

09 - 2023 – Let the Defenders Help You

In the rush to make the Contract, we often forget the Defenders can help us

This hand came up a few weeks back

You are South, and are playing 3NT, vul

West leads SQ and Dummy goes down

532
10862
AK865
5

SQ is led

AK109
AQ3
Q
KQ1042

You see straight away that communication between the hands is going to be poor – making finesses hard and setting up the long Diamonds. So you are going to need to be smarter, and make the Defenders work for you

Firstly, count your winners. As SQ has been led, you know you have 3 Spade winners after you knock out SJ

Diamonds can give you 3 more, but you need to get to Dummy, so only 2 are certain if you play DQ and overtake with DK, then play DA

One Heart is certain and 1 Club, Total 7. So, you are 2 short

At our Table, Declarer won SQ with SA then led DQ at Trick 2, and overtook it in Dummy, cashed DK, then finessed Hearts – down he went, as the Defenders got 5 Tricks before Declarer could get 9 Tricks

BETTER LINE

Let the Defenders help you. Here is the full deal (**SQ is led**):

	532	
	10862	
	AK865	
	5	
QJ87		64
KJ		9754
J1043		972
763		AJ98
	AK109	
	AQ3	
	Q	
	KQ1042	

You know you can make 3 Spades from the lead of SQ, once you knock out SJ. West is most likely to have it (the lead coming from a sequence). You have 7 Spades, so they are likely to break 3:3 or 4:2

Win SQ with SA. Play DQ (essential), then SK, then S10. West wins and must find a lead. He cannot lead Hearts (with KJ bare). So, he must either put you into the Diamonds on the table, or play a Club. He would probably think South has no more Diamonds, so will play a Club. (If he plays a Diamond, play DA, DK and then another – South wins and then must either play a Club or a Heart – giving you more Tricks)

On a Club from West, East will probably play CA, maybe then continuing with Clubs, or switching to Hearts. If it is a Club, then play CK, CQ and another to North; you will later make the last Club

If it is a Heart, play HQ (as you hope to get to Dummy with H3). West wins, and now must play a Diamond, or another Club. Probably it will be a Club, again, you will score more Club Tricks

In the end, you must lay down HA, hoping that HK falls (as it does), then use H3 to cross to H10 and play your last 2 Diamonds

You will make either 9 or 10 Tricks, depending on how the Defenders lead back and play their cards

Moral of the Story

You should look to the Defenders to help you make your Contract by throwing them in – most often, whatever they lead back, helps you get extra Tricks

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