

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

WAKE-UP CALL

By: Brian Gunnell

On defense, when leading a suit, we follow certain conventions such as “top of a sequence” or “fourth best”, all the better to help partner figure out our holding in the suit. But, once in a while, we lie. Consider this deal:

<i>North</i>	♠ J87
<i>West Dummy</i>	♥ 65
	♦ K973
<i>South</i>	♣ KQ62
♠ 643	
♥ A43	
♦ T8642	
♣ A7	

Both Vulnerable

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
Pass	1♠	3♥	3♠
4♥	4♠	All Pass	

Against 4♠ our partner leads the ♥2 and we win the trick with the Ace. Have you figured out partner’s holding in the Heart suit? Of course not, it’s impossible, the lead makes no sense whatsoever! Partner’s Two is clearly non-standard, it cannot be

4th best when he is known from the bidding to have at least a 6-card suit. What’s he up to? He’s issuing a wake-up call, requesting us to think outside the box. He doesn’t want us routinely to continue Hearts, he has something else in mind. What could that be? No doubt he can ruff a minor suit! But which one? Surely not Clubs, that would give Declarer seven of them. Partner must be void in Diamonds!

	♠ 52	
	♥KQJT972	
	♦	
	♣ 9854	
♠ AKQT9	<i>North</i>	♠ J87
♥ 8	<i>West East</i>	♥ 65
♦ AQJ5		♦ K973
♣ JT3	<i>South</i>	♣ KQ62
	♠ 643	
	♥ A43	
	♦ T8642	
	♣ A7	

North’s “alarm clock lead”, as it is known, alerts us to the winning defense. A Diamond is ruffed at Trick 2, then a Club returned to our Ace, after which a second ruff. Down one! Those alarm clock leads won’t come up very often but they are great fun when they do!

Visit www.acbl.org for more about the fascinating game of bridge or email marketing@acbl.org