

## Ultimate Defence 11

Let's now continue with listening to the bidding and drawing the inferences that will help with the defence from the moment of the opening lead.

**Dealer North NS Vul**

♠ A 10 3	
♥ K 9 4	
♦ Q 4 2	
♣ K 8 4 3	
♠ K 9 7 5 2	♠ Q J 6
♥ Q J 8	♥ 3 2
♦ 7	♦ J 10 8 5 3
♣ A 9 7 5	♣ J 10 2
♠ 8 4	
♥ A 10 7 6 5	
♦ A K 9 6	
♣ Q 6	

The Bidding:

North	South
1NT	3H
NB	4H

What does the bidding tell West THIS time? North has a balanced hand with 12-14 HCP. South has FORCED to game and shown a FIVE card heart suit (with six, South would have bid 4H immediately). North has three or maybe even four card heart support. West has learnt not to lead unsupported aces, or to underlead them, and a trump lead with that holding is ludicrous. So the only choice is between a spade from the LONG suit, or a diamond from the SHORT suit. A spade MAY give a trick away, but then South seems likely to be short in that suit so it may not. With a singleton, South may be reluctant to finesse if there is a finesse available.

The diamond lead may strike partner with the ace (there is JUST room for partner to have 5 HCP), but then, against that, if you DO get your ruff, what does that do to your trumps? Yes, it reduces them to NO tricks, so your ruff will achieve nothing other than to transfer the one trick you already have. PLUS, the danger that you might pick up any vital cards in partner's diamond suit. Sure enough, if you look at East's hand, that is just what happens. Declarer plays low from dummy, East produces the ten and declarer wins. Later, when declarer leads to the queen and West shows out, the finesse against East's jack is marked.

So, the ONLY lead that works out on this hand is a low spade, and it is for logical reasons, and not blind following of rules such as leading your singletons hoping for a ruff. Why ask for a ruff when you don't want, or need, one?

**Dealer East EW Vul**

♠ J 10  
♥ Q 10 7 5  
♦ J 9 8  
♣ A 9 5 3

♠ Q 9 7  
♥ 4 2  
♦ Q 10 7 5  
♣ Q 8 4 2

♠ 6 5 2  
♥ A K J 8  
♦ A K 4  
♣ K J 6

♠ A K 8 4 3  
♥ 9 6 3  
♦ 6 3 2  
♣ 10 7

**The Bidding:**

East	West
1H	1NT
3NT	NB

Put yourself in the North chair this time. The bidding hasn't told you much, but try and picture the hands as best you can. East should have a fairly balanced 19 count to raise West to game, maybe 18. West has 6-9 HCP but in which suits? Or, more to the point, which suit(s) does West not have? West does not have four or more spades if their bidding is to be believed because West should bid 1S if they have 4 or more. West does not have heart support, therefore West has one or both of the minor suits. East just might have four spades, but even in that case, partner (South) has four also, and if East has fewer than four, partner has five.

Opening any of your own suits could be dangerous. A heart might run round to declarer's Jx, a club may just be enough to prevent your nine making later, and leading a diamond from Jxx in a suit that declarer probably has is very foolish as it will ruin any combined holding you and partner may have in the suit.

So, the only answer is to lead your partner's suit, and that is spades. Lead the jack, as it will tell partner that is your highest. Once you do, here is where signalling is once more important. Partner has no entry but sees the need to take as many spade tricks as possible. South also knows that West probably has Qxx because the jack has denied any higher card. South therefore signals by playing the eight and allows West to score the queen. But after careful discarding, North gets the lead after declarer has taken only eight tricks, and leads the ten of spades which South overtakes and proceeds to take the last three tricks as well.

This hand is no different in principle to an earlier one. Had South been on lead, South would have led the four of spades and North played the ten. No real difference between North leading the jack and South following with the eight. The communication has been preserved and as long as South doesn't throw any spade tricks away, the tricks are assured.

Some Souths might overcall 1S on this hand, especially at the vulnerability. That is a good move and will ensure that partner leads a spade. As long as the proper system of leads and play is followed, North will lead the jack, South encourage with the eight, and the result will be down one. But it is much more satisfactory when you, as North, have no such help from partner yet still produce such a great lead. People of course may question how you came to find the lead when partner had five to the AK, but you will have great delight in explaining to them just why it is the only sensible lead on the bidding.