pair in our game did open 2NT, and the worst case scenario (partner with a weak hand and 5 card heart suit transfers to hearts) played out.

Over 1D, West has a poor 5 card spade suit and only 9 HCP, but will likely still overcall 1S. Every pair faced with this decision did come in with 1S. North has a clear pass, whether West overcalls or not.

When the auction comes back to East after a 1S overcall, they should evaluate their hand as worthy of a limit raise (especially as a passed hand) and make a cuebid of 2D (artificial and showing a limit raise of spades), not a simple raise to 2S. In our game, 4 of 4 pairs faced with this decision only bid 2S. As a passed hand, you have 10 HCP, 3 card support, and a useful doubleton, and this hand is worthy of a limit raise.

South has an interesting bid over 2D. I think the practical bid is 3D, which should end the auction. However, in our game multiple pairs competed to 3S. Suboptimal defense led to 3S not being punished as much as possible double-dummy.

Board 6 E/W Vulnerable, East deals

Assuming pairs are playing Strong (15-17) Notrump, East has a clear 1NT bid. The lack of a high card in Hearts should not be an impediment to opening 1NT. 1NT was the opening bid at 4 of our 5 tables.

Over 1NT, with N/S not-vulnerable vs. E/W Vulnerable, South can consider competing. With 9 cards in the black suits and KQJxx in Clubs, the manner of competing will depend on partnership agreements. Playing DONT for example (see [link](#)), South could bid 2C showing Clubs and a higher suit.

Assuming South passes, West needs to transfer to Hearts by bidding 2D. After East completes the transfer with 2H, West will either bid 3H invitational or jump to 4H depending on how they evaluate their hand. At Teams, where there is a premium for bidding games, I think bidding game directly is probably warranted. At matchpoints, the decision is closer.

If the final contract is 4H, N/S best defense is a Club lead. After winning the Club Ace, declarer needs to lead two rounds of Diamonds, pitching a club on the second

Diamond, before starting to draw trumps. Best for N/S is for South to win the first trump and then play 2 rounds of Clubs. This will put declarer to the test. If declarer thinks North is ready to ruff the third round, they must ruff the Club high and then hope the trumps split 2-2. In our layout, this is the winning line and declarer will take 10 tricks in Hearts.

Board 7 All Vulnerable, South deals

South has a clear Pass and West will normally open 1D. North has a good 5 card Heart suit and 10 HCP and has a clear overcall of 1H.

If North had passed, East would be duty bound to make a bid of 1H with his 7 HCP and a 4 card heart suit. With North bidding 1H, things have changed. If East chooses to bid, they are making a "free bid". A free bid is defined as: A bid that is made when a pass would still allow partner to make a bid. In a free bid situation, the criteria for various bids changes. An example is the response of 1NT. If North had passed, 1NT would show 6-10 HCP balanced hand with no 4 card major and no suitable diamond raise. After the 1H overcall by North, the 1NT free bid would show 8-10 HCP and a heart stopper.

With this particular hand, East only has 7 HCP, does not have a 4+ card spade suit to show, and does not have a Diamond raise. East can and should pass with this hand,

knowing that their partner is going to get another chance to speak.

South has an interesting decision after 1D - (1H) - P - ?. The hand has 9 HCP and a weak 5 card Spade suit, but is not suitable for a Heart raise and does not have a Diamond stopper (1NT here would typically show 8-11 HCP and a Diamond stopper). That leaves possible calls of 1S and Pass. You will find that there are many ways to play new suits by the Advancer in this situation. On the Convention Card, you will see checkboxes for Non-Forcing, Forcing, and Non-Forcing Constructive. Experienced players have differing thoughts as you can see from this discussion - <https://bridgewinners.com/article/view/responing-to-an-overcall-whats-forcing/>. As you gain experience, these are good conversations to have with your partner so you can solidify your agreements. Also see <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/simple-overcalls> for additional discussion on this topic.

