

Witness for the Defenceless – Part 2

Continuing our spotlight on defensive glitches observed at our bridge club, we take a look at 2 hands featuring minor suit games that could not have been made by the declaring side without a little help from their friends - the opponents! The first hand we look at features a play that could never be necessary and, as in this case, could be very wrong. As always, names have been withheld to protect the guilty.

<p>♠ J652 ♥ A7 ♦ A ♣ Q85432</p>		<p>Vulnerable: East-West Dealer: South</p>																					
<p>♠ KQ1084 ♥ 102 ♦ Q984 ♣ K7</p>		<p>Bidding:</p> <table><tr><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th><th>West</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>2♣</td><td>2♠</td><td>3♦</td><td>3♠</td></tr><tr><td>4♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		North	East	South	West			1♦	1♠	2♣	2♠	3♦	3♠	4♦	Pass	5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass		
North	East	South	West																				
		1♦	1♠																				
2♣	2♠	3♦	3♠																				
4♦	Pass	5♦	Pass																				
Pass	Pass																						
<p>♠ 9 ♥ KQ6 ♦ KJ107653 ♣ A10</p>		<p>Opening Lead: ♠K</p>																					

After a competitive auction, South ended up in a shaky 5♦. West led the spade king and when it held he continued with a low spade to his partner's ace which declarer ruffed. Declarer now played a low diamond to the ace, a heart back to his hand and then the diamond king. When East showed out it appeared that declarer must go down as he couldn't avoid a club loser unless the king was singleton. But when South played the diamond jack to West's queen, West gave declarer a huge gift by switching to the club king! Now South could romp home with 11 tricks.

No doubt West was hoping his partner had the club ace but if he had reviewed the bidding he would have concluded that South needed that card to have opened the bidding. But even without that bit of brainwork he should have known that if South had a club loser in his hand there was no way to get rid of it. If he had just patiently waited he would have won the club king in due course and set the contract.

		♠ 106	Vulnerable:		North South	
		♥ AK1082	Dealer:		North	
		♦ 108				
		♣ KJ85	Bidding:			
♠ KJ5		♠ 9732	North	East	South	West
♥ 76		♥ J943	1♥	Pass	2♣	2♦
♦ AKJ754		♦ Q96	3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass
♣ 96		♣ 73	4♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
		♠ AQ84	Pass	Pass		
		♥ Q5				
		♦ 32				
		♣ AQ1042	Opening Lead: ♦A			

Although a little shy in high card points North opened 1 heart because she had a good 5 card major and a decent second suit. East passed and South bid 2 clubs which in their system was forcing to game. West chimed in with 2 diamonds and North raised her partner to 3 clubs. East passed again and South bid 3 spades hoping his partner had either 4 spades or a diamond stopper. Holding neither, North had no option but to bid 4 clubs and South raised to game.

West had no problem choosing the opening lead of the diamond ace and quickly followed with the king, winning both tricks as her partner followed with the 6 and 9. Without giving it a great deal of extra thought, West continued with a third round of diamonds on which declarer gratefully pitched a low spade from the dummy as he ruffed in hand. South now cashed his spade ace and ruffed a low spade in dummy and then drew two rounds of trumps before ruffing another spade in dummy, at which point the spade queen had become high and so the contract made unexpectedly.

West should have realized that the spade king was well positioned to take a trick if only she bided her time. Also, if she had watched the cards with which her partner followed to the first two tricks she would have noted that the order in which he played, the 6 and then the 9, promised one higher card, which had to be the queen (holding only 2 cards, East would have played high-low). In that case she would have avoided the dreaded ruff-sluff and the contract would have failed.