

MAKE YOUR PLAN WHEN ON DEFENSE

We all know that we must make a plan when we are declaring a contract. How we are going to make our contract and how are we going to make overtricks without risking the contract? When we are defending a contract, we also must plan. Here, we plan how we are going to defeat the contract. The job is much harder than declarer's. Whereas the declarer can see both his and dummy's hand, the defenders can only see only their own hands.

But there is help. For one, we can see the dummy when partner is on lead. From the lead and the dummy, we can make assumptions and plan out the best way to defeat the contract. We also must listen carefully to the auction.

Here, you (South) and your partner pass throughout the following auction:

West	North	East	South (You)
		1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Your partner leads the ♠A and you see this dummy:

North

♠ A

East

♠ QJ1054

♥ A86

♦ A10

♣ Q63

South

♠ 3

♥ Q543

♦ Q963

♣ A1075

While the declarer is devising his plan to make 3 NT, you should also be planning. Your objective, however, is to set the contract. Partner leads the ace from ♠ AK, so you can see 3 top tricks for the defense. Your red queens might produce 1 or 2 tricks. But your hand and dummy's hand adds to 21 points. West has shown, in the auction, an invitational hand between 10 and 12 points. That leaves about 8 or so points for North, who has already "shown" 7 points in spades. Therefore, the red kings must be in West - poised to capture your queens. The only hope for two additional tricks are in clubs. You'll need some help from partner however.

Not wanting to set up the spades for declarer, partner switches to the ♣J after winning the ♠A. The declarer plays low from dummy. Now you have to make a decision. Should you win the ♣A

or not? If you do, the declarer has 2 club tricks to go along with the 2 spades he eventually gets, and the presumed 4 tricks in the red suits. He will only need 1 more trick which he can easily get in hearts or diamonds since you don't have good intermediates in those suits.

You should not play the ♣A. Instead, you should signal encouragement by playing the ♣7, hoping that partner will lead another club when he is thrown in with the ♠K. Sure enough, declarer wins the ♣K and leads a spade up to his dummy. Your partner will win the ♠K and lead another club. Whether dummy goes up with the ♣Q or ducks, you will win the club trick along with your remaining clubs to make up the 5 tricks you need to set the contract.

Here is the entire deal:

14	N North	W	N	E	S
	♠ AK972 ♥ 97 ♦ 842 ♣ J84	2♦	P	2♠	P
W West		2NT	P	3NT	P
♠ 86 ♥ KJ102 ♦ KJ75 ♣ K92		P	P		
	E East				
	♠ QJ1054 ♥ A86 ♦ A10 ♣ Q63				
	S South				
	♠ 3 ♥ Q543 ♦ Q963 ♣ A1075				
		3NT W		NS: 0 EW: 0	

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/z7y2eb8> , 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.