

Better Bidding with Bergen



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The defense never rests

When a defender knows that he must get the lead, he's gotta do what he's gotta do.

♠ 8			
♥ AKJ4			
♦ AKQJ8			
♣ 843			
♠ KQ1062		♠ A975	
♥ 87		♥ 32	
♦ 654		♦ 972	
♣ A109		♣ QJ62	
	♠ J43		
	♥ Q10965		
	♦ 103		
	♣ K75		

West leads the ♠K against 4♥. Declarer calls for dummy's ♠8 and the spotlight shifts to East.

If East hopes to defeat 4♥, he had better make his move now — overtake West's ♠K with his ♠A and switch to the ♣Q.

This allows the defenders to take the first four tricks and defeat the contract. If East ducks the ♠K, South's ♣K is well protected from any attack by West.

Stop, look and listen

Respect partner's signals. He knows more about his hand than you do.

♠ —			
♥ AKQ			
♦ K8653			
♣ A10532			

♠ 9			
♥ J9852			
♦ QJ			
♣ Q9864			

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Despite North's bid, you elect to lead the ♦Q. Things are looking up when you win the first trick as partner plays the ♦2 and South the ♦7.

You are all set to continue with the ♦J but pause to reflect. What is going on? Why was partner screaming, "I hate diamonds," when he must have the ♦A? What should you lead next?

The complete deal:

♠ —			
♥ AKQ			
♦ K8653			
♣ A10532			
♠ 9		♠ AK42	
♥ J9852		♥ 7643	
♦ QJ		♦ A10942	
♣ Q9864		♣ —	
	♠ QJ1087653		
	♥ 10		
	♦ 7		
	♣ KJ7		

Did you get partner's message and find the essential club shift? If you don't give partner a club ruff, South will draw trumps and make his contract, losing only one diamond and two spade tricks.

Timing

When declarer is drawing trumps, a defender should (usually) take his ace of trumps when he has only one low trump remaining.

♠ AKJ3			
♥ 1075			
♦ 865			
♣ 1074			
♠ 1072		♠ Q9654	
♥ A643		♥ 2	
♦ KQJ3		♦ A974	
♣ 83		♣ 652	

♠ 8			
♥ KQJ98			
♦ 102			
♣ AKQJ9			

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥
All Pass			4♥

You (West) lead the ♦K and continue diamonds, declarer ruffing the third round. With no problems in the other suits, declarer

begins drawing trumps.

If you win the first or second round of trumps, declarer will have no problem; he will win any return, draw the rest of your trumps and run his clubs.

If, however, you duck twice, the contract is doomed. If declarer leads a third trump, you win and lead a diamond. This forces out declarer's last trump and you score your ♥6.

If instead, declarer abandons trumps and cashes the ♠A, he then plays clubs, hoping you will follow to three rounds. In that case, declarer would continue clubs and your ♥6 would never win a trick because dummy could overruff.

As the cards lie, you ruff the third club with the ♥6 and cash the ♥A. Down one, a nice reward for defensive patience. □

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