Leading can be very hard, and often gives a trick away

In deciding what to lead, look at what everyone has bid, and try to picture Declarer's hand

This hand came up a few weeks back

I write this article with 2 scenarios:

## 1. WEST OPENS THE BIDDING WITH 2S

You are East. Here is your Hand, and the bidding is below:

East: J108
AKQ74
109765

## **Bidding (all Vul, Dealer West)**

| West | North | East       | South |          |
|------|-------|------------|-------|----------|
| 2S*  | 4H    | <b>4</b> S | Pass  | *Weak 2S |
| Pass | 6H    | Pass       | Pass  |          |
| Pass |       |            |       |          |

As East, what do you lead? Your aim is to win 2 Tricks to take Declarer down. Diamonds are your best chance (hoping NS have 2 or more each)

It is worth considering how North bid – if North had a clear 6H bid, he would have done so straight away. So, he probably has 2 losers, and is hoping South can help, or the opening lead gives a trick

North obviously has lots of Hearts. North also did not ask for South's Aces, so probably has 3 Aces or void(s) (you have the 4<sup>th</sup> Ace as East)

South did not bid at all, so probably has nothing

You lead DA to see the landscape – it is good to lead from a solid holding

Dummy (South) comes down

J108 -AKQ74 109765

976 5 J109762 QJ2

Your opening DA lead wins, each of West and North throwing a Diamond. You started with 5 Diamonds, South 6 Diamonds, and each of West and North 1 Diamond = 13 Diamonds, thus, there will be no easy 2<sup>nd</sup> Trick in Diamonds

So, what do you lead next?

You should not lead a Club, as it looks like North cannot get to Dummy to finesse the CK if West has it

There is a general rule not to lead an exhausted suit again, as this can give Declarer a Ruff and a Discard

Your Partner bid 2S (promising 6 Spades), you have 3 and South has 3, so North probably has SA singleton. So, finding a Spade lead at Trick 2 is quite straightforward and does no harm (in fact, if your Partner has SA, it will win) and down goes the contract)

#### 2. WEST OPENS THE BIDDING WITH A PASS

## **Bidding (all Vul, Dealer West)**

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 2C    | 2D   | Pass  |
| Pass | 6H    | Pass | Pass  |
| Pass |       |      |       |

As East, you play DA, and now must decide whether to continue with a Spade (noting you must not lead a Club)

But leading a Spade may give the contract to North if he has SA and SQ

In that case, it is best to continue with DK, even though a Ruff and Discard could be on. You just hope your Partner has a heart higher than H5 and will over-ruff (unless, of course, he has a protected high heart, say K7, or Q74, and can wait for it to win)

Here is the full deal. If you led properly, North will go down (so long as West watches carefully if North runs all the Hearts, keeping Clubs K8 – East must throw his Diamonds and Clubs)

Full Hands:

A AKQJ109873 10 A4 KQ5432 J108 642

642 - AKQ74 K83 109765

> 976 5 J97652 QJ2

## Moral of the Story

Leading is hard, try to get a picture of the other hands from the bidding, and later what you see in after Dummy comes down

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