

Discussion on a deal by Justin Lall

(Anand Samant of Mumbai - the great promoter of youth bridge in India and who deserves to be the NPC & coach of Indian Youths - would be proud of Justin Lall)

In the finals we faced Mike Cappelletti Jr., Chris Compton, Tom and Carolyn Peters, and Loretta Rivers.

I held ♠9872 ♥8632 ♦974 ♣Q8. The auction, starting on my right with our side not bidding, was:

East	South (Justin lall)	West	North
1 Spade	Pass	2 Diamond	Pass
3 Diamond	Pass	3 Spade	Pass
4 Xlubs	Pass	4 Heart	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 Heart	Pass
5 Spade	All Pass		

What would Justin Lall lead?

Partner is likely to have 2 keycards, or perhaps 1 keycard and the spade queen because they stopped in 5 after using keycard (good players rarely use keycard and then stop when they are off all but 1). If he has 2 aces, we need to find another trick. Clubs seemed like the obvious place to attack, partner had 2 chances to double hearts and did not. On top of that, as clubs is my doubleton, I might end up getting a ruff or trump promotion there. And maybe partner even has the club king (keep dreaming).

After settling on a club lead, we must decide *which* club to lead. The queen is the normal choice, but it does not serve much purpose in this situation since partner has both of our keycards, and we know RHO has the

control so we don't need to worry about partner having the AJ over the king and putting up the ace. Leading the 8 might gain if declarer decides to finesse clubs later (if he has KJx for example), or if he ruffs low on the third club from partner thinking we have 3.

I led the ♣8, and I saw this dummy:

♠K64 ♥A93 ♦KQ84 ♣J32

Partner won the club ace and RHO dropped the king! See what's about to happen? Partner plays a club back, RHO ruffing. Now they run the ♠Q to partner's ace, and he returns another club. RHO ruffs high, but I have more trumps than him now as he has ruffed twice, so he is down 1. If I had led the ♣Q, now declarer does not have to ruff the second club since his jack will be high. Now as long as declarer plays a spade off of dummy rather than a high one out of his hand, he will not suffer a trump promotion since he can ruff high and pull the remaining trumps.

I obviously was not catering to this layout by leading low, and we were very fortunate to win a big swing on this board. Keep this hand in mind the next time you see something like this written up and you're amazed that [insert bridge hero here] could be so good as to find the winning lead, most of the time it was accidental, as it was here.

(Ed BII>How humble Lall is)