

Dealer: E
Vul: ALL

♠ 862
♥ Q76
♦ KQ763
♣ 95

♠ J1097
♥ A954
♦ 85
♣ A76

E	S	W	N
P	P	1C	P
1D	P	1NT (12-14)	P
P	P		

North leads S5, South playing S9 and declarer winning with the SQ. You have the following lead agreements in NTs with partner:

1. 4th highest/low from 3 or more to an honour
2. 2nd highest from 4 or more small
3. Top of 3 small
4. Top of a doubleton

What was the S5 from?

Defence 12 – Study the Opening Lead Like a Hawk

Dealer: E
Vul: ALL

	♠ 54 ♥ KJ8 ♦ AJ9 ♣ KJ1084	
♠ AKQ3 ♥ 1032 ♦ 1042 ♣ Q32	♠ J1097 ♥ A954 ♦ 85 ♣ A76	♠ 862 ♥ Q76 ♦ KQ763 ♣ 95

E	S	W	N
P	P	1C	P
1D	P	1NT (12-14)	P
P	P		

North leads S5. You have the following lead agreements in NTs with partner:

1. 4th highest/low from 3 or more to an honour
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What was the S5 from?

South can see every card from SJ down to S6 in their hand or dummy. From holdings like AK5 or A5 you would clearly lead a high honour. So, North must have led from 54 or 543 in spades. ***From the lead, you can place SAKQ in West's hand. You have counted 9 of West's at most 14 points.***

Note declarer's poor play of the SQ. When declarer has a sequence of honours, they should normally play the highest to keep the lower ones hidden from the defenders. The SA would leave North in some doubt that partner could have a spade sequence (KQJ109). South would play the SA or SK if they had them ("third player plays high"), so declarer's play has also told North they hold SAKQ.

Declarer led a diamond to the DK and then rather foolishly led a club to the CQ. In with the CK, North knows 11 of West's points (SAKQ, CQ) and thus knows South must have both missing aces. NS took 5 clubs, DA, and HAK for +200 and a top.

I don't like West's 1C opening for 3 reasons:

1. I don't think you should ever open light when vulnerable in third seat. The point of a third seat light opening is to interfere with the opposition bidding and/or attract a good opening lead. Too dangerous when we are going down in 100s. Partner could drive things too high or start doubling.
2. While the SAKQ are a good feature and there are 2 tens, the hand is a 4333 which has poor trick producing qualities.
3. You don't really want a club lead – you want a spade lead.