

DEFENDING AGAINST A TWO-SUITER

BY TERENCE REESE

The normal defenses against a two-suiter are forcing out declarer's trumps and preventing side-suit ruffs in the short trump hand. Others are harder to recognize. There is one type of position in which a defender must refuse to overruff in order to prevent declarer from bringing in a long side suit.

The position when declarer led the third round of hearts was:

NORTH
 ♠ 7
 ♥ —
 ♦ Q 10 6 5 3
 ♣ J 4

WEST
 ♠ 6
 ♥ 10 9
 ♦ A 8 4 2
 ♣ 5

EAST
 ♠ A 9
 ♥ —
 ♦ K J 9
 ♣ K Q 7

NORTH
 ♠ 7 4 2
 ♥ 6
 ♦ Q 10 6 5 3
 ♣ A J 4 2

SOUTH
 ♠ Q J 10
 ♥ K 8 5 4
 ♦ 7
 ♣ —

WEST
 ♠ 6 5
 ♥ A 10 9 7
 ♦ A 8 4 2
 ♣ 10 9 5

EAST
 ♠ A 9 3
 ♥ Q 2
 ♦ K J 9
 ♣ K Q 8 7 3

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q J 10 8
 ♥ K J 8 5 4 3
 ♦ 7
 ♣ 6

The contract was three spades by South. West led the ten of clubs, and the play appeared to follow a normal course. Declarer won with dummy's ace of clubs and finessed the jack of hearts; a trump lead at this point would have done no good, so West continued with a club. Declarer trumped the club, ruffed a low heart, and led a spade from the table, winning in the closed hand. Another heart was trumped in dummy and East overtrumped. As the defenders' last two spades were now evenly divided, South was able to maintain control, and the contract was made.

As South had shown a marked two-suiter in the bidding, when a heart was trumped in dummy, East should have been able to work out that if he overruffed, the contract would certainly succeed. The right defense was to leave declarer in dummy, so that to return to his hand he would need to force himself once more. See what happens if East discards a club instead of overruffing the heart. Dummy leads a club, ruffed by declarer. If South leads a trump, East wins and continues the force by leading a low diamond. Declarer's best hope is to lead the king of hearts instead of a trump. East trumps with the nine of spades and refrains from playing the ace; instead, he leads the club or a low diamond to continue the force, and declarer loses control. [Unless the bidding suggested otherwise, declarer would do better to play for three-three hearts by leading

a trump in the end-position shown. If hearts were three-three, the defense would be preempted from its actual blunder.—Ed.]

The next deal shows another unusual way of upsetting the trump position when declarer has a long side suit.

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

South played in four hearts, and the king of clubs was led. Dummy won, and a spade was lost to West's ace. West cashed the queen of clubs, on which South's jack fell. Ninety-nine players out of 100 would shift to a trump at this point, with some idea of preventing declarer from ruffing spades in dummy. The play would continue: South wins in his own hand, trumps a spade, then overtakes a trump and plays a third round of trumps. As the trumps break three-three, declarer can then afford to give up a spade. Had the trumps been four-two, declarer would still have been all right if the spades had been three-three; he succeeds with an even break in one of the major suits and not worse than four-two in the other. The situation would be essentially the same if West played a diamond instead of a trump at trick four.

The reasoning pointing to the right lead after the queen of clubs is quite

simple. Obviously, declarer will trump spades in dummy, so why not let him trump a club in dummy instead? The difference is that trumping a club in dummy does not help to establish the spade suit. Study the effect of another club lead by West. If declarer trumps in dummy, he must come back to his hand with a second trump and then ruff a spade with dummy's last trump. Declarer then must play ace and another diamond to get back to his hand, and needs to stake everything on a three-three break in both major suits. The same sort of position arises if declarer trumps the awkward club continuation in his own hand. He ruffs a spade in dummy but has then no alternative but to take three rounds of trumps and hope that the spades will break evenly as well.

Here is an even more uncommon form of defense against declarer's two-suiter:

NORTH		EAST	
♠ A 4 3		♠ 9 8 5	
♥ K 5 2		♥ A 9 8 3	
♦ 6		♦ 9 4	
♣ A J 10 6 5 4		♣ K Q 7 2	
WEST		SOUTH	
♠ 7 6 2		♠ K Q J 10	
♥ Q J 10 6		♥ 7 4	
♦ A 8 5 2		♦ K Q J 10 7 3	
♣ 9 3		♣ 8	
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	(All Pass)

West led the queen of hearts, and declarer had to trump the third round. South then played the king of dia-

monds and clever shot six diamonds. Likely, the ace, and break favor the ace of could draw. Where South cont West ducked jack of diamonds position was

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monds and *West played low!* It was a clever shot. South was marked with six diamonds and four spades. Very likely, the diamonds were solid after the ace, and the spades were going to break favorably for declarer; so once the ace of diamonds was gone, South could draw trumps and claim the balance. When the king of diamonds held, South continued with the queen, and West ducked again. He also ducked the jack of diamonds, and East ruffed. The position was:

	NORTH	
	♠ A 4 3	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ A J 10 6	
WEST		EAST
♠ 7 6 2		♠ 9 8
♥ 10		♥ 8
♦ A		♦ —
♣ 9 3		♣ K Q 7 2
	SOUTH	
	♠ K Q J	
	♥ —	
	♦ 10 7 3	
	♣ 8	

[See top of next column.]

There was only one shot for East here, a fourth heart, conceding a ruff-and-discard full of embarrassment.

Declarer could stand on his head, but he had to lose one more trick. This defense was found in actual play by the winners of the British Masters Pairs.

CORRECTIONS PUBLISHED

Errors are corrected both in *The Bridge World* and on its web site. From www.bridgeworld.com link to the Editorial Department page, then to Corrections. You can check there to obtain missing information or to see if an item has already been submitted.

CLASSIC REWIND

ALABAMMY BOUND

Many play techniques were known to puzzle constructors before they were made at bridge tables. The deal below, declared by Dr. French Craddock, Jr., in a team match in Alabama during the mid-1940's, may have been the first table appearance of a particular approach.

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

The bidding has been swept away by the sands of time, but South was the declarer in seven spades, and West led the queen of clubs.

Plan the play.

(Solution overleaf.)

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 EAST
 ♠ 9 8 5
 ♥ A 9 8 3
 ♦ 9 4
 ♣ K Q 7 2
 WEST
 ♠ 10
 ♥ 10 7 3
 EAST
 Pass
 Pass
 (All Pass)
 of hearts, and
 the third round.
 the king of dia-