

Ultimate Defence 39

Counsel for the Defence 09 – Be Assured

Here is the full deal:

Dealer West EW Vul

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

Against East's 4H I started with my singleton club. Declarer won in dummy and Bob SIGNALLED encouragement with his seven. Next, declarer played off his top hearts, Bob signalling encouragement in spades by discarding the nine on the second round of trumps. His first play in clubs, plus his first discard in spades, told me in no uncertain terms two things: firstly, that he was in control of the club suit and it wouldn't provide declarer with any more discards than on the top three clubs. Secondly, his encouraging card in spades told me that I could underlead the king with no worry that it might run to declarer's jack and provide an extra trick on the return of a low spade to dummy's queen. If declarer wanted to take a spade finesse he would have to play the queen if I switched to a spade once in with a trump. Of course Bob didn't know that I would get in, he just hoped. He also hoped that he might be able to persuade declarer not to take the spade finesse if he had good diamonds. He also knew that from MY point of view, I might think clubs could provide more than just one discard from declarer's hand, for instance if declarer had the NINE of clubs (by ruffing out Bob's jack). But Bob knew declarer couldn't do anything useful in clubs and was therefore telling me that I could, and should, switch to a spade and not try to cash my ace of diamonds. Thankfully, I was able to read his messages this time round, and did switch to a low spade when declarer put me in with the fourth trump. Declarer wasn't fooled by Bob's encouraging nine of spades and did take the finesse, but after a diamond discard on the third club, still had to lose two diamond tricks. He still made his contract of course but this was a match point tournament where every trick counts, and we had finally managed to get the best out of our defence thanks to Bob's vision and powers of communication. We ended up with a very good match point score on this board. More of Bob's intelligent play was to follow.