

are worth more) and no major to bid, let's give partner a chance to bid game. We will pass his two of a major."

Problem H

Matchpoints; none vul. You, South, hold:
 ♠ J 10 3 ♥ 10 9 5 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ 10 8 5 2

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
 — — — 2 NT

Pass 7 NT (All Pass)

What is your opening lead?

Action	Score	Votes
♠ J	100	7
♠ 10	100	7
♠ 3	90	1
♥ 9	80	4
♥ 10	80	3
♦ 2	60	3
♦ 3	60	1
♦ 4	60	1
♣ non-10	20	0
♣ 10	0	0
♥ 5	0	0

A few panelists considered the possibility that North holds as many as 3 HCP, but I make that very unlikely. Bidding seven notrump off an ace is deemed an embarrassment by almost all players. Furthermore, it is not good bridge, matchpoint or otherwise: Half the time, opening leader will have the ace. Of the other half, sometimes the lead will hit it randomly, sometimes the ace-holder will be able to double for a lead of the suit of the ace, and sometimes defeat will be inevitable after any lead. It is definitely not a high-percentage contract-type.

So, unless West holds all four aces (a possibility mentioned by Shuman), the chances are that he expects the partnership to hold at least 37 HCP. Therefore, one might reasonably downplay the ace- and king-aspects of the next few comments:

MICHAEL ROSENBERG: "Heart ten. A double here should ask for a specific lead (I

play spades). This doubles the probability (from 25 percent to 50 percent) of finding partner's ace on lead. This is such an ABC convention that every expert pair should adopt it. Of course, there is no particular reason to think that partner has an ace, but South should lead to maximize the chance of solving that problem. What is the 'safest' lead? Certainly a high spade, which can lose only by taking away a spade guess, while any other lead can bury partner's queen. However, I will follow my convention and try a heart, which burns the defense only if dummy has honor-jack-low(-low) and partner has the queen without the eight or a useful seven. [Chorush and Shuman also analyzed the dangerous heart combinations.—J.R.] The heart nine would never fool a real player; he'll just give you a pitying look."

RALPH KATZ: "Spade ten. Any lead could cost a trick. A spade is wrong if partner has the king of spades. The ten-lead is not likely to work, but it has a small chance."

KIT WOOLSEY: "Spade jack. Safest; costs only when partner has a stiff honor, or when declarer has something like ace-third in dummy opposite king-queen-fourth in hand, and his best play is to take a third-round spade finesse. Each of these scenarios is very unlikely. A low spade protects against the singleton honor, but often loses when partner has nine-fourth of spades and the enemy's spades are four-two. The ten is more deceptive, but if partner does have nine-fourth and has a discarding problem, he would have preferred to see that jack."

Kleinman, the only low-spade leader, noted the possibility of dummy's having honor-fourth (perhaps in a 4=3=3=3 hand) opposite declarer's honor-fifth.

JOHN KRANYAK: "Spade jack. A spade won't blow up a queen or king. It might help declarer with a restricted-choice spade guess, but that is less likely than my possibly blowing up a trick."

IRA RUBIN: "Spade jack as it might lead to a poor king or queen, but safest."

No one else considered the possibility of 3-plus HCP in partner's hand.

BART BRAMLEY (and several others): "Spade ten. The ten is not risk picking partner's queen; the ten probably won't fool declarer in the spade suit itself is key."

ZIA: "Spade ten. Agairment. I would lead the ten and hope to make my restricted-choice situation."

ERIC KOKISH: "Spade ten. Around with Zia too often."

DAVID BERKOWITZ (with several others): "Spade ten. Trying not to add a minor trick."

EDDIE KANTAR: "Spade ten. How this can cost. Partner's queen if dummy plays low."

HENRY BETHE: "Spade ten. Of my face card quickly."

ROBERT WOLFF: "Heart ten. Years ago, a former bridge partner advised me: 'When declarer bids a slam, especially a grand slam, do not make a tell since partner should be able to figure out what way declarer plays.' This is right-on correct."

IRA CHORUSH: "Heart ten. The nine-lead is a trump but not so much and it could offer declarer a trick he believes it."

KITTY & STEVE COOPER: "Heart ten. Trying to make the lead anything away."

MARSHALL MILES: "Heart ten. Likely to cost a trick: spade ten."

FRED GITELMAN: "Diamond ten."