

April 2015

We're playing in the Canary Teams, an event that I am happy to say our team went on to win. My partner in this competition was Greg Hingle.

### Bidding

No one vulnerable

East	W	N	E	S
♠ 7		2C	pass	2D
♥ A86543	pass	2S	pass	3S
♦ 1065	pass	4S <sup>(1)</sup>	pass	4NT <sup>(2)</sup>
♣ K98	pass	5H <sup>(3)</sup>	pass	5S
	All pass			

On this deal you are sitting East and the bidding proceeds as above. (1) On receiving positive support in her suit North fails to bid any of her controls and goes straight to game. This is hard to believe. Perhaps she has been dealt the top ten Spades and three small cards. (2) Her partner doesn't believe it either and tries key card Blackwood. (3) Wow, only two key cards and denying the Q, and she's opened 2C!

Contract: 5S by North. I lead the AH and dummy goes down with

**South**  
♠ Q65  
♥ 97  
♦ AJ98  
♣ Q1073

My partner drops a discouraging 2 and declarer the Q.  
Plan your defence

### Initial Analysis

I haven't a clue as to what's going on here but that won't help us take this contract off. I need to make some assumptions. Declarer is clearly bidding on her distribution rather than points so will have at least seven Spades, possibly eight and, less likely even nine. She has the ♥KQ and probably the ♦KQ to go with it in which case she has discards in Diamonds in the unlikely event that she needs them. Which two key cards does she have? I'm putting my money on the ♠AK, missing either of these along with the QS where did she find this opening? But let's think about this a little bit longer. If she's missing the SK then I think she will make 12 tricks on this hand. If my partner holds the Ace of Spades then my correct play is a small Club in the hope that declarer misguesses where the missing honours are placed, holds a second Club, fails to throw a loser on the

Diamonds....No, let's keep this simple – our only real hope is that Declarer started with two small Clubs, something like the following

♠ AKJ10xxx  
♥ KQ  
♦ KQ  
♣ xx

This still isn't my idea of a 2C opening; perhaps Declarer has more Spades and fewer Clubs? I'm going to lead a Club. All that remains is to decide which Club to lead? If I lead the 8C is there a chance that partner goes up with the Ace and failing to realize I have the King switches back to Hearts? Highly unlikely, but let's eliminate any chance of errors by leading the King.

When I lead the King something amazing happens, it wins the trick and my partner drops the Jack. Has the lead of the ♣K cost us a trick? If so I was wrong about declarer's hand and she started with

♠ AKJ10xxx  
♥ KQ  
♦ –  
♣ xxxx

This simply isn't possible is it? There is one other explanation for the play of the JC from partner. It is called the alarm clock signal. By throwing away what appears to be a sure winner partner is desperately trying to tell you that you must look elsewhere for the best defence. This signal is so rare that I have never seen it before at the table, I have only read about it in books. I wonder if Greg has been reading the same books? Could my partner be void in Diamonds? No, that's impossible. Could he be void in Hearts? If so Declarer would hold something like

♠ AKJ10xxx  
♥ KQJ10  
♦ x  
♣ x

Things are falling into place. This looks far more like a 2C opening. With nine tricks assured it needs very little in partner's hand to make ten tricks.

Here is the full deal

	N	
	♠ AKJ10943	
	♥ KQJ10	
	♦ 3	
	♣ 5	
W		E
♠ 82		♠ 7
♥ 2		♥ A86543
♦ KQ742		♦ 1065
♣ AJ642		♣ K98
	S	
	♠ Q65	
	♥ 97	
	♦ AJ98	
	♣ Q1073	

### Conclusion

Playing the ♣K was a stroke of luck, playing the ♣J was a stroke of brilliance.  
Well done Greg ☺