

Ultimate Defence 33

Counsel for the Defence 03 – The Real Deal

Time now for our Post Mortem, so let me show you the full deal:

Dealer South EW Vul

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

The bidding had been:

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

Bob led the five of hearts, dummy played low and I played the eight, losing to FFY's nine. He next led a spade to dummy's queen and led the six of hearts to his queen, losing to Bob's king. Bob now led the two of hearts and cleared the suit. After five rounds of spades, FFY threw me in with a high club when I had to come down to AKQ, and I had to concede the last two tricks to dummy's AQ of diamonds. Here is the Post Mortem, as verbatim as I can recall.

Me: "That was great declarer play, throwing me in at the end, well done. And well done for choosing 3NT instead of 4S."

FFY: “Thanks, but maybe 4S would have been better. I decided that with my good heart stoppers I should opt for 3NT but I do agree, I should have bid 3S not 3NT. But there I was, and fortunately I did know how to count to 12 so realised that you had to have the diamond king, plus the top clubs, IF you did not have the heart king. I had to find that out, hence I crossed to dummy's queen of spades to lead another heart. While I was pretty sure you didn't have it, any good player in your position would not sacrifice the king at trick one as I was sure to have the ace, wasn't I? When the queen of hearts lost to the king, I had to hope that Bob didn't switch to a club. You would certainly have cashed your clubs had I taken the diamond finesse. Fortunately, Bob led his last heart. Was that intentional, Bob?”

Bob: “Yes, of course. But I assumed too much. I assumed that you would be good enough to play the hand well, and that my partner would be able to defend perfectly. Only one of those assumptions proved to be correct. You see, once the queen of spades held, I too knew that Vil almost certainly had the top clubs, but I didn't know how many he had. It really didn't matter if you were as good as I hoped you were. I also worked out that we could score more than just 100 for down one even if Vil had only four clubs, and most people in 4S would be down one. You will note that when I led the third heart to clear the suit, it was the TWO. I could have led the seven, a neutral card, being the middle one, or the TEN, a high card. But I chose the TWO, which should have been read as a suit preference for CLUBS. I knew Vil had the top clubs but he didn't think that I knew. I even tried to make sure by discarding the THREE of clubs on the fourth spade but I guess he didn't notice that the TWO was missing. Had he known what I was doing, he would have ditched his QUEEN of clubs on the fifth spade when you cashed it. Then you would have placed him with AJ10 left, and as indeed you did do, tried to throw him in with a club. Note that I say 'tried.' But I would have stepped up with my jack, cashed my good hearts and then led a club to Vil's two top clubs. I figured that plus 200 would be an OK sort of score for us.” That last bit he said with a meanignful look, and I shrank off to lunch without another word. What could I say?

During the break between sessions I finally began to realise what treally good defence COULD be about, and resolved to be a bit more awake, and AWARE, for the next session.