West will rebid their Diamond suit and that should end the Auction. If South has not mentioned Spades in the Auction, the normal lead from North would be the Heart King. Most non-double dummy lines will result in 8 or 9 tricks for declarer. In looking at play at each table, then handling of the Spade suit was challenging for both sides. On a non-Spade lead, if declarer later in the hand leads the Spade Jack from dummy, South needs to cover this card with the King. Although their 10 could technically be

finessed against later, dummy does not have another entry. If the Spade Jack is not covered, this allows Declarer to take an immediate second finesse in the suit.

Board 8 None Vulnerable, West deals

The first round of the auction is straightforward and was replicated at all tables. 3 Passes and then South opens 1NT showing a balanced 15-17. West passes and then bidding decisions come into play.

North has 8 HCP and a 4 card Heart suit. Since South has 17, the partnership could have as many as 25 HCP combined, and may have an 8 card Heart fit. So game in Hearts or NT is potentially in play. That being said, it is close and I believe some number of experienced players could decide to pass 1NT.

Assuming North wants to investigate game, they should start with Stayman to see if their partner has 4 Hearts. In this case, South will respond with 2H and the spotlight is back on North. If you have gone down this path, I think North should invite game in Hearts by bidding 3H. At 2 of the tables in our game, North passed 2H, which is somewhat contradictory. You decided to pursue game, got good news, so you probably shouldn't stop now.

Now the spotlight moves to South. South has 16 HCP, which is middle of the range, has a Ten in the hand, has good Hearts, and has a potentially working QJ of clubs. If you give this hand and auction to a large set of

experienced players, I think you will get support for both 4H and Pass. Players have different ways of evaluating hands, and different approaches for when to accept (for example - Who should do the stretching - Inviter or Acceptor?). See <https://bridgewinners.com/article/view/accepting-rules-for-nt-invite/> and <https://andrew-gumperz.blogspot.com/2011/12/reader-writes-we-recently-lost-match.html> for some interesting discussion.

So the final contract is likely 3H or 4H. What happens in the play? If you look at the double-dummy analysis, 10 tricks are possible in Hearts and so the game bidders are rewarded. Oops, not so fast! The trump queen is doubleton offside. While declarer can drop the Queen if he can see through the backs of the cards, in practice declarer will likely follow the "8 Ever, 9 Never" guideline (see [link](#)) and take a losing trump finesse. This will limit declarer to 9 tricks.

Hand evaluation, When to invite/decline, Double-Dummy vs. Realistic declarer play - These are just a few of the reasons why there are very few absolutes in Bridge and it is such a rewarding game.

Boards 9-12 Mary Jo Dunnebacke

Board 9 EW vulnerable, N deals

North faces a question of whether to open 2h. This is not

a perfect weak two bid because North does not necessarily want a heart lead if NS end up on defense, I think a 2h bid is justified by its preemptive value. I would make that bid at any vulnerability, and here the vulnerability is favorable. Most of our Norths passed, and one opened 3h. Preempting in first or third seat makes life so difficult for our opponents that I think 3h is better than pass, though 2h is still my first choice.

Once N preempts, South can raise. South's hand could easily produce 3 defensive tricks on its own, and North might add a defensive trick, so South shouldn't think that EW have a game. But EW likely have a partscore, so it would be wise for S to bid 3h make it tough for EW to find their best spot.

And bidding 3h does put West in a tough position. West may feel that his side has a makeable contract, but W has no good way to find out what it is. Pass, Double, and 4c are all possible. I would choose Double, as it's the call that allows for partner's input.

Board 10 Both vulnerable, E deals

East opens 1s. West has enough to make a limit raise but not quite enough, in my opinion, to force to game. One of our Easts opened 1c. Long ago players were advised to open 1c with 5-5 in the black suits, to make it easy to rebid 1s. More modern advice is to open 1s because major suits are more important than minors and, if you open 1c,

the opponents may jam the auction by bidding a large number of hearts or diamonds before you have a chance to show your spades. So let's say East opens 1s.

