

Ultimate Defence 29

Continuing the theme of what happens after the opening lead, signals are a vital factor in partnership cooperation on defence. It's not enough to know what partner's doing if you can't help him. Here is a very good example of how proper defence works, with cooperation and signalling.

Dealer North Nil Vul

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

The bidding was as follows:

W	N	E	S
	1D	NB	1S
NB	2NT	NB	3C
NB	4S	ALL PASS	

The bidding was perfect but unfortunately for NS this time 3NT would have been better than 4S. South was quite right in looking for a 5-3 spade fit and North was quite right to oblige. Unfortunately the defence were not as cooperative. West had good reason to start with the ace of diamonds, clearly looking for a third round ruff. Declarer played low from dummy and East was smart enough to realise what was going on. He signalled encouragingly with the TEN of diamonds. This also served the purpose of giving West a SUIT PREFERENCE signal: the higher of the other two suits. That encouraged West to continue, and East then followed with the SIX, still a suit preference signal for hearts. Declarer played the hand as well as he could by coming to hand with the king of clubs to lead a trump towards dummy. West wasn't taken unawares and rose with the ace of spades and immediately switched to the jack of hearts, East winning the ace when declarer had no choice but to cover in dummy. East of course wasn't interested in trying to set up any more heart tricks. Knowing full well what partner was doing, East returned the third diamond and West gratefully ruffed. At other tables, when declarer led towards dummy (not always after a diamond lead and continuation), West played low, dummy's king won, and on the return of another spade the smart declarers played the percentages and inserted the ten, asking themselves why East had not won with the ace when dummy's king was played. The answer: East did not have the ace!

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