

Learning Points – Exploit the Defender’s Dilemma

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Declarer Play LEVEL: Intermediate/Advanced

South Deals NS Vul MPs	♠ J852 ♥ 4 ♦ AK3 ♣ AJ1065	Steve
♠ A64 ♥ J106 ♦ QJ86 ♣ Q98	N W 15 E S	♠ 9 ♥ KQ98532 ♦ 94 ♣ K72
Ron	♠ KQ1073 ♥ A7 ♦ 10752 ♣ 43	EW: 2♥ NS: 3♣, 2♦, 5♠

South West North East
Pass Pass 1♣ 4♥
All Pass
South leads ♠K

Tuesday Evening May 18, 2010, Club Championship. Mr. Michael Lipp Director. Cincinnati Bridge Association Bridge Center, 2860 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, OH 45241 (513) 631-8070 . My partner is Ron Babcock. We play Precision.

When there’s no possible way to make 10 tricks you can concede and move on to the next board...or you could create an illusion that gives the defender a hard guess. Things just might go your way.

The Bidding

After 2 passes North has a minimum opening bid. East has a weak jump overall – but how high? The Rule of 2-3-4 suggests 4 tricks over the number of winners in-hand at favorable vulnerability (they are vulnerable and we’re not). East counts 6 losers so 7 winners plus 4 means up to 11 tricks should be safe. East chose the 10 trick game bid with the 7 card suit. (*Some choose to play Rule of 2-3-4-5 for Weak Jump Overcalls – I agree*). South has spades but cannot act if partner is a minimum opener.

The Play

The opening ♠K lead hints that North’s HCP are all in the minors. Declarer can count 4 or 5 losers: 1♥, 2♦, and 1 or 2♣. There are only 7 top winners. Declarer must find 3 more tricks. Declarer wins the 1st trick to play the ♥6. South wins the ♥A confirming North has minor suit winners. A 2nd ♠ is ruffed by declarer who now plays a ♥ to the dummy drawing the remaining trump. A small ♣ from dummy induces a defensive error – North rises with the ♣A. This gives declarer 2 winners. Better to play low and set up the ♣AJ tenace over dummy’s ♣Q. Declarer ruffs the ♠ return (eliminating that suit) and clears ♣s with the lead in hand. Declarer has lost 2 tricks and still has 2♦ losers to deal with. Down 1 looks likely unless there is an end play (there is no squeeze at this point). North holds the ♦AK and perhaps a simple play can create an illusion.

Declarer led the ♦9 toward dummy, overtaking with the ♦Q, losing to the ♦A. North huddles and thinks. North does not know if East’s remaining outside card is a ♣ or ♦. After a few moments, North tables a high ♣. This gives East a ruff-sluff. 4♥s made 4 for +420 and all the Match Points. Note down 1 would score 5 MPs.

NS Pair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MPs	2	0	7	2	5.5		5.5		2	4
Score	-650	-990	420	-650	-50		-50		-650	-620

Post Mortem

North shouldn’t go wrong on defense – If East holds a ♦, the ♦K cashes. If a ♣, East always makes the contract. Choose the only winning option for defense and cash the ♦K. The fear of a ♦ ruff is an illusion!

Learning Points

1. Don’t give up! Even the smallest chance of an opponent’s dilemma is better than no chance at all.
2. Weak Jump overcalls work best when your partnership follows principles. The Rule of 2-3-4 (5) means bid to a level 2 tricks above your winners at unfavorable vulnerability, 3 at equal vulnerability and 4 at favorable vulnerability. If you use 2-3-4-5 then 3 is for both vul, 4 is for neither vul, and 5 is for favorable vulnerability.

Key Words: Eliminate Side Suits, Weak Jump Overcall, Rule of 2-3-4-(5), Placing HCP, Create an illusion.