

DEFEND

WITH YOUR LIFE



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1. The Beginning, the Middle-and Almost the End

Dealer South Both sides vulnerable

♠ J 5
♥ K J 8 7
♦ 9 4 2
♣ A K 10 6

♠ Q 9 8 6 3
♥ 5
♦ K 10 6 3
♣ 9 4 2



<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
6♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

North-South are playing a variation of the Swiss convention in which the response of four clubs indicates opening bid values, at least four trump, and no singleton. Most players nowadays use the Jacoby 2NT response to show this type of hand.

Sitting West, and playing with an unfamiliar partner, you lead the 6 of spades, which is covered by the 5, king and ace. South plays three rounds of clubs, ruffing, draws two trumps, and ruffs the fourth club. Then he exits with the 10 of spades; queen from you, jack from dummy, 2 from partner. What do you play now?

Answer 1

♠ J 5
♥ K J 8 7
♦ 9 4 2
♣ A K 10 6

♠ Q 9 8 6 3
♥ 5
♦ K 10 6 3
♣ 9 4 2



♠ K 2
♥ 4 3 2
♦ J 8 7 5
♣ Q J 8 3

♠ A 10 7 4
♥ A Q 10 9 6
♦ A Q
♣ 7 5

Playing in six hearts, South has won the spade lead, eliminated the clubs, drawn two rounds of trumps, and exited with the 10 of spades, creating the impression that he began with A 10 alone. Did you fall into the trap of supposing that since a spade would apparently allow a ruff and discard (or sluff, ruff, if that is your idiom), you must risk a low diamond?

The problem illustrates the need to count, which is the beginning, the middle, and almost the end, of good defense. Partner's play of the spade deuce indicates an original even number of spades (current count). If partner had four spades, declarer has four black cards. Even if declarer has six hearts, he must have three diamonds. So a ruff/sluff can't help him.

You may reply that a diamond lead won't hurt the defense either since declarer's third diamond is a loser. What third diamond!? Declarer has executed a diabolical deception. Did he catch you napping? And this is only problem number one!

2. Confidence

Dealer South Both sides vulnerable

♠ Q 10 9 8 4
♥ 3
♦ K 9 4 2
♣ 7 6 3

♠ A J 5
♥ A J
♦ J 10
♣ A Q 10 8 4 2



<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1♦	2♣	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Your partner has failed to turn up for the first session of a pair game, and the tournament director has provided you with a substitute. You have an early opportunity to establish mutual confidence.

Your lead of the jack of diamonds is covered by the king, 3 and 5. Declarer leads a low spade from dummy, partner plays the 2 and declarer the king. How will you defend?

Answer 2

♠ Q 10 9 8 4
♥ 3
♦ K 9 4 2
♣ 7 6 3

♠ A J 5
♥ A J
♦ J 10
♣ A Q 10 8 4 2



♠ 7 3 2
♥ Q 9 8 7 6 5 4
♦ 3
♣ K 5

♠ K 6
♥ K 10 2
♦ A Q 8 7 6 5
♣ J 9

South plays in four diamonds doubled after West has overcalled in clubs and East in hearts. West's diamond lead is won in dummy and declarer leads a low spade, covered by the 2 and king.

Clearly you need to determine whether partner has the king of hearts or the king of clubs. If you win the first spade you will have to guess. However, partner has played the 2, suggesting an odd number, so it must be safe to duck. On the next spade partner will have an opportunity for a suit-preference signal—playing the 7 if he has the king of hearts, the 3 if he has the king of clubs. If you defend on that basis, partner's second spade will be the three, suggesting club strength. Now it is easy to cash the clubs and a heart without risking the daring heart underlead.