Playing 2/1, the way to make a limit raise with only 3 trumps is to start with 1n, then raise spades later. So W bids 1n. One of our Wests bid 2s and another bid 2d. I think 2s is too weak and 2d is too strong for West's hand. North has a good heart suit but not enough strength to overcall 2h. After 1s-1n East has a close decision between 2c and 3c. Whichever bid E chooses, W will complete the plan and jump raise in spades. Preferring spades at the lowest level is too weak an action for West.

After West shows a limit raise, E may think they're in the slam zone. With such good controls, and the new knowledge of the spade fit, it is possible for E to bid RKCB. E will find one key card missing and, if their knowledge of RKCB is good enough, E can ask W about the spade queen. When that's missing too, E may rest in 5s. The slam is not good because EW are bound to lose the diamond ace and still have other possible losers in spades and clubs.

Board 11 Neither vulnerable, S deals

South opens 1d and West overcalls 1s. When S opens, N also has an opening hand and should try to reach game. North's first bid is 2h, which shows 10+ points, 5+ hearts, and is forcing for one round. Three of our Souths passed

North's 2h. That's a no-no. South has good spade stoppers and should be pleased to bid 2n, especially because any spade lead will come around to South's king-jack. After S shows a spade stopper N has enough to bid 3n.

West will likely lead a club because South has shown a spade stopper. East wins the ace. Switching to spades is very tempting because it's East's only chance to lead a spade through South and into West. If East does switch, then S can put in the spade J and West will win the Q. Then West has to refrain from leading either black suit, which would give S the ninth trick. NS will be unlucky because they might not make 3n despite having 26 hcp between them.

Board 12 NS vulnerable, W deals

Every W correctly opened 1s. N should contemplate a weak jump overcall of 3d but, I think, pass instead, because the hand does not meet the rule of 2, 3, or 4. See <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/rule-of-234> for thoughts about how aggressively to preempt. Those thoughts apply to overcalls as well as opening bids. If N and E both pass, then I think South's best call is 1n which, in the balancing seat, shows 11-14 hcp points plus a spade stopper. West has too much to sell out and can bid 2c. If East had bid, then West would have enough for a jump shift. But I don't think a jump shift is warranted after East passes. 2c is enough.

It's hard to say what should happen after 2c. North should think about how many tricks he might take opposite the balanced approximately 12 points that South promised. 12 points usually provide 2–4 tricks, and North has 5–6 tricks, so the combined total is 7–10. However, there's a question of how North's bids will be understood. Do NS use their usual notrump system even when S has overcalled 1n in the balancing seat? Is NS's notrump system on when West intervenes with 2c? See <https://larryco.com/bridge-articles/lebensohl-stolen-bid-doubles-and-interference-over-1nt> for a simple method of handling opponents' interference over our notrump bid. Using that method, N will use whatever bid they have that asks partner to bid 3d.

Boards 13-15 Eric Hamilton

Board 13 Both vulnerable, North deals

East opens 1H. South may consider coming in with 2D (there is an interesting digression about the risk-reward balance here), but either way west is bidding 2H and that comes back around to east.

East now faces a glass half-full/half-empty problem: their hand is much better than a minimum opening bid but not quite good enough to make game opposite a dead minimum 2H response. The optimists will blast 4H, the pessimists will bid 3H as a game try: "partner, raise to game unless you have an absolute dead minimum" which west will happily pass.

Whether the contract is 3H or 4H, south's most likely lead is a small spade (although as the cards lie any reasonable lead works). Declarer wins in hand and considers the play: two potential losers in each minor suit and the trump king to worry about. If the trumps are 2-1 a small singleton is twice as likely as king singleton and they might be 3-0, so the percentage play in the trump suit is to finesse. That requires getting to the dummy, the only possible entry is in clubs, we're going to ruff the third club eventually so we may as well get started on them. Declarer leads a club towards dummy and puts up the king, north wins the ace, thrusts the diamond jack back through, the defense scores up four tricks in the minors and even with the heart king on side declarer is held to nine tricks.

