

**Unusual  
By Roger Lord**

**Dealer: East**  
**Vul: Both**

	<b>North</b>		
	♠ J4		
	♥ AJ10854		
	♦ K7		
	♣ A87		
<b>West</b>		<b>East</b>	
♠ A85		♠ 109	
♥ ---		♥ 7632	
♦ AJ952		♦ Q864	
♣ K6542	<b>South</b>	♣ 1093	
	♠ KQ7632		
	♥ KQ9		
	♦ 103		
	♣ QJ		

East	South	West	North
Pass	1 Spade	2 Notrump	3 Diamonds
Double	3 Spades	5 Diamonds	Pass
Pass	5 Spades	All Pass	

**Contract: Five Spades                      Opening Lead: Diamond Five**

The diagramed deal took place at SLBC Monday, March 2, #23, with hands rotated to make South declarer.

Over South's one spade, West overcalled two notrump, the "unusual notrump" promising length and strength in both minors. North "cuebid" three diamonds, which was interpreted by her partner to show a good hand with support for spades. (Because diamonds had been advertised as one of West's suits, the three diamond bid could not logically indicate a desire to play a diamond contract.) Accordingly, over East's double, South rebid spades at the same level, suggesting a sign-off unless North already had intended to forge ahead on her own.

However, North's interpretation of her own three diamond bid was disharmonious with South's. North had employed one version of the convention known as "unusual over unusual," whereby three diamonds showed a game force and a long heart suit, with or without tolerance for spades. Using that method, a cuebid of three clubs instead would have been intended to show good spade support.

West, noting her partner's double of three diamonds and anticipating a game bid by North, took an excellent sacrifice at five diamonds. North, believing that South knew about her heart length and strength, passed to allow her partner to make the matchpoint decision whether to double or bid. Holding relatively weak defensive values (and being oblivious of North's heart suit), South bid five spades.

If you are West, what would be your opening lead against five spades? Would you lead the diamond ace and wait for the trump ace plus another plain-suit trick? Not this time. The club ace is in dummy to your left, their hearts are solid, and the trump ace will produce the only additional trick.

If you scare yourself by opening a low diamond, hoping to get partner in with the king to give you a heart ruff, the dummy will win the trick with the king. But don't give up. After you win your high trump trick, you will have the rare chance to underlead the same ace twice! Your diamond nine will be won by partner's queen, and—if he is awake—he will give you the setting heart ruff.