

Hand of the Week

Oftentimes, your skill as declarer will make you a better defender. Here is a case in point:

<p>♠ AQ ♥ KJ2 ♦ 987654 ♣ T4</p>		<p>Vulnerable: N-S Dealer: S</p>																									
<p>♠ 976 ♥ 84 ♦ AQT ♣ AK983</p>	<div><div>N</div><div>W<div>E</div>S</div></div>	<p>♠ 54 ♥ QT763 ♦ J32 ♣ Q72</p>	<table><tr><th><u>W</u></th><th><u>N</u></th><th><u>E</u></th><th><u>S</u></th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>2♣</td><td>2♦</td><td>2♥</td><td>2♠</td></tr><tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>3♣</td><td>P</td></tr><tr><td>P</td><td>3♠</td><td>P</td><td>P</td></tr><tr><td>P</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>				1♠	2♣	2♦	2♥	2♠	P	P	3♣	P	P	3♠	P	P	P			
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<p>♠ KJT832 ♥ A95 ♦ K ♣ J65</p>		<p>Opening Lead: ♣A</p>																									

A word about the bidding... It could have gone any number of ways on this hand -- and did. Out of 7 tables, 5 different contracts were reached.

The bidding, as shown, illustrates a very valuable competitive principle: "4th hand to bid may have nothing." Altogether, the bids by South, West, and North show a minimum of about 34 HCP. East is known to have no more than 6 HCP and can afford to show useful shape, first mentioning hearts and then falling back on the club fit, without West mistaking the bids for strength.

Back to the play... Declarer would approach this or any other hand by first counting losers (in a suit contract) and then looking around for ways to eliminate one or more losers by developing extra tricks.

Two common methods for building extra tricks are, as we know, setting up dummy's long suit to discard a loser, and ruffing a loser in dummy. As defender, sitting West, you can see that declarer might try to set up dummy's diamonds (with little hope of success) or to ruff a losing club (with a good chance of success).

What can you do to get in declarer's way? Nothing in diamonds, but you can prevent a club ruff. After winning the opening lead with your ♣A, switch to a trump. When declarer later leads a club, attempting to set up a ruff, you eliminate dummy's ruffing power by leading another trump.

Declarer is now helpless, losing 1 heart, 1 diamond, and 3 clubs. Simply by putting yourself in declarer's shoes, you were able to set the contract and score well above average on this board.

TheCommonGame.com Wed aft May 29

Board 31

South Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A Q

♥ K J 2

♦ 9 8 7 6 5 4

♣ 10 4

♠ 9 7 6

♥ 8 4

♦ A Q 10

♣ A K 9 8 3

N

W

E

S

♠ 5 4

♥ Q 10 7 6 3

♦ J 3 2

♣ Q 7 2

♠ K J 10 8 3 2

♥ A 9 5

♦ K

♣ J 6 5

NS 2♠; EW 2♣; EW 1♥; NS 1♦; Par +100:
EW 3♣×-1

Contract	Score		Matchpoints		Pair	
	N-S	E-W	N-S	E-W	N-S	E-W
2♠ S 3	140		5.50	0.50	2-Talbot-Bennett	3-Goldman-Rauch
3♠ S 3	140		5.50	0.50	7-Hoger-Shirey	6-Nash-Eads
3♣ W -1	50		4.00	2.00	4-Ream-Parmley	7-Stahlecker-Birmingham
3♠ S -1		100	2.00	4.00	3-Wray-Denke	5-Little-Sutherland
4♠ N -1		100	2.00	4.00	6-Walker-Walker	4-Simon-Dutcher
4♠ S -1		100	2.00	4.00	8-Sandars-White	8-Baker-Buchanan
2♣ W 3		110	0.00	6.00	5-Hicks-Cruce	2-Hopkins-Williams

Not a good game
Lead trumps or, after leading a top club and seeing dummy, switch to trump
Good example of being able to figure out declarer's plan and act against it