

Low from a Doubleton -- Westwood DBC Thu AM, Sep 24, 2015

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A K 7 6 4		♠ Q 8			
♥ K 9 8 3		♥ 10 7 6 4			
♦ 8		♦ A Q J 6 4			
♣ Q 9 4		♣ K 2			
♠ J 9 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 10 3 2
N					
W E					
S					
♥ A J 2		♥ Q 5			
♦ K		♦ 10 9 7 5 3 2			
♣ A J 10 7 6 5		♣ 8 3			

EW 4N; EW 3♥; EW 4♣; EW 2♦; EW 1♠; Par -430

West	North	East	South
<i>Pat</i>	<i>Andrew</i>	<i>Sheila</i>	<i>Pete</i>
		1♦	Pass
2♣	Dbl	2NT	Pass
3NT	All pass		
3NT by East			

Sheila made a great tactical bid of 2 NT, intentionally putting me on lead. A spade lead would have forced declarer to guess clubs, but I chose ♥ 5. (I do tend to go for the heroic play.) This is close to the deal in the *BOLS Bridge Tip* "Low from a Doubleton" by Rixi Marcus. With no side entries, I may have needed to use the power of my lead to help partner. To see this possibility, switch the ♥ 10 and ♥ 8 in the diagram above: if declarer ducks the lead of the ♥ 5 in dummy, partner's 9 wins, and he safely returns the ♥ 3. (After the ♥ Q lead, dummy's ♥ J would be unassailable.)

To see what I really should have led, I used Dealmaster Pro to generate 500 deals with the South hand shown, and random hands in the other positions, subject to constraints: North with 4-5 cards in each major, 11+ HCP, and 13 points including distribution; East and West both with 4+ cards in their bid suit, and 12+ HCP.

After editing the deal files, I used Bridge Composer and GiB to play all 500 deals with each of four leads. A Perl program tallied the percentage of defeating the contract, and the average number of defensive tricks taken:

♥ 5	28.0%	3.75
♥ Q	26.0%	3.68
♠ 2	30.8%	3.91
♠ 10	29.6%	3.84

Next, I deleted all deals in which North was only 4-4, almost a third of them. Few of those were suitable for a double into a 2/1 auction. I did not delete any other deals, suitable or not, with these results:

♥ 5	32.8%	3.87
♠ 2	35.1%	4.01

Clearly, I should have led the ♠ 2. A five-card suit in the North hand improves the chances, and narrows the difference between suits slightly. In either suit, it is important to retain the honor, so partner can lead back to it.

- Pete Matthews, Jr.