n’t be much need to lead a spade, since where would the trick be going? But South could have a stiff spade, in which case a spade lead may be necessary.

WITTES: 7. Although a double such as this should call for an unusual lead, not automatically dummy’s suit. I have no indication to lead otherwise. And my hand is so weak they may very well have 12 tricks without a spade lead. Partner could have the AQ on the king of spades and an ace. On the other hand, against a notrump slam it is frequently right to lead passively, and a spade might be the expected lead without the double. If partner has a cashable AK, it is more likely to be in diamonds rather than hearts, or the double might be the only way to get me to lead a club.

Those alternatives stated, I’ll still lead a spade.

EISENBERG: 7. It’s a Lightner double... but I hope it’s not a club lead partner wants: North could have the AKQxx KKJxx, opposite XXQQXX or XXXXX.

KANTAR: 7. I talked myself into it. Declarer could hold XXQJxx, XXXQxx, XXXQxx. Partner wouldn’t double if he wanted a red-suit lead. We don’t believe two fast spade tricks will go away, so the unusual lead partner is asking for must be clubs.

The double normally asks for a lead in dummy’s suit, but in this case it doesn’t make sense, since North has presumably bid 6NT with running spades (not that declarer is likely to have 12 tricks without the spade suit anyway). Therefore I think partner wants me to lead declarer’s suit. M.M.: These last four problems may seem like far-fetched products of my imagination, but they are all actual hands from the 2002 Phoenix Nationals. East (Mark Barnett) did have the AK and, without a club lead, the hand was cold for an over-trick. Without a double the normal lead would be a red suit.

The double must ask for a spade or club lead, but realistically, which tricks are more likely to go away? North’s bidding denied a side suit; so opener has to have a singleton spade for a spade trick to be lost, and many players refuse to jump to 2NT with a singleton, even if it is partner’s suit. I might have bid 2NT with Eddie’s hand, but most people would bid 1NT or 3O. No matter who South is, the odds are that he doesn’t have a singleton spade. Billy’s ex-ample hand is much more likely.

Shugart-Robson: 6. Partner would have to bid a spade lead with a singleton. The South hand is cold for a spade lead. Partner has probably bid 6NT weak, so opener was most likely to have a 4-4-3-2 holding. Partner would have bid 2NT with a singleton.

SHUGART-ROBSON: 6. Partner would have to bid a spade lead with a singleton. The South hand is cold for a spade lead. Partner has probably bid 6NT weak, so opener was most likely to have a 4-4-3-2 holding. Partner would have bid 2NT with a singleton.

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