

## Learning Points – An Unfortunate Opening Lead

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by Steve Moese; edited by Mike Purcell

N Deals

♠ Q43

Both Vul

♥ J74

♦ KJ72

Steve

♣ 1087

Mike

March 6, 2008 Thursday Evening Open Pairs Ms. Pat Newman, Director, Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 563 2218 <http://www.cincybridge.com>

♠ AK10765	N	♠ 98
♥ K106	W 13 E	♥ 9853
♦ 8	S	♦ A53
♣ A93		♣ KJ65
	DealMasterPro:	
	EW: 3♣ 1N	
	4♥ 3♠	
	♠ J2	
	♥ AQ2	
	♦ Q10954	
	♣ Q42	

Normally one doesn't think of 1 level contracts as learning opportunities. There are several points of interest on this hand in both bidding and play.

### The Bidding

South's hand might elicit a 3<sup>rd</sup> seat opening diamond bid from some, but the lack of majors and quick tricks indicate a pass is best. Mike and I play Precision. My 1♠ call is similar to any 5 card major system except it's limited to 11-15 HCP.

South	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠

Passed Out

West leads ♣10

I'm a bit surprised when everyone passes. I expect partner to be close to 6 HCP. Much less and one of our opponents would have opened. I'm beginning to wonder if we missed something.

### The Play

North chose the ♣10. Unfortunately this gave up a trick. The ♣J fetched the ♣Q and ♣A. I can count 2 more ♣ tricks, 3 if the suit broke 3-3. South is the danger hand here given the precarious ♥King. I decide to tackle the trumps by finessing South. This will keep South off lead if South holds 3 trumps, and might pick up a bonus trick if South has both the ♠Q and ♠J. I lead to the ♦Ace and lead a spade, ducking to North. North continues with the ♣8. I let this ride to the ♣9. The opponent's carding suggest the suit will break 3-3. I draw 2 rounds of trump and lead the ♣3 to the ♣K. Sure enough, the suit breaks. Now I can play the 4<sup>th</sup> ♣ pitching a losing heart. The remaining play for an extra trick is a heart toward the ♥K. This finesse of the ♥A works and we tally 1 Spade making 5 +200 for top board. Sure didn't feel like a top when we scored it.

### Post Mortem

**Steve:** Partner's pass of 1♠ was conservative – I guess he's seen too many light 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> seat openings by me. A 1 NT response by East (Forcing 1 Round) would put some pressure on me. The hand feels like a 3.5 ♠ bid – worth 17 points if partner has 2 spades and no wastage, and 14 points otherwise. None in the field found 4 spades and I agree – we need too much help to bid this game at pairs. Partner's 1NT bid promises a minimum of 8 HCP (or a good 7 - A&K, A&QJ playing Precision) so game is close.

Looks like we had 2 ways to win on this hand. If we're going to play 3♠, I'd rather play 1♠. At teams I'd probably bid 4♠ given the chance and the right vulnerability.

**Mike:** Why pass with 8 HCPs? Bridge often rewards the aggressive, but when hands do not match things can go badly in a hurry. My hand has 8 HCPs but at first glance appears a poor match for my partner 1S open with no points in partners suit, and no solid side suit and no outside shortness. Given this, I choose to pass 1♠ versus bid on and risk 2♠, 3♠ or even 4♠. I can do this because I know my partner is limited to 15 HCPs. Sure 3♠ rates to make given this lay of the cards, but it requires Steve to share club values with me plus a little luck in the heart suit. Put ♥A in North's hand and the picture changes a lot. Give West 5332 distribution with no points in clubs and this becomes a hand best left for the opponents. Do I pass with 8 HCPs often? Certainly not but sometimes it pays to see the glass as half empty.