

Hand of the Week 11/12/19

By Victor King

Choices! Choices!

You are playing in a regional team game and all white, in second seat, you pick up:

♠KQJ9
♥AQx
♦Qxxxx
♣x

Your RHO opens 1H. You might say pass, you might say double if playing equal level conversion, you might bid 2D (pretty cheesy suit). What's your choice? I chose 1S based on the suit quality, and LHO bids 1NT. (I think we have found the spade ace.) Partner gives a nice little raise to 2S, RHO bids 3H, and LHO bids 4H. You give a fleeting thought to doubling, but quickly discard it.

The bidding:

<u>West (You)</u>	<u>North (LHO)</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South (RHO)</u>
-	-	-	1♥
1♠	1NT	2♠	3♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

What are you going lead? Before proceeding, please rank the three leads (1=Best lead, 3=Worst lead).

___ K of spades

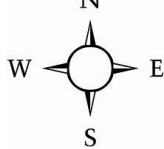
___ Low diamond

___ Singleton club

The bridge literature is dominated by two schools of thought: always lead your singletons versus conditions where you lead a suit, hoping to attack declarer's trump length. Examples abound where it's right to lead your singleton, and others where it loses.

On this hand, I took note that partner did not bid 3S, so I thought the possibility of getting a spade trick or two were good so I led the king of spades.

The full hand:

Dir: S Vul: None	♠ Axxxx ♥ Jx ♦ xx ♣ KQxx	
♠ KQJ9 ♥ AQ9 ♦ Qxxxx ♣ x	N  S	♠ 10xx ♥ xx ♦ KJxx ♣ xxxxx
	♠ x ♥ K108xxx ♦ Ax ♣ AJ8x	

As you can see, the singleton lead wins this battle. Declarer plays the club king and runs the jack of hearts to the queen. You play a diamond to partner, hoping he has the ace. He does not play the ace, but he does play the jack. This is a nice play. Declarer wins with the ace.

Declarer now knocks out the ace of hearts, but you play another diamond. Partner wins the king and gives you a club ruff to set the contract.

What I failed to consider was if the singleton was a losing lead, I could still get a spade trick or two, because I had trump control. Whereas, if I lead a spade, I would need partner to have an immediate entry (the ace of diamonds) in order to set the contract.

Lead those singletons more often – especially when you have such exceptional trump control!