

Ultimate Defence 14

There are a number of dos and donts that defenders should be aware of. Before we go into defensive strategy in full, here is another quite simple hand that has a number of lessons to be learnt.

Dealer South All Vul

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

The possible bidding:

W	N	E	S
			The
NB	2H	NB	3C
NB	3H	NB	4H

East has the opening lead against North's 4H. Nothing could be easier! Yes there will be times when the opening lead is 100% clear cut and this is one such time. It is very unfortunate for NS that through no fault of their own they have freely bid to a game that cannot make due to the very unfortunate diamond set up. Not only that, the hand with all top diamonds has the opening lead. East starts with a top diamond and continues with more top diamonds, taking the first three tricks. What should East do next? The game will be defeated now if East takes the ace of clubs, which does seem to be the obvious thing to do, there is little chance that North will be void in clubs and that trying to cash the ace of clubs will give declarer the contract. So, East takes the ace of clubs, but what then? Ultimate defence is about extracting the most from your defence whenever you can. East has done enough to defeat opponents' game, but, especially when you are playing for match points, you should try for as many down as possible. East can sit back and take the plus 100, or East can do a bit of thinking. Is there a possibility of another defensive trick? Certainly not in clubs. If it is in spades, can West have the king? North's 2H bid should have been made on at least a ten count so that suggests having the spade king.

Can another trick come from the trump suit? North almost certainly has at least six hearts, more than likely to the king and queen, and that will be enough to draw all the defenders' trumps. So there doesn't seem to be another trick, does there. It seems that a continuation in clubs, a switch to spades, or a switch to a trump would achieve nothing. The only hope that East can have of another trick is if a trump trick can be PROMOTED for the defence. If West has the JACK, then irrespective of how many trumps declarer has to the king and queen, if the jack forces out one of declarer's while East still has the 10 6 5, East will make a trump trick.

East should be well aware of the pitfalls of the 'ruff and slough' or 'ruff and discard' as it may be better known: If a defender leads a suit that neither declarer nor dummy has, declarer can ruff in EITHER hand while discarding a loser from the other hand. But in so far as East has decided that there are no losers to discard, and also can see that dummy would need to ruff with the singleton ace, and with it East will do the unthinkable and present declarer with a ruff and discard by leading the last diamond. If West, also (and remember, defence is a partnership thing) is up with the play and follows East's reasoning for leading the thirteenth diamond, West will be smart enough to ruff with the JACK and not a lower trump. There is a lesson here, and an old saying: "Don't send a boy on a man's errand". Jack is clearly the man to send. At the time there this deal was played, there was not one declarer in 4H who was down two, so thinking defence would, and should, have scored 100% instead of 50% for the board.