

The Real Deal

by Larry Cohen



Larry Cohen, a many-time National champion, is a popular writer and lecturer, living in Boca Raton, Florida. Information on Larry's upcoming activities can be found by visiting www.larryco.com.

One of Larry's favorite teaching methods is to analyze random deals. He feels that any time you deal out a deck of cards, there are numerous lessons that can be learned.

This eighth "Real Deal" was dealt by **Donna Compton**. Among her many contributions to bridge, the one I best recall is her captaining our U.S. Team to victory in the 'Ryder Cup of Bridge' against Europe in 2007.

On the deal she dealt, East passes and South opens 1♠. What should West do?

There must be some reason West was dealt that 7-card suit headed by a sequence. If you like to sit there and make life easy on your opponents, you can pass, but surely it is better to preempt with this hand. West can proudly jump to 3♦, especially since East and West are not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents—the most "favorable" time to preempt. Don't worry about not having two of the top three honors at this vulnerability.

North is faced with a problem, as so often happens over a preempt. North can bid 3♥ to show that suit, or conceivably make a negative double. However, I think it is best to raise spades. To how many? Probably to 3½, but that isn't allowed. If North bids 4♠, that will end the auction. If North chooses to go the low road with only 3♠, South has enough extra to go on to 4♠ anyway.

THE PLAY IN 4♠

What should declarer do?

Here is another popular rule: "When a player pre-empts and then leads some other, non-trump suit, it is usually a singleton." Declarer must be aware of this fact and should rise with dummy's ♥A at trick one.

Then what?

As declarer in a suit contract, you always have to decide whether to draw trump immediately, or postpone trump drawing. The answer can usually be found by counting the tricks declarer must lose and seeing what can be done about them.

South must lose the ♠A, ♥K, and ♣A, but that should be it. South can always trump just one little diamond in dummy to take care of that suit. So, declarer should start trumps, with a low one from dummy, intending to ruff a diamond loser later.

What should East do? Isn't this game amazing? Everyone at the table has had a problem so far!

Suspecting the lead is a singleton, East should hop up with the spade ♠A at trick two to try to give his partner a heart ruff. True, West might have only one spade, but

given that West rates to have only one heart, it doesn't seem right to expect West to have a singleton in both major suits.

After winning the ♠A, East can issue the heart ruff. East can play the ♥K and then a low heart for partner to ruff. East will then be pleased to see partner cash the ♣A for the setting trick. Good defense. There was nothing declarer could do.

THE REAL DEAL

DEAL: 8
DLR: E
VUL: N-S

NORTH

♠ J 6 5
♥ A Q 6 4 3
♦ —
♣ Q 7 5 4 3

4♠

<p style="text-align: center;">WEST</p> <p>♠ 4 2 ♥ 10 ♦ J 10 9 6 5 4 3 ♣ A 9 8</p> <p>3♦ Pass</p>	<table style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	<p style="text-align: center;">EAST</p> <p>♠ A 9 3 ♥ K 9 5 2 ♦ 8 2 ♣ K 10 6 2</p> <p>Pass Pass</p>
N						
W						
E						
S						

SOUTH

♠ K Q 10 8 7
♥ J 8 7
♦ A K Q 7
♣ J

1♠ Pass

THE OPENING LEAD AGAINST 4♠

What should West lead against 4♠? One of my favorite rules—which has gotten lots of press lately—is "when in doubt, lead a singleton." This applies only against suit contracts, of course, and only when the singleton is not a trump.

So, I would spurn the lead of the ♦J and go instead with my singleton ♥10.

POINTS TO REVIEW

- 1) At favorable vulnerability, take every opportunity to preempt.
- 2) When in doubt, lead a singleton.
- 3) When a preemptor leads another suit, it is usually a singleton.
- 4) Declarer always must decide whether or not to draw trump. ♠♦



This issue's deal comes from **Donna Compton**. Donna began playing competitive bridge in 1975, and has had a lot of success at the national and international level, including a win in the 2003 Chicago Trophy Mixed Teams. She received the Journalist Award in 2005 for an article on the Defensive Hand of the Year, and also publishes daily bulletins for both the Houston Regional and the Cavendish Invitational events.

In 2003, Donna opened the Bridge Academy of North Dallas (BAND), along with her professional bridge-playing husband, Chris. BAND started by offering bridge lessons, but has expanded into a full-service bridge club with games for players at all levels.

Donna has captained several U.S. teams, including Team USA in the Buffet Cup Challenge Match between the United States and Europe. Last September, her team won the 2009 Bermuda Bowl trophy in Sao Paulo.

Donna and Chris have two daughters, Morgan and Taylor, and they enjoy spending time with the family and traveling around the world.

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