

**Lead Director  
By Roger Lord**

**Dealer: South  
Vul: North-South**

	<b>North</b>	
	♠ J3	
	♥ Q942	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ AJ1052	
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>
♠ AK10972		♠ Q864
♥ 63		♥ A8
♦ 74		♦ 986532
♣ 743		♣ 8
	<b>South</b>	
	♠ 5	
	♥ KJ1075	
	♦ AJ10	
	♣ KQ96	

South	West	North	East
1 Heart	2 Spades	3 Spades	4 Clubs
4 Diamonds	4 Spades	Pass	Pass
5 Hearts	Pass	Pass	Pass

Contract: 5 Hearts

Opening Lead: Club Four

The bidding by both pairs was masterful. Over South's one heart, West overcalled a preemptive two spades. North's three spades cuebid showed heart support, was forcing to game, and established in principle that the hand "belonged" to North-South. Had North instead jump-raised to four hearts, that ownership would not have been so clear.

East chimed in with a new suit bid, which, according to partnership agreement, was forcing one round. On this sequence, East obviously held spade support and was headed for a sacrifice. Thus, four clubs was assumed to transmit side-suit strength, at least the ace or king. East, however, was ahead of the game—he knew what opening lead he wanted against an eventual North-South heart contract, so he bid that suit.

South's four diamonds was intended to help partner with the competitive auction. Since it was below game, it did not promise a slam try. West's four spades confirmed having good spades. North made a "forcing pass," meaning that the partnership was committed by the auction either to buy the contract or double the opponents.

After East passed, South chose to go to five hearts, hoping for plus 650 rather than what would have been a paltry plus 100 for defeating four spades doubled. Three passes ended the auction.

As West, what would you have led against five hearts? It is axiomatic that, if the leader does not brandish the king or ace of a suit, he does not own the ace-king of that suit. West might figure he should start with the ace of spades and perhaps switch to partner's presumed side suit. That would have proved to be too late, since he has deprived himself of a needed re-entry.

The winning defense was to follow partner's lead-director and make that club opening lead from three small. East's club "suit" was a singleton! On declarer's trump lead at trick two, East leaps up with the ace and crosses to West with a spade. West administers (we hope) a club ruff to set the contract on a cleverly engineered defense.