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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

25th August 2010 Both vulnerable. South deals.

	NORTH ♠ Q 10 5 3 ♥ Q 10 6 5 3 ♦ K ♣9 6 4	
WEST ♠8 ♥A K 4 ♦ Q 4 3 2 ♣ Q J 10 3		EAST ♠ 2 ♥ 9 8 7 ♦ A 9 8 7 6 5 ♣8 5 2
	SOUTH ♠A K J 9 6 4 ♥J 2 ♦ J 10 ♣ A K 7	

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 Spade	Pass	2 Spade	Pass
4 Spade	All Pass		

Opening lead: ?

To lead an unsupported ace simply to "take a look at dummy" is inane — no matter what card you lead at trick one will give you a look at the table. The lead of the king from ace-king is almost always recommended, but even that must come with a caveat — to do so from a short suit can be dangerous; from length, however, it is relatively safe. This deal illustrates our point.

The auction is simple enough. North has an easy raise to two spades and South has no ambitions beyond game.

West made the "automatic" lead of the king of hearts, and declarer was a tempo ahead in the game. At trick two, West shifted to the queen of clubs, the card he should have chosen for his opening lead. Declarer won with the king, drew trumps, and forced out the ace of hearts. No matter how the defenders proceeded, dummy's hearts were set up and the ace of diamonds was the third and last trick for the defense.

Had West started with the queen of clubs, there was no place for declarer to park his club loser. West wins the first heart, forces out the ace of clubs and the defenders must collect two heart tricks and a trick in each minor — down one.

e-mail: gorenbridge@aol.com