

DEFENSIVE PLANNING

You are South, with the following auction:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Dbf	2♠	3♥
3♠	All Pass		

South
♠98
♥AJ73
♦J75
♣A873

Your partner has forced you to bid and you are happy that your heart suit is this robust. He likely has 4 hearts for you and a 10-12 point hand. West wins the contract with his 3♠ bid and partner leads the ♥K. What are your plans for setting the contract?

While the declarer is studying the dummy and planning on how he is going to take 9 tricks, you should be studying it as well and planning how you can take 5 tricks. You know you will have 2 hearts and a club, but where are you going to get the other 2 tricks? You will be on lead for trick 3; what will that lead be?

Your 2 tricks extra tricks must come from diamonds. You should lead a diamond at trick 3. But which diamond should this be? You should reason it this way. You can only get two tricks if your partner has a top diamond. If he holds the ♦K and declarer holds the ♦A, he will only take his one diamond. If partner holds the ♦A8 and declarer the ♦K along with the ♦10, your partner still gets only one diamond. The only holding that gives you two diamonds is if partner holds the ♦A10 and declarer holds the ♦K8. If you lead a low diamond, declarer will duck and your partner will have to put up his ♦A. That will be your only diamond winner. However, if you lead the ♦J, declarer will let in ride to dummy's ♦Q. Now when declarer eventually plays the club, hoping to set up the dummy's clubs for diamond loser discards in his hand, you will rise with the ♣A and lead another diamond. This will trap declarer's ♦K and set up partner's ♦10 for the setting trick.

This is the entire hand:

D 1	N North	W N E S
	♠ 52	P P 1♣ P
	♥ KQ92	1♠ X 2♣ 3♥
	♦ A1062	3♣ P P P
	♣ 542	
W West		E East
♠ KQ1063		♠ AJ74
♥ 1084		♥ 65
♦ K84		♦ Q93
♣ 96		♣ KQJ10
	S South	
	♠ 98	
	♥ AJ73	
	♦ J75	
	♣ A873	
		3♠ W NS: 0 EW: 0

Defense is difficult because you can't see into your partner's hand. You must visualize possible holdings and hope that the one that sets the contract is the one he actually holds.

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/n4yva7u> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.