

Ultimate Defence 30

If you are going to become a top defensive partnership you will need to not just know what's going on and keep all your wits about you, you are also going to have to learn how to tell lies. That is a big part of good defence but one that many defenders are not very good at. Here is a hand from a recent teams match, where two top pairs were playing against each other.

Dealer East All Vul

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

The bidding was as follows:

W	N	E	S
		1D	NB
1H	NB	1S	NB
2NT	NB	3NT	NB

North led the ten of clubs and this is where the lies began. Declarer played low from dummy and South followed with the queen, not such a lie anyway since the jack would have meant pretty much the same thing. Declarer won in hand and ran the jack of diamonds for a finesse, South winning. Now South laid down the jack of clubs, clearing the suit and setting up clubs for North. Declarer proceeded to run the diamonds, and North was quick to spot the problem that he was going to be faced with. He discarded the three of spades, signalling no interest in the spade suit, and followed next with the jack of hearts (!!) then the six of spades. He had seen the problem well in advance. On the final diamond he let go a club.

Meanwhile, South's first discard on the diamonds was the SEVEN of spades, followed by the three of hearts then the six and seven. Declarer needed two more tricks for his contract. These could be developed in spades by losing to the ace if SOUTH had it and had no more clubs, or via a heart finesse, which declarer was sure would lose. Since North had shown no interest in spades and had clearly asked for a heart, and had discarded a club, declarer felt safe in playing on spades, having diagnosed that THIS was the situation with five cards left:

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

Confidently, declarer called for the two of spades and the roof fell in when North won the ace and took his clubs, giving up the king of hearts at the end. The smirk on his face could not be disguised.

I know that this was a rather extreme example of how to tell lies to convince declarer in such a way that he will go wrong, and unfortunately for the very good defenders the declarers are usually not good enough to fall for a brilliant piece of deception, but do practice to lead declarer astray. We may see more examples of this later.

And by the way, you may have your own opinion on whether declarer played this hand properly, and if not, how declarer should have played it and why.