

3rd March, 2010

DECLARE & DEFEND

Board 6 involves a smidgen of technique and the potential for a bit of skullduggery.

	♠ A874 ♥ 82 ♦ A84 ♣ T753	
♠ Q62 ♥ A9 ♦ KJ93 ♣ 9642	North Declarer Dummy South	♠ JT3 ♥ KQJ75 ♦ T7 ♣ AK8
	♠ K95 ♥ T643 ♦ Q652 ♣ QJ	

Against 3NT, North leads the Spade Four to South's King and a Spade is returned. If North had no outside entry she would show the aforementioned smidgen of technique by ducking the second Spade, keeping communications open for when South gets in. But that is not necessary here. North has the ♦A and so wins the second Spade and clears the suit.

Over to Declarer, who has 8 tricks and who must rely on a successful Diamond guess for the 9th. But first the Hearts are run and North is careful to pitch two Diamonds and just one Club. Now the moment of truth has arrived and Declarer leads a Diamond towards his KJ. Here's what might happen:

- The initial thought might be to play the King, trying to keep North (who appears to have the 13th Spade) off lead. That's false logic, all that counts here is to guess Diamonds right for the 9th trick.

- A more thoughtful Declarer might ask himself "Why did North not duck the second round of Spades?" The answer is that North has an entry and doesn't *need* to duck the Spade. Ergo, she has the ♦A! That being so, Declarer will finesse the ♦J and make his contract.

- But now we enter the realms of bluff and double-bluff. If North is of a devious disposition she might duck the second Spade anyway, even though there

is no need to do so! This might prompt a thoughtful Declarer to place the ♦A with South, in which case the best chance is to hop up with the King. Well, we did warn you that it was devious.

The computer has been dealing us some Trump Coups lately, take a look at **Board 14**.

	♠ AK3 ♥ AT ♦ T86 ♣ KQ642	
♠ 874 ♥ ♦ AKQJ532 ♣ JT7	Dummy West East Declarer	♠ T92 ♥ Q7432 ♦ 97 ♣ A98
	♠ QJ65 ♥ KJ9865 ♦ 4 ♣ 53	Hands Rotated For Convenience

We'll spare you the full horror of the auction, except to say that West bid lots of Diamonds and that East doubled 5♥. How do you make 11 tricks without peeking at the E-W hands?

West leads Diamonds, you ruff the second one (East following with the Nine and then the Seven). There is the ♣A to be lost, which means that you cannot afford a trump loser. The ♥Q is probably with East, but the bidding suggests that East has four or even five Hearts. What's your plan?

If East has Heart length it may be possible to organize a trump coup against him. To start with you lead a Club to Dummy's King and East's Ace. You win the Club return and run the ♥T. The good news is that this wins the trick, the bad news is that West shows out! Yikes! But all is not lost. You ruff a Club, and when both defenders follow you know East started life with 3=5=2=3 distribution. Next, you cash three Spades ending on the board, and lead a Club. In the 4-card ending, East has only trumps left, so you lead a Club, which is ruffed and over-ruffed ... then you ruff your last Spade on the board (East is obliged to under-ruff) ... and at Trick 12 East is caught in a Trump Coup. 11 tricks!

That was well-timed. Declarer had to: (a) recognize the likelihood of long trumps with East, (b) knock out the ♣A before playing on trumps, and (c) run the ♥T without cashing the Ace first. Did you find the right sequence of plays?

On **Board 22**, West had the opportunity for some inspired card-reading, but we've rotated the hands to make South Declarer.

♠ AQJ ♥ 8632 ♦ 542 ♣ K64 ♠ KT632 ♥ K ♦ AQ763 ♣ 82	Board 22			
	Hands Rotated for Convenience			
	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass	1♠
	2♠	3♠	Pass	4♠?
	Dbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

West's 2♠ was Michaels, showing Spades and a minor, and let's assume that, like many pairs, E-W play this as showing a good hand or a bad hand, but not a middling (say 11-15) hand. That being the case, we can assume that West's Double of 4♠ shows the good hand.

West leads the ♥A, then the ♥Q which you ruff. The bidding suggests that West has virtually all of the missing high cards including the ♦K, and that his distribution is likely to be 1=5=2=5 or 2=5=1=5. Here's the route to 10 tricks:

- ♥A is cashed
- Heart continuation is ruffed**
- ♠A is cashed
- Diamond to the Ace**
- Low Diamond to West's King
- Another Heart ruff**
- ♦Q is cashed
- Club to West's Ace

Now Declarer can score the ♣K and cross-ruff the rest of the hand. Declarer's 10 tricks are a high trump, ♦A, ♦Q, ♣K, and six ruffs. The full diagram is hardly necessary, but here it is anyway:

	♠ AQJ ♥ 8632 ♦ 542 ♣ KT4		
♠ 5	<i>Dummy</i>	<i>East</i>	♠ 9874
♥ AQJT9	<i>West</i>		♥ 754
♦ K8			♦ JT9
♣ AQJ63	<i>Declarer</i>		♣ 975
	♠ KT632 ♥ K ♦ AQ763 ♣ 82		

Yes, Declarer played it better than he bid it!

On **Board 26** East opened 1NT, West tried 2♣ and then passed the response of 2♦. That was a good guess and we now challenge you to make 11 tricks.

	♠ KT42 ♥ K972 ♦ 92 ♣ AK3		
♠ QJ97	<i>North</i>		♠ A53
♥ QT63	<i>Dummy Declarer</i>		♥ A54
♦ T863			♦ AKJ75
♣ J	<i>South</i>		♣ 76
	♠ 86 ♥ J8 ♦ Q4 ♣ QT98642		

The defense starts with Clubs and Dummy ruffs the second round. Declarer uses that entry to run the ♠Q successfully. Trumps are drawn, and the ♥T is finessed, losing to North's King. Back comes a Heart won by Declarer's Ace, and the remaining trumps are cashed. With one trump left to play:

	<i>North</i>	
	♠ KT	
	♥ 97	
	♦	
	♣	
<i>Dummy</i>		<i>Declarer</i>
♠ J9		♠ A5
♥ Q6		♥ 5
♦		♦ 5
♣		♣
	<i>South</i>	
	♠ 8	
	♥	
	♦	
	♣ QT9	

When the last trump is played, Dummy pitches a Spade and North is squeezed. It's Declarer's lowly Spade Five which takes the last trick if North pitches a Spade, and Dummy's Heart Six has that honor if North pitches a Heart. Declarer had to time the play just right to bring about the squeeze:

- It was essential to take a Spade finesse at Trick 3, using that precious Dummy entry to good effect.
- It was necessary not to cash the ♥A before finessing the ♥T, otherwise North breaks up the squeeze by returning a Heart.