

Teaser No. 68

North

♠ J
♥ 8 2
♦ A K Q 10 7 4
♣ A Q 7 5

East

♠ A Q 10 9 8
♥ A J 3
♦ 6 3 2
♣ 8 6

N/S Game, Dealer: North

Contract: 3NT by South

Lead: 5♠

North opened 1♦, you overcalled 1♠ and South doubled (negative, promising 4 hearts). North jumped to 3♦ and South bid 3NT.

You are sitting East. Plan the defence – it's a teams match.

Solution Teaser No. 68

Win the first trick with the ace and switch to the JACK of hearts.

Declarer has advertised the king of spades so returning the suit will allow the contract to make, possibly with a couple of overtricks. The only hope is to take four heart tricks immediately. Playing the ace of hearts first would be a mistake as it might be necessary to lead through declarer's holding a second time. If that's the case, you need the ace as an entry card. Switching to a low heart would also be an error as it is likely to block the suit. The correct card is the jack, catering for as much as Q965 with South.

82

K1074

AJ3

Q965

If the jack is led, declarer loses four quick tricks regardless of whether they cover. If the ace is led first, declarer will cover when the jack follows. Now your poor partner is stymied and cannot continue the suit from their side of the table, nor put you back on lead.

When you need to score several quick tricks in a particular suit and dummy (on your right) has one or two low cards, it is generally correct to start with the middle card from any of these three card holdings: K9X, K10X, KJX, A9X, A10X, AJX. Partner needs to be aware that you might be leading from such a holding and on many occasions must assume that you are! Remember that the table of 'standard' leads only applies at trick one, with sight of dummy a defender should do whatever looks best.

In the same circumstances, it would be right to lead the top card from a holding such as QXX, JXX or 10XX:

865

AQ104

J32

K97

If the defence needs to run four quick tricks only the lead of the jack will do.

A corollary is that the lead of a small card in these 'cash-out' situations will guarantee the ace or king:

105

KJ93

A42

Q876

East must start with a low card for the defence to run four tricks. West can be confident that it is right to continue with the suit.

South held: ♠K642, ♥Q965, ♦J5, ♣KJ2