

## THE CRITICAL BOARD

CT Ng

My team Bengal Aces had a private quarterfinal League Cup match against NTU Staff in Bishan. This was the critical hand that decided whether we would win or lose the match! First of all, how will you bid this hand?

♠ Qxx	<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>CT Ng</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>Nancy</b>
♥ Q98x	Pass	Pass	*2C	2D
♦ J9	Pass	?	(6-card ♠s or 5/4 ♠s + major)	
♣ AJxx				

As we were trailing our opponents at half time, I bid 3NT. The next question is how will you play this hand? The lead was ♥A and dummy's hand was:

♠ A10xx  
♥ J7  
♦ AKxxx  
♣ Qx

I had four certain tricks, and needed to establish five more tricks. After the lead of ♥A, I was hoping to develop two heart tricks and set up a club trick. If ♠K was with RHO, I would then have eight tricks. How should I get the ninth trick? I had several options. If LHO had five clubs with four hearts, and 2-2 in spades and diamonds, I could strip all 3 suits and end play LHO for a additional club trick. Alternatively, if LHO held singleton ♦Q, my ♦J would be the 9th trick as well.

Anyway, the opponents cashed ♥AK and switched to spade. RHO took the trick with ♠K and I took the spade return with my ♠Q. This sequence gave me a chance to make the contract if I read the cards correctly!

I could then strip hearts (pitch 2 diamonds from Dummy) and play to my ♠Q. If RHO ducked, I will cash my ♠A and ♦AK, then RHO would be left with ♠J9 and ♦8. I could then endplay him to return spade to my ♠A10. Nonetheless, I did not find this winning line of play. The full hand :

♠ xx	♠ A10xx
♥ AKxx	♥ J7
♦ Q10	♦ AKxxx
♣ K109xx	♣ Qx
	♠ KJ9x
	♥ 10xx
	♦ 8765
	♣ xx
	♠ Qxx
	♥ Q98x
	♦ J9
	♣ AJxx

On an opening spade lead to the ♠K, a heart switch to ♥K, a spade return would easily defeat 3NT. Our teammates, Chris & Raj found the lead and heart switch but failed to return spades after that, thus allowing declarer to make 3NT. This board had a potential swing of 20 IMPs, and could have sent us into the semi-finals! Nonetheless, I would like to congratulate our opponents, who played better than us.

## QU?Z LL Wong

### ANSWER for previous question

#### ANSWER TO 13 IMPs

Most of you were able to figure out declarer's 5-3-3-2 distribution (good!), and that to defeat the contract of 4S, partner must have ♥10 (excellent!) as an entry to give you another diamond ruff. Your 4 tricks in defence would include ♠K, first diamond ruff, ♥10, and a second diamond ruff.

**Dummy**  
♠ Q10x  
♥ Kxx  
♦ Kxx  
♣ QJxx

**Your Hand**  
♠ Kxxx  
♥ AQJx  
♦ x  
♣ 9xxx

After the first diamond ruff, the solution is to return ♥Q, which declarer has to cover. When declarer attempts to discard his heart losers on the ♠QJ, partner must ruff the fourth club. After overruffing, declarer will eventually still have to yield to your ♠K, and you can then return ♥x to partner's ♥10 to give you another ruff to set the contract.

In addition, kudos to the partner of Mr Hui who followed smoothly and did not insert ♦Q at trick 1, in an attempt to create an impression that partner may have led from it, instead of a singleton. An expert player would, of course, not be easily fooled, and make the contract without difficulty by just drawing trumps immediately.

Congratulations to Mr C T Ng (Bengal Aces), in getting the right analysis and solution! I would also like to thank Mr Zain Moledina (SRC) who also submitted the correct answer,

and posed the question of why 13 IMPs instead of 12 IMPs for +720? In the actual match, the contracts on both sides were 4S+1 (losing only to ♠K and ♥A) and 4S-1, thus giving +650 and +100 for the overall score of 13 IMPs!

Mr Sun Zizhao mentioned that partner must have ♠A to defeat the contract but what about defeating the contract when partner does not have the ♠A? Adrian hoped that declarer would duck his ♥x return, but why must he duck the ♥x? Nonetheless, I would like to thank everybody's fervent support and participation in the Quizzes!

## QUESTION for this issue

### WHAT IS YOUR THE LEAD?

After many issues of solving complicated hands, from double dummy problems to defensive play after the lead, shall we take a step backward to the lead itself to relax yourself a little?

Look at the bidding below to figure out what would be the best lead from your hand.

<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>YOU</b>	<b>NORTH</b>
Pass	*1NT (15-17 HCP)	Pass	2C
Pass	2S	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

You are holding:

♠ A95  
♥ A73  
♦ AQ93  
♣ 987

What is your best lead and why?

**Call-to-action: Please send your entries to [quiz@bridgeleague.net](mailto:quiz@bridgeleague.net) by 01-October-2005 (Sat)!**