

# Learning Points – The Dream Killing Lead

By Steve Moese

August 24, 2010

Defense Level: Basic/Intermediate

West Deals Both Vul MPs	Mike ♠ 4 ♥ KJ10 ♦ AQ864 ♣ KJ105		
Steve Felson		Kim King	
♠ KJ10962	N	♠ Q85	
♥ A	W 20 E	♥ 7532	
♦ 97	S	♦ KJ532	
♣ 9432		♣ 6	
	Steve	NS:5♠, 5♥, 1N	
	♠ A73		
	♥ Q9864		
	♦ 10		
	♣ AQ87		

Tuesday Club Game, August 26, 2010 Mrs. Kay Mulford, Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . Mike Ma is my partner. We play Precision.

Some opening leads just help declarer go astray. Some are contract killers. This one is a Dream Killer.

We've battled long and hard. Luck has been with us and our opponents have been good to us all night long. We have a late play against our friends Steve Felson and Kim King. If we can just make it past this last board we'll have a good shot at winning the event. All we need is an average plus result...that's what friends are for, right?

### The Bidding

Everyone had their bids...so far so good...now all we have to do is take the most ricks we can... Notice that after partner's takeout double of 2♠, South should insist on game. Some might favor a 3♣ cue bid (not available after Kim's raise), but the 4♥ bid suggests game with modest extra. North will know to go on with a sound or super strong overcall (say, 17 HCP plus useful shortness). South would bid 5♥ immediately with enough opposite a good 14 HCP for slam investigating.

West	North	East	South
2♠	Double	3♠	4♥
All Pass			
West leads the ♣9			

### The Play

Normally an opening lead in an unbid suit by the weak 2, 3 or 4-bidder suggests a short suit. It is an attacking lead. The ♣9 didn't pose an immediate threat. Declarer went about counting winners and losers. It appears that there is 1 certain trump loser. If declarer can ruff 2 ♠s in dummy there should be a clear road for 11 or 12 tricks. This is matchpoints – every trick counts.

Declarer won the ♣ in hand with the ♣A (leaving plenty of ♣ entries to the Dummy were ♦s needed later) and set about ruffing ♠s. Declarer avoided using clubs fearing West would ruff. The ♠A, ♠ ruff was followed by the ♦A, a ♦ ruff, then a ♠ ruff, then trump to West's ♥A. West continues a **CLUB** and East ruffs in!!!!

East now continues the ♦K and declarer ruffs (things are turning ugly). By ruffing ♦s, declarer shortens trumps. East continues the forcing defense by leading good ♦s. This promotes a long trump and a ♦ winner for East – Defense manages to take the ♥A, a ♣ ruff, a long trump and a good ♦ in the end. Declarer managed to go down 1 in what should have been a cold game. In fact 4 declarers made 12 tricks!!!

Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MPs	0	1	4.5	4.5	2		4.5	4.5
Result	-200	-100	680	680	650		680	680

### Post Mortem

Steve's lead of the ♣9 eliminated a key entry to declarer's hand required to safely ruff out ♠s without touching ♦s. The ♣9 also looked like a singleton – what Steve didn't tell me was that the singleton he announced was held by his partner!!!

Declarer's line of play needs either a 3-2 ♣ or ♥ break. As you can see neither were happening. In match points playing for 12 tricks is necessary (you saw the line results right?).

When the final results were tallied, Mike and I had missed 1<sup>st</sup> place overall by 4 Matchpoints. If we had made 12 tricks on this late-played board, we would have scored 4.0 not 1.0, leaving us 0.5 MP from 1<sup>st</sup> (the 1<sup>st</sup> place team would lose ½ MP were we to make +480 too).

Notice that making 5 (11 tricks) improves our score by only 0.5 MP and leaves us in the 3<sup>rd</sup> place we had earned already... So while Deep Finesse says 5♥ is the limit of the hand, the field found overtricks because of a less effective opening lead. Looking at the results, I'd guess that only one other pair received a ♣ lead and were held to 11 tricks. Notice that declarer makes 11 tricks all the time by allowing East their one ♣ ruff!

What stands out about Steve's lead is that he rejected the ♠ suit in favor of ♣s, a lead that might promote something in partner's hand. Leading from a small doubleton (♦s) is a bit more likely to promote something in opponent's hands than in partner's hand.

Kim colluded with her partner (isn't that what good partners do??) and continued a forcing defense to eventually defeat the contract. Well done Steve and Kim.

We'll look forward to not having late plays from now on...

### Learning Points

1. When considering an opening lead, choose to attack from your suit when you safely can, or to attack an unbid suit that might develop length tricks or ruffs for your side. Avoid leading from small doubletons unless:
  - a. Partner has bid the suit or
  - b. You hold AQx in the suit and might get 3 trump tricks.Steve's ♣ lead is a standout choice.
2. If you hold 4 trumps, look for a forcing defense – force declarer to ruff in the long-trump hand as many times as necessary to shorten declarer's trumps to fewer than you hold. You've just created an extra winner (or 2) for your side!
3. Don't lull yourself into a false sense of security when declaring – avoid shortening your own trumps because when the opponents are in, they will not be kind to you.
4. If an opponent has found a dream killer lead – smile and congratulate them! They've earned their good result, and you get to chase your dream another day.
5. Remember to recognize good play, even by the opponents.

Keywords: Lead from length, Forcing defense, Matchpoints.