

WEDNESDAYGAME.COM

EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR BRIDGE PLAYERS

1st September, 2010

DECLARE & DEFEND

August is traditionally the month when newspaper columnists and the hosts of TV shows take a break while their public is being fed re-runs. And so it is this month with The Wednesday Game. But it's not because your writers have been taking a well-earned break, it's because September's deals were astonishingly deficient in good *Declare & Defend* examples. Instead of using this month's rather poor specimens, we have dug up a couple of gems from the Archives.

Our first offering comes from 6th February, 2008. It's a most instructive exercise in card-reading, and in combining chances.

♠ Q9532				
♥ AQ8				
♦ A4				
♣ KT2				
♠ 6				
♥ KT9752				
♦ JT3				
♣ Q53				
	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass	2♥
	Dbl	4♥	Pass	Pass
	Pass			

Your vulnerable 2♥ opening can most kindly be described as daring, and the final 4♥ contract is somewhat dicey. West leads a low trump, won by Dummy's Eight.

There are 8 sure tricks, and the 9th can be obtained with a Diamond ruff in Dummy. One possible line is to ensure that Diamond ruff by immediately playing A♦ and another Diamond, and this would need to be done immediately, in case Hearts are 3-1 and the player with the 3rd trump can win the second round of Diamonds. After getting that Diamond ruff for the 9th trick, you will need to find the J♣ with East if you are to make 10 tricks.

Is there a better line? Well, yes, of course there is, that's why we asked the question. Your job is to find that better line.

Surely Spades are 4-3. How so? With 5 Spades, West would probably overcall 2♠ instead of doubling, and with only two Spades his hand would not be suitable for a Double. So, instead of making sure of the Diamond ruff, it should be possible to use our Dummy entries to set up a long Spade for the 9th trick. This line has various ways to win:

- Trumps may be 2-2 all the time in which case a Diamond ruff is the 10th trick.
- Even if trumps are 3-1, it is unlikely that the defense can stop the Diamond ruff later in the play ... the trump singleton would probably be with West, and he is also likely to have ♦KQ (remember, he did not lead a Spade so is unlikely to have both the A♠ and the K♠, what does he have for his Double?)
- Finally, if trumps are 3-1, and if the defense is able to prevent the Diamond ruff, then the Clubs can still provide a 10th trick if the J♣ is with West.

So, the recommended line of play (when trumps turn out to be 2-2) is:

Win the 8♥ on the board

Spade won by West's Ten

Heart (both defenders following)

Spade ruff

Cross to the A♦

Spade ruff

Now Declarer exits with a Diamond, and still has two entries to the board (one to ruff another Spade, the other to reach the long Spade).

		♠ Q9532	
		♥ AQ8	
		♦ A4	
		♣ KT2	
♠ KJT		<i>Dummy</i>	♠ A874
♥ J6			♥ 43
♦ KQ75	<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>	♦ 9862
♣ A986		<i>Declarer</i>	♣ J74
		♠ 6	
		♥ KT9752	
		♦ JT3	
		♣ Q53	

Keys to Success

- *Deducing that Spades were likely to be 4-3*
- *Realizing that setting up the long Spade had additional ways to win*
- *Careful use of Dummy's entries to ruff out the Spades*

Our second offering from the Archives is this defensive problem from 16th January, 2008. It starts with a bidding question. You are South:

♠ T987, ♥ AK542, ♦ J3, ♣ K8

You open 1♥, of course. West doubles, and North bids 2NT, which, by partnership agreement, is Jordan, showing a limit raise or better in Hearts. You won't be accepting this invitation with your minimum hand but, before you can bid 3♥, East interjects with 3♦. This gives you the option of passing or bidding 3♥, and the question is "Which of those two bids is the weaker?" You reason that Partner has forced you to 3♥ and the more quickly you get there the weaker you are. So you bid 3♥, but the enemy persists to 4♦, ending the auction:

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>
	1♥	Dbl	2NT
3♦	3♥	Pass	Pass
4♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

You lead a high Heart, and Dummy goes down:

♠ AK43 ♥ 97 ♦ A82 ♣ J764	<i>North</i>
	<i>Dummy Declarer</i>
	<i>You</i>
	♠ T987 ♥ AK542 ♦ J3 ♣ K8

A second Heart may well cash, perhaps it would be a good idea to grab it immediately in case Declarer has ♠Qx and two Hearts. But, first, let's do some point-counting. What does Partner have for that game-invitational raise? More to the point, is it possible to construct a hand for North where she does *not* have the A♣? While we are at it, let's also give Declarer the worrisome holding of ♠Qx, and let's assume that Declarer has at least something in Diamonds. And, we'll hypothetically give Declarer two Hearts. That would give Partner something like ♠Jxx, ♥QJxx, ♦Kx, ♣Qxxx. Well, that looks like a somewhat miserable limit raise, don't you think?

We'd be more inclined either to give Partner a 5th Heart (in which case the second Heart is not cashing) or the A♣. Yes, the winning defense is to shift to the K♣ at Trick Two, and this is the full hand:

	♠ J2 ♥ QJT86 ♦ 964 ♣ AT2	
♠ AK43 ♥ 97 ♦ A82 ♣ J764	<i>North</i> <i>Dummy Declarer</i> <i>South</i>	♠ Q65 ♥ 3 ♦ KQT75 ♣ Q953
	♠ T987 ♥ AK542 ♦ J3 ♣ K8	

See what happens if you try to cash a second Heart? Declarer ruffs, draws *two* rounds of trumps (leaving a trump on the board to handle the Heart force), and plays on Clubs. Making 10 tricks when the defense's long trump turns out to be in the same hand as the long Club.

Carding Agreement

"A from AK" is the "standard" lead against suit contracts. Also standard, at least in North America, is to give attitude to the opening lead, not count. When the Ace is led, it's normal to assume that this is backed up with the King, so 3rd seat will typically encourage with a doubleton or Qxx (many exceptions, of course, usually depending upon what is in Dummy). Here is an alternative opening lead method, one which works especially well when the suit being led has been bid and raised:

King lead asks for *count*

Ace lead asks for *King attitude*

Queen asks for *Ace or Jack attitude*

Using this method, consider these holdings:

AKQxx Lead the King if you want count, lead the Queen if you think it may help to find out about the Jack (it may be useful to lead a low one at Trick Two to get a shift through Declarer).

AQxxx Obviously you lead the Ace, Partner will tell you about the King.

AKxxx Lead the King to get count.

KQxxx Lead the King if you want count, or the Queen if you think that "Ace or Jack attitude" would be more useful.

Kxxxx Lead low ... or the King, if you think it will be helpful to keep the lead or to get count.

Using this method on the actual hand, South leads the King, gets count, and knows for sure that the second Heart is not cashing.