

BRIDGE HAND

Dhondy's unlucky lead

By Tom Townsend

Dealer South
Vulnerability North-South

♠ A Q J 10 7 5 4 2	N	♠ 9 6 3
♥ A 3	W	♥ K Q 10 9 7 4 2
♦ K	E	♦ 6 5
♣ 4 2	S	♣ 7

♠ 8
♥ none
♦ A Q J 10 9 4
♣ A K Q J 8 5

♠ K
♥ J 8 6 5
♦ 8 7 3 2
♣ 10 9 6 3

West	North	East	South
1♠	2NT(1)	4♥	5♣(2)
5♣	6♣	6♣	pass
pass	7♣(3)	pass	pass
dbld	pass	pass	pass

- (1) At least 5/5 in the minors
- (2) Brave
- (3) Insurance

Contract 7♣ doubled
Declarer South
Opening Lead ♥A

For the next few days we focus on the English Bridge Union's London Easter Festival, the opening event of which is the Championship Pairs. This year's winners were David Gold and Susanna Gross, ahead of Graham Sadie and Patrick Shields.

On today's deal Zia Mahmood's partnership alighted in the inferior contract of 6NT by North. By all accounts, South overcalled East's 6♣ with 6NT to offer a choice of minors at the seven-level, and North blithely passed. The jubilant Sinead Bird and Jonny Sharp collected eight spade

tricks and three hearts for down 10.

It's not really Zia's style, but had he been keeping a scorecard, and estimating his matchpoint score on a board-by-board basis, he would have marked a perfectly round zero after minus 1,000. He would have been wrong – two pairs made 6♣ doubled by West, scoring 1,210. North led a top club, and South followed with a careless ♣3, taken as a suit preference signal, promising the ♦K. North accordingly underled his ♦A at trick two, expecting South to win the ♦K and give him a heart ruff for down two. When West produced that card, he had the rest of the tricks to make his slam.

London's Mike and Carrie Eden sat North-South on our featured auction, against Richard Fleet (East) and EBU Chairman Jeremy Dhondy (West). With big fits all round, the bidding was predictably competitive. Fleet judged well to sacrifice in 6♣ over the Edens' making 6♣. Now Mike Eden couldn't be sure of beating 6♣ if an opponent was void in one of his suits. Besides, he might be making a grand slam himself, so Eden pressed on to 7♣ (not via 6NT).

Holding two aces, Dhondy was happy enough to double, but which to lead? Normally and reasonably, he put he put his faith in the ♥A, as his side's bigger fit appeared to be spades. Every other player in the same position did the same, but it turned out to be the wrong choice. Carrie Eden ruffed the lead, drew trumps, and disposed of her losing ♠K on dummy's good diamonds. What a difference an opening lead can make.

Final Result 7♣ made, N/S +2,330
Par Result 6♣ doubled minus one, N/S +100