

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

NICE LEAD, PARTNER!

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ AK865 ♥ A6 ♦ 9753 ♣ 53	
♠ J43 ♥ QJT87 ♦ QJ ♣ KT8	North West East Declarer	♠ ♥ 54 ♦ KT8642 ♣ AJ642
	♠ QT972 ♥ K932 ♦ A ♣ Q97	

N-S Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	4♠	4NT
Pass	5♣	5♠	All Pass

There are other ways to bid the North hand, but our North was obviously a paid-up member of the Bid-What-You-Think-You-Can-Make Club. East's 4NT showed the minors, then North pushed on to 5♠, in this case bidding what he *hoped* they could make.

As West, what would be your choice of opening lead? Outside of the trump suit, Declarer does not appear to have an obvious source of tricks. West has the Hearts under control and East has long minors so, with no side-suits that can be set up, it's reasonable to assume that Declarer will be relying on ruffs to bolster his trick total. That's right, an opening trump lead seems to be called for.

Over to Declarer. He can count five natural trump tricks, plus the ♥AK and ♦A. That's eight tricks and, to get to eleven, he needs three ruffs in one hand or the other. Of course, the trump lead and the 3-0 split put a dent in those hopes, but Declarer is not done yet. Ruffing three Diamonds in hand won't work, that will run into an overruff by West. So Declarer's plan is to ruff two Hearts and a Club in Dummy.

The opening trump lead is won in Dummy, and that is followed by ♥A, ♥K, and a Heart ruff. Now a Club is led from Dummy, East ducks and Declarer's Queen is taken by the King. Back comes another trump, won in hand by Declarer, who next ruffs his last Heart in Dummy. A second Club is led and, again, East must duck, hoping that West has the Ten, and can continue with another trump. East reasons that Declarer probably does not have the Ten (if he did, he would surely have finessed it on the first round), so she boldly ducks. West wins his Ten, and the third round of trumps is the one that dashes Declarer's hopes.

"Nice lead, Partner!"

"Nice Club ducks, Partner!"

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