

A Switch in Time saves a Pine and maybe a Whine:

You are East with the following hand and the bidding proceeds:

Dir: S

Vul: None

♠ A2
♥ 2
♦ K87542
♣ QT42

South	West	North	East(you)
1H	2D	2H	5D
5H	Pass	Pass	Pass

West leads the AD. What do you play?

Thoughts:

There are occasions when both partnerships have a strong suit fit and this usually results in very competitive bidding to try to win the contract. Having lost the contract, one of the unsuccessful pair leads a winner in their suit to take a trick if one is going and to try to get a look at the dummy to decide what to do next.

More often than not, one trick is the most they will get in their suit before declarer ruffs. Therefore, the defender on lead can really benefit from knowing what suit to switch to and this is where a signal from partner can be very helpful.

When partner leads a winner we normally signal to her that we would like her to continue the suit or switch but, in this case, where a switch is clearly demanded, the signal should be solely focussed on what other side suit we believe she should lead.

To do this we use **suit preference signals**. A high card asks for the higher ranked of the two suits other than trumps and a low card for the lower.

The correct switch is so critical that it can make or break the contract.

The full board (Board 27, Wednesday evening, Aug 21) is here.

You should play the KD without hesitation. Partner must have at least 5 x diamonds for her overcall so one trick is the maximum you will take in this suit. Declarer switches to a spade which you win and return your rag spade to partner's KS to obtain a ruff holding declarer to 9 tricks.

27	♠ 76543 ♥ AQ87 ♦ 3 ♣ 986	<i>Dir: S</i> <i>Vul: None</i>																														
♠ KT8 ♥ J4 ♦ AQJT9 ♣ 753	♠ QJ9 ♥ KT9653 ♦ 6 ♣ AKJ	♠ A2 ♥ 2 ♦ K87542 ♣ QT42																														
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