

## Lightner Double

The Lightner Double sounds like a bolt out of the blue, designed to strike fear into the heart of your opponents, but it was actually named after Theodore Lightner in 1929 . The Lightner Double is a lead-directing double of an opponent's slam contract.

It frequently implies a void, and asks partner for a ruff. Generally speaking, partner is asked to:

1. Lead dummy's side suit, if one has been bid
2. Lead declarer's side suit, if one has been bid
3. Make any other unusual lead - usually partner's longest suit to get a ruff

Additionally, the double asks partner to NOT lead any suit that your side has bid, and NOT to lead a trump.

Examples:

♠ 5 4 3 2 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ A 10 9 8 7 6 ♣ void

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	6♥	Dbl <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Lightner double. This requests a club lead because your right-hand opponent bid clubs.

♠ 7 6 2 ♥ void ♦ A 10 9 8 7 ♣ K 9 8 4 2

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♠	3♣	3♠	5♣
6♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Lightner double. This asks your partner to NOT lead a club (your side's suit) and to find an unusual lead (in this case, a heart).

♠ A 7 6 2 ♥ void ♦ 7 6 ♣ 10 8 7 6 5 3 2

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass
6♦	Pass	Pass	Dbl <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Lightner double. Hopefully partner can find a heart lead.

YOU	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Pass	1♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Dbl	All Pass

You hold: ♣5 ♥QJ7 ♦Q2 ♠10876532. Likely, partner has a club void, so a club lead is indicated. (It isn't likely a diamond lead is needed based on your hand and the auction).

Lightner doubles do carry a bit of risk. On this example, partner had better be sure that 6NT will not make, since the opponents might run there.

### Other Considerations

- The Lightner double is not in effect if the opponents are sacrificing at the 6- or 7-level. In those situations, it's more practical to use regular penalty doubles.
- Playing Lightner doubles, the opening leader can also infer what to lead if his partner did NOT double. For example, if the opponents bid a side suit en route to a slam contract and partner does not double, the inference is that partner does NOT want a lead of that side suit.

(Lightner Doubles are not alertable)

Theodore (Teddy) Lightner was an American lawyer, he was Ely Culbertson's favourite partner and together they won the world championships in 1953.