



6th August, 2008

DECLARE & DEFEND

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

Declare ...

<p>♠ 764 ♥ AK3 ♦ 9752 ♣ T32</p> <p>♠ 32 ♥ 94 ♦ AQT3 ♣ AQ984</p>	<p>Board 10 Hands Rotated for Convenience</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><i>North</i></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><i>East</i></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><i>South</i></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><i>West</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <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> </table>		<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>				1♦	1♥		1NT	2♥	Pass	Pass		3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>																	
			1♦	1♥																	
	1NT	2♥	Pass	Pass																	
	3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass																	

Some Souths will open 1♣ planning (after 1♥ or 1♠ from Partner) to rebid 1NT (not ideal with a small doubleton in the other major) or else 2♣ (not ideal with only 5 Clubs). Others, as our South above will open 1♦ planning to rebid 2♣ ... it's a distortion of the minor suit lengths but at least it shows a minor-oriented hand and is more likely to right-side a No Trump contract. Anyway, opening 1♦ works well here, allowing North to compete to 3♦.

In order to make 3♦, Declarer must lose no more than two tricks in the minor suits. Normal play in each suit is to take the double hook against the KJ, but Dummy has only two entries to Dummy, so here's how the play might start:

- Q♥ won by Dummy's Ace**
- 9♦ run around to West's Jack (wrong guess!)
- J♥ won by Dummy's King**
- Q♦ is finessed**
- A♦ is cashed (West pitching a Heart)**

Thanks to the wrong initial guess in the trump suit, Declarer must play the Clubs from her own hand for just one loser.

Here are some deductions that Declarer might make:

- Hearts are surely 5-3 from the bidding (West presumably overcalled with at least 5, and East raised with 3)
- How about Spades? Best guess is 5 with East and 3 with West. Why? Well, if East had 6 he might have bid 2♠, and if West were 4-5 in the majors he might have doubled initially.
- That suggests (it's not a certainty) that West started with 3=5=2=3 distribution and East with 5=3=3=2.

How about the HCP's? West presumably did not start with both the A♠ and K♠, surely he would have lead one. Therefore he needs the K♣ to give him the values for a vulnerable overcall.

The above logic is not ironclad, but it strongly suggests that Declarer should attack the Clubs by laying down the Ace and following with the Queen, hoping to squash East's doubleton Jack.

	<p>♠ 764 ♥ AK3 ♦ 9752 ♣ T32</p>	
<p>♠ AJT ♥ QJT65 ♦ J6 ♣ K75</p>	<p><i>Dummy</i></p> <p><i>West</i> <i>East</i></p> <p><i>Declarer</i></p>	<p>♠ KQ985 ♥ 872 ♦ K84 ♣ J6</p>
	<p>♠ 32 ♥ 94 ♦ AQT3 ♣ AQ984</p>	

Nicely done (but only if Declarer also remembers to unblock Dummy's Ten on the second round of Clubs!).

The keys to success were:

- (a) Finessing the T♦ on the first round of trumps (this turned out to be wrong but it was well thought out, with the strength in the West hand East was less likely to hold the King)
- (b) Deducing the most likely enemy distribution
- (c) Concluding that the K♣ was likely to be with the 3-card suit and therefore playing to squash the doubleton Jack.

... Defend

There were no suitable "Defend" hands this week, so instead here's a gem from last month's Youth Pairs (see wendnesdaygame.com for the hand analyses of this event). It's more of a Declarer problem but there is a nice defensive stroke by West, maybe you will spot it as the play unfolds.

<p>♠ 87532 ♥ KQT ♦ 3 ♣ J832</p>	<p><i>South West</i> <i>North East</i></p> <p>Pass Pass</p> <p>1♥ Dbl 2♥ Pass</p> <p>4♥ Pass Pass Pass</p>
<p>♠ A4 ♥ A9874 ♦ AQ87 ♣ K6</p>	

South's 4♥ was something of an overbid, but we had to get to that contract in order to enjoy a delightful play problem.

West leads the K♠. Where are Declarer's 10 tricks coming from? There are 7 top tricks for starters. How many ruffs in Dummy? Only one, alas, because the KQ will be needed for drawing trumps. With the A♣ and K♦ likely to be with West, Declarer appears to be stuck on 8 tricks. But, if the Spades can be ruffed out, perhaps West can be end-played into returning Clubs. And, if West has Kxx in Diamonds then the K♦ could be the 10th trick. Here's the "simple" line:

- K♠ lead won by the Ace**
- Spade won by West
- Heart to Dummy's King**
- Spade ruff (East shows out)**
- A♦ is cashed
- Diamond ruff**
- Q♥ is cashed**
- Spade ruff**
- A♥ is cashed (West shows out)**

The scene is set for the end-play. Declarer exits with a low Diamond and, bingo, West's King wins the trick. Now West is end-played as planned, being forced to surrender a trick to Declarer's K♣. With the Q♦ also now established, that's 10 tricks for Declarer, via 5 trumps in hand, one ruff on the board, plus A♠, A♦, Q♦ and K♣.

	<p>♠ 87532 ♥ KQT ♦ 3 ♣ J832</p>	
<p>♠ KQJ9 ♥ 53 ♦ KT4 ♣ AT97</p>	<p><i>Dummy</i></p> <p><i>West</i> <i>East</i></p> <p><i>Declarer</i></p>	<p>♠ T6 ♥ J62 ♦ J9652 ♣ Q54</p>
	<p>♠ A4 ♥ A9874 ♦ AQ87 ♣ K6</p>	

That was nicely played by Declarer, but we warned you that it was just the simple line! Let's give West a second chance and see if Declarer can still prevail. The play to the first 9 tricks (up to where the A♥ is cashed) is the same as before except that, on the second round of Diamonds, West ostentatiously jettisons the K♦! Great play, but resistance is futile. Declarer will have been watching East's pitches on the Spade ruffs, and, if those pitches were a Club and a Diamond, then we arrive at the following end-position:

	<p>♠ 8 ♥ ♦ ♣ J83</p>	
<p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ AT97</p>	<p><i>Dummy</i></p> <p><i>West</i> <i>East</i></p> <p><i>Declarer</i></p>	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ J9 ♣ Q5</p>
	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ Q8 ♣ K6</p>	

Declarer has 8 tricks in the bag with the Q♦ still to come. This time the 10th materializes by throwing in East. The Q♦ is cashed, then a Diamond to East's Jack, forcing her to lead a Club and surrender a trick in that suit.

Finally, suppose that East discards differently, this time coming down to: ♦ J96, ♣ Q. No problem! Declarer cashes the Q♦, then lays down the K♣, squashing East's Queen and setting up a trick for Dummy's Jack.