So were the optimists or the pessimists right? Consider that if we switch the club queen and the club ace the auction will be the same - but now ten tricks roll in.

Board 14 Neither vulnerable, East deals

South is 3-1 in the majors with four diamonds and five clubs, but not strong enough to reverse by opening 1C and rebidding 2D over the likely 1H, 1S, or 1N response.

There are two schools of thought here:

A) Open 1C, planning to rebid 1N if partner bids the singleton and to raise on three-card support if partner bids that suit.

B) Open 1D, planning to pass over a 1N response, bid 2C

after 1H or 1S.

Plan A leads to painful ambiguities later in the auction because responder with a four-card suit cannot completely trust opener's raise (some advanced partnerships use a gadget called "spiral game tries" to handle this problem) and pretty much guarantees losing the diamond suit. Plan B runs the risk of playing in diamonds when we should be in clubs. It's a partnership game, we can pick our poison as long as both partners pick the same one (and these days the trend among advanced players is plan A).

In our game we had three plan B pairs and two plan A pairs and either way west with 5-5 in the majors makes a Michaels cuebid. If south started with 1C north will of course compete aggressively to buy the contract in clubs. If south started with 1D north has no bid over the Michaels, east will bid two of a major, and if over that south doesn't bid 3C north should in the passout seat.

The play in a club contract is uncomplicated: we lose two black aces and the offside diamond king, making ten tricks. We are somewhat disappointed that it isn't eleven: The bidding has told us that there seven minor suit cards with east and three with west, so east was a 7:3 favorite to hold the KD.

And why are we so sure that it was right to compete over east's 2H/2S contract? At this vulnerability it is almost never right to sell out to 2H/2S when it looks like the

opponents want to be there. We would rather be down two for -100 than defending 2H/2S for -110, and if our contract makes we lose by defending unless we can hold them to just five tricks.

Board 15 NS vulnerable, South deals

South opens 1N with their balanced 16, surprising West who had been expecting to open 1N themselves. What happens next depends on the east-west agreements. Most experienced partnerships use double in this situation as some sort of artificial bid. West has no choice except to quietly pass and hope that the balance of strength lies with east and they will reopen in the passout seat. It doesn't, so south gets to play 1N and takes eight tricks: four diamonds, two clubs and a heart by force, and the spade ace so +120 and on to the next board. (South can take nine tricks, but only by making an unrealistic double dummy play: ace of spades then small to set up the queen).

But suppose that east-west are playing the old-fashioned method in which double shows a balanced hand at least as good as the NT opener? There's nothing wrong with that treatment, the only reason more people don't play it is that it doesn't come up often so there are better uses for the double. Now west will double to show their balanced 15-17, and east-west will bid on just as if west had opened 1NT: east bids 2C garbage stayman or 2H transfer to

spades, and either way they end up in 2S. 2S doesn't make, but it is only down one or two and that's beats -120 for selling out to 1N.

Boards 16-18 Michael Lavine

Board 16 EW vulnerable, West deals

West has a clear opening bid of 1h; and that's what happened at every table. In my opinion, N should overcall 1s; that happened at all but one table. Then East should pass and hope for partner to re-open with a double, which East would pass for penalties. One East bid 1n over North's 1s. I think that's inferior because partner will expect more hcp and a more balanced hand. With this spade holding, East should expect to defeat 1s and should want to defend because the singleton heart further indicates a misfit with partner.

Regardless of whether E passes, what should South do with that beautiful diamond suit? Pass! Although South isn't happy about N's 1s, bidding diamonds shows more strength than South has. See <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/simple-overcalls> or <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5127d3d2e4b0b304f0b6db24/t/6653de50a7fe4f73efb35f8d/1716772433033/4+%28527%29+Advancing+Partner%27s+Overcall+without+>

[a+Fit.pdf](#) for details. I think the wisest course is to pass and hope that West reopens the bidding. West will rebid hearts and that should end the auction.

