



2nd July, 2008

DECLARE & DEFEND

Two hands from today's Wednesday Game, one to test your declarer skills, the other your defense.

Declare ...

<p>♠ 987 ♥ Q85 ♦ AK84 ♣ 984</p> <p>♠ T6 ♥ AKJT43 ♦ 2 ♣ K732</p>	<p>Board 7 Hands Rotated for Convenience</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding-right: 10px;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Dbl</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			Pass	1♥	Dbl	2♥	2♠	3♥	3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>														
		Pass	1♥														
Dbl	2♥	2♠	3♥														
3♠	Pass	Pass	Pass														

West leads a low Diamond which is won by Dummy's Ace. That was not a good start for the defense, now, at Trick Two, you can pitch a Spade loser on the second Diamond winner. After that you must simply avoid the loss of 4 Club tricks and you will make your 3♥ contract.

You can avoid 4 Club losers in any one of these 4 ways:

- *The A♣ with East?* This is unlikely, West did not start out with a high Spade, so he probably does not hold AK♠. With only one of those high Spades, West is most likely to have the A♣ for his Double.
- *Clubs 3-3?* That's possible.
- *Hearts 2-2?* This would allow a Club ruff on the board and is also possible.
- *A natural Club trick?* There are some layouts where a Club trick might come naturally (for example if East has a doubleton honor).

The best way to marshal your chances is play on Clubs immediately, so at Trick Three you run the

Nine around losing to West's Ten. Back comes a Heart, and the trick goes: Two, Eight, Nine, Jack.

The defense is trying hard to stop that Club ruff, but you will persevere with Clubs, which you must play from your own hand. What's the best way to do this? Surely you should play the King, hoping that East started with a doubleton honor. This is the full deal:

	<p>♠ 987 ♥ Q85 ♦ AK84 ♣ 984</p>	
<p>♠ AQJ4 ♥ 2 ♦ QT65 ♣ AJT5</p>		<p>♠ K532 ♥ 976 ♦ J973 ♣ Q6</p>
	<p>♠ T6 ♥ AKJT43 ♦ 2 ♣ K732</p>	

The King does indeed squash East's honor, and now the 9th trick is assured, either via a natural Club trick, or if West continues with Clubs (hoping that East can overruff with the K♥) then the 9th trick is the ruff in Dummy.

Look what happens if Declarer mistakenly plays low from her hand on the second round of Clubs. The full line of play is as follows:

- Diamond lead won by Dummy's Ace**
- Another Diamond, pitching a Spade**
- 9♣ run around to West's Ten
- Heart Two, Eight, Nine, Jack**
- Low Club won by East's Queen
- Heart won by Declarer**
- Low Club won by West
- Low Spade (nice play!) to East's King
- Heart return**

Nice defense by E-W, they have managed to head off Dummy's Club ruff in Dummy, and (thanks to Declarer's wrong play on the second round of Clubs) will score 4 Club tricks to set the contract.

Look also at what happens if, at Trick Three, Declarer leads a Club from Dummy, optimistically playing the King from hand. Again the defense removes Dummy's trumps and scores 4 Club tricks.

... Defend

Board 26 required alert defense by North, though for ease of presentation that hand will be South from hereon in. Feeling alert? Read on, starting with the auction (in which you are South in the rotated diagram):

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

East's 3♠ was game-invitational, and this is what you see when Dummy goes down ...

<i>North</i>	♠ KQT96 ♥ J92 ♦ QT2 ♣ 86
<i>South</i>	♠ 875 ♥ AQ ♦ J85 ♣ AJT52

Board 26
Hands Rotated
for Convenience

Partner leads the K♣, and, as always, Step 1 is to figure out from what holding Partner is leading. No doubt, in this case, Partner has led from the KQ (plus some smaller brethren, one suspects). Playing the devil's advocate, is it possible that esteemed Partner has led from Kx? That would be a highly aggressive lead, indeed, perhaps Partner has aspirations of a Club ruff. Well, hardly, you can tell that Partner has no trumps here, there are only 13 of them and the auction and Dummy tell us that the other 10 trumps belong to the enemy. So it's now official, Partner has the KQ of Clubs and some undetermined number of small Clubs.

Things are looking bleak! If Partner has the K♣ and Q♣ she can hardly also hold very much more, if anything. Is there any hope at all? The only glimmer is that Partner holds the K♥, in which case the defense may be able to score a Club and 3 Hearts. Or perhaps 2 Clubs and 2 Hearts? Do you see a potential pitfall? Yes, the Heart suit is blocked! If you persist with Clubs at Trick Two, hoping to get you Hearts in the fullness of time, there is the danger that you might get endplayed. Declarer might well ruff the second round of Clubs, draw trumps, ruff a Club, cash Diamonds and exit with a Heart. Now, with the Heart suit blocked, there will be no way of unraveling the 3 Heart

tricks. You will win the A♥ and Q♥ but then must then concede a ruff and sluff, allowing Declarer's 3rd Heart trick to evaporate in a puff of smoke. This is the full deal:

	♠ ♥ K543 ♦ 9763 ♣ KQ943	
♠ AJ432 ♥ T876 ♦ AK4 ♣ 7	<i>North</i> <i>Declarer</i>	♠ KQT96 ♥ J92 ♦ QT2 ♣ 86
	♠ 875 ♥ AQ ♦ J85 ♣ AJT52	

Yes, the winning defense is to overtake the K♣ with the Ace, and to table the A♥. If Partner has the K♥ then she will encourage and you can continue with the Q♥, after which Partner can either overtake and give you a ruff or else play low and get her Heart trick later on. And, if Partner discourages our A♥ shift, then we'll assume that the K♥ is with Declarer and hope that we can cash another Club. South is the one who can clearly see the dangerous Heart blockage, so she is the one that must take charge in the defense by overtaking the Club and switching.

Carding Note 1

Most players nowadays lead Ace from Ace-King on opening lead. But, in the middle of the hand (starting at Trick Two!), they lead the King from Ace-King. Therefore, when South switches to the A♥, he denies possession of the K♥ and when North's encourages if she holds the King, and not, for example, if she holds a doubleton and is hoping for a ruff.

Carding Note 2

When signaling to the A♥, North must be as clear as possible, playing the highest one she can afford, the Five in this instance. Even that may not be enough, as that would also be played from T875, for example. Imagine Declarer with: ♠ AJ432, ♥ K643, ♦ AK, ♣ 73, in which case North's Five was intended as discouraging, and another Club must be cashed pronto before it goes away on the Diamonds. It's not always possible to read Partner's signal, and the best we can do is to make our signals as loud and clear as possible.