

The Lead: The five of spades

When the bidding goes directly from one notrump to three notrump, one should stretch to lead a major. The last suit West should pick to lead is a club. West has a six-card club suit, but the suit is far too weak with which to compete and so it is too weak to lead. To lead a weak and long suit, West needs more than one outside entry.

My online partner led his singleton heart. This lead is better than a club, but is not a good lead because he cannot continue the suit when he gets in with the ace of diamonds. If West did not have the ace of diamonds, a heart lead could be best. Partner likely has long hearts and the entries to set them up. Because of the ace of diamonds, West should lead a small spade, the five.

Most people, who play bridge have probably heard of and use the statement: Lead your longest and strongest suit. This statement is false and therefore misleading.

A correct statement is that one should lead from touching strength in a four-card suit or from broken strength in a five-card suit or longer as long as one has outside entries. One can afford to give declarer a trick in order to set up a fourth and fifth card.

One would lead from AQxxx or KJxxx but not AQxx or KJxx. Leading from broken strength in a four-card suit may not even set up a trick, except for declarer.

The play:

Declarer needs three stoppers to kick out the ace and king of a suit. With a spade lead, declarer cannot attack diamonds and will only make ten tricks. With a club or a heart lead, declarer has the timing to set up a diamond for the eleventh trick.

Result:

3NT+1 for +430 (spade lead) or 3NT+2 for +460 (spade not led)

Note:

-All the bridge columns may be viewed at <http://watsongallery.ca>.