West has seven obvious tricks. West might try to ruff a diamond, but I don't think NS will permit that; they'll lead hearts after either the first or second diamond. West's best play might be to pull trump, give up the spade king, and hope that NS lead either spades or clubs at some point.

Board 17, North deals, both non-vulnerable

I agree with all five Norths not to open this hand and with all five Easts to open 1c. If South stays out of the auction, EW are likely to bid 1c-1s; 1n-?, and West will either pass or place the contract in 2 spades. Either action is acceptable. At one table the auction went 1c-1s; 1n-2d. I presume 2d was New Minor Forcing. I think that's a mistake. NMF shows at least an invitational hand, 11+ points, which West doesn't have. It's better to describe one's strength accurately even at the possible expense of missing a 5-3 fit. If W bids NMF and E has a strong hand, then EW might get too high.

But I don't think South should stay out of the auction. I would overcall 1d with the South hand. Both the hand and the suit are strong enough and the presence of a four-card heart suit should not deter the overcall. If S overcalls then West can still bid 1s. North has about 11 points and good

enough diamonds to support South's overcall. See <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/simple-overcalls> or [https://nvba.org/novices/Robert_Todd/\(030\)++Overcalls+-+Advancing+P's+Overcall+with+Fit.pdf](https://nvba.org/novices/Robert_Todd/(030)++Overcalls+-+Advancing+P's+Overcall+with+Fit.pdf) for details about raising partner's overcall.

When N raises, East's call depends on whether EW use support doubles. See <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/support-doubles> for details. Support doubles are useful but not necessary, especially for partnerships trying to learn other aspects of bidding. See <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/read-this-first-what-should-we-play> for Cohen's opinion about which conventions are most important.

Playing in spades, West will want to lead up to the DQ early, hoping that N has the king so the DQ will provide an extra trick, a discard for one of W's losers. West also wants to take a heart finesse and a double finesse in spade. The double finesse means leading spades twice from dummy and finessing both times. That will gain a trick whenever S has either or both missing spade honors. It doesn't work on this hand.

Playing in diamonds, W is likely to lead a club, partner's suit. South will probably go up with the K or Q and hope to discard the third club on one of dummy's spade honors. S will also want to finesse against the diamond queen and the heart queen. If S tries the heart finesse first, then there might be two heart ruffs or else a single heart ruff

might yield another dummy entry to take the diamond finesse.

Board 18, East deals, NS vulnerable, E-W non-vulnerable

East is too strong to open 1n, so opens 1c, planning to rebid 2n. South has a choice between 1s and 2s. See https://www.bridgebum.com/weak_jump_overcalls.php and <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/jump-overcalls> for discussion of weak jump overcalls. With South's hand I would certainly make a weak jump overcall at any other vulnerability. I would even do it at this vulnerability, but maybe not in a team game. However many spades South bids, West is not strong enough to bid or double.

If South bids 1s, North might decide to bid 2d. See the comments about board 16 for how advancer should bid without having a fit for the overcaller. But however the auction gets back to East, I think East should bid the minimum number of notrump. Rebidding notrump when partner has passed shows the hand too strong to open 1n. A double by East would be for takeout. The Easts who doubled heard their partners bid hearts and were in trouble.

At most tables, East played in notrump. What should South lead? South would like to establish and run spades but knows that East has a spade stopper. Since South has no high card outside of spades, If South starts with the

spade AK, then South should realize there will never be an entry to cash the spades, so South might start with a low spade, hoping that North has either xx or xxx and can get in to lead a spade back to South. An alternative, if N has bid diamonds, is to lead a diamond. I wouldn't because North's diamonds don't have to be as good as they are and the spade suit is more attractive. On this hand no lead can stop EW from taking lots of tricks in notrump.