

Ultimate Defence 13

Defensive strategy requires the cooperation of both partners. Before we go into that in more detail, let me show you a quite simple case where this is most important.

Dealer East All Vul

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

The possible bidding:

W	N	E	S
		1D	1H
2C	3H	4C	4H
NB	NB	NB	

After West has made a 'free' bid of 2C (yes, a free bid is marginal given the void in East's opened suit) East has been encouraged to support them to the four level. South has diagnosed the situation, and with a six card heart suit has happily gone on to 4H, knowing North has heart support and, from the EW bidding, a shortage in clubs. This is what competitive bidding is all about. As you can see, 4C is down one, but what happened to 4H at a number of tables was not what should have happened. Nearly all Wests led the king of clubs. When this held, the Wests had two options: to shift to a spade, or to carry on with a second club, which would be effective by shortening dummy's trumps and negating the spade suit should South have a singleton. But, as in one of our earlier examples, West should not have remained on lead. It should have been automatic for East to overtake the king of clubs and cash the top diamonds, and give West a third round ruff, defeating the 4H contract. In fact, if East does not overtake the club, that should be a command for West to either continue with a club or shift to a spade, for whatever reason East might have. Later, we will learn about suit preference signals. West, being desperate for a diamond lead from East, and knowing that East had supported clubs, could have led the THREE of clubs at trick one. The message would have been clear and we will talk about suit preference signals later, but the basic way they work is: lead your lowest card and you ask for the return of the lowest suit, lead (or follow with) your highest card and you request a return of the higher suit. But more on that later.