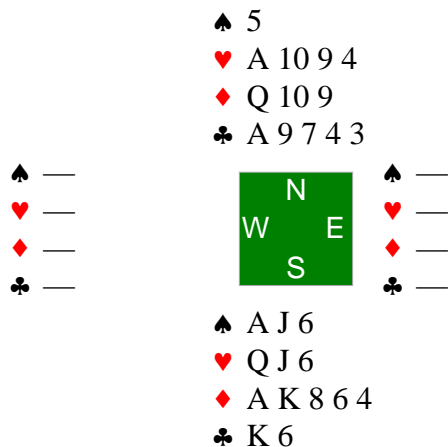


I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

IMPs
NS Vul



Opening Lead Q of ♣

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♣
4 ♠	4 NT	Pass	5 ♦
Pass	6 ♦	All pass	

6 ♦ by South

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the 26th Shark's Pointers Online!

The theme of today's talk is the old Beatles line - "I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends". We're going to look at a number of examples where difficult plays by declarer and defender are made easier with help from the opponents or from partner. I got the idea of today's talk just the other day as I was watching an online international team competition in which several of my friends were competing. The diagrammed deal highlights many of the recurrent themes that I have been addressing in my Shark's Pointers lectures and columns over the past 45 years!

The bidding requires some explanation. South opened a strong ♣, which said nothing about clubs, and was showing 17+ HCP. North's 4 NT was not Blackwood, it was a conventional 3 suit takeout. North made an educated guess that South had at least 5 ♦'s, and recognizing that Aces are worth more than 4 points, took a shot and bid the slam. If he had 4 diamonds, I think his bid would have been clear. Ok, back to the hand. 1st thing we need to do is count our tricks.

Assuming we can pick up the diamonds, we have 5 ♦'s in hand, 1 ♠, 2 ♣'s and 3-4 ♥'s. If the heart finesse loses, we'll need to ruff a spade in dummy. Problem is that the Q of ♣ is very likely to be a singleton. We can't base our plan on getting more than 3 ♥'s. As we have said repeatedly, if one hand is known to be long in one suit, that hand is less likely to hold any specific honor cards in any of the other suits. So, assuming that both the J of ♦ and the K of ♥ are in the East hand is not unreasonable. But wait! West is likely to hold at least 8 ♠'s. If he holds 8, and East does hold the J of ♦, East must ruff high. Playing East to hold the J of ♦ is better than 50-50.

I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

IMPs
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

	♠ 5											
	♥ A 10 9 4											
	♦ Q 10 9											
	♣ A 10 7 4 3											
♠ K Q 10 9 8 7 3 2	<table border="1" style="background-color: #008000; color: white; width: 40px; height: 40px; text-align: center; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 4	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 8 3 2		♥ K 7 5										
♦ 5		♦ J 7 3 2										
♣ Q		♣ J 9 8 5 2										
	♠ A J 6											
	♥ Q J 6											
	♦ A K 8 6 4											
	♣ K 6											

Opening Lead Q of ♣

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♣
4 ♠	4 NT	Pass	5 ♦
Pass	6 ♦	All pass	

6 ♦ by South

This was the complete deal.

South can win the club in dummy, and play a spade to the A and spade ruffing in dummy with the Q. Now, holding her breath, she needs to lead the 10 of diamonds off dummy and let it ride. When that succeeds, the 9 of diamonds, duck, duck, discard, club to the K. Draw the last two trumps and take a heart finesse, hoping for an overtrick.

I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

West Deals
None Vul

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

West	North	East	South
<i>Green</i>		<i>Aquino</i>	
1 ♣	Pass	3 ♣	3 ♠
4 ♣	4 ♠	Dbl	All pass
4 ♠× by South			

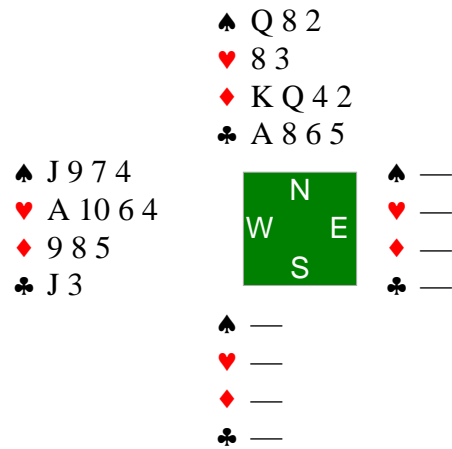
Sometimes very tough defensive plays can be made easy with a little help from your partner.

You all may recall this hand that was publicized in bridge publications in Italy, India, the UK and across the USA from the final session of the 2004 Fall North American Championships in Orlando, FL. After EW competed in clubs, I made a curious double of 4S and my partner, Jonathan Green led the Ace of clubs. On the first trick, I played the J - a clear suit preference for the highest suit - hearts. Jon made a fabulous play of underleading his AQ of hearts to my K, and after I continued the suit, he played 2 more rounds which declarer ruffed with dummy's 8 and I overruffed with my 9. Even though declarer guessed to drop my partner's singleton K of spades, for +300 we scored 81 out of 90 matchpoints on this spectacular deal - and finished 2nd overall in this very prestigious event - earning more than 93 Platinum points!

This was a tough defense made easy because of the spectacular, but fairly obvious suit preference signal. This defense on the next hand was not nearly so obvious or spectacular, but equally effective....

I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

IMPs
EW Vul



Opening Lead A of ♠

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3 ♠	4 ♥	2 ♠ All pass
4 ♥ by East			

Your partner leads the A of Spades, declarer plays low. You play A from AK and standard count and attitude. Your play?

If you play the 2, declarer will follow with the K and your partner will shift to the 10 of clubs and declarer will eventually lose 3 tricks.

Here was the complete deal....

I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 9 7 4	♠ Q 8 2	♠ K									
♥ A 10 6 4	♥ 8 3	♥ K Q J 9 2									
♦ 9 8 5	♦ K Q 4 2	♦ A 10 6 3									
♣ J 3	♣ A 8 6 5	♣ K Q 7									
	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A 10 6 5 3										
	♥ 7 5										
	♦ J 7										
	♣ 10 9 4 2										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3 ♠	4 ♥	2 ♠
			All pass

4 ♥ by East

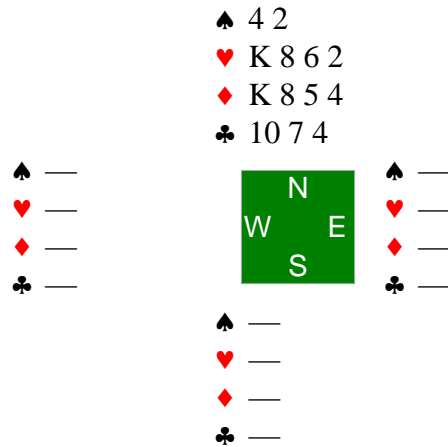
As you can see, double dummy you will set this contract if partner shifts to the J of ♦. Any way to figure this out?

In order to have a chance to beat this, you need to hope that declarer has a spade. If you have the foresight to play the 8 of spades instead of the 2, your partner will read this as a suit preference signal for diamonds, and find the killing shift!

Playing the 8 of spades at trick one is not obvious, and in most cases won't matter as declarer will ruff the opening lead. On the other hand, at favorable vulnerability, it is not uncommon to open a weak two with only a five card suit in first seat. In fact, at the other table, the South player also opened 2 ♠! But your hand passed and the opps ended up playing 3H. Pushing the opps to game and setting them would have gained 7 IMPs, not beating them cost your side 13 IMPs!

OK, 1 more hand...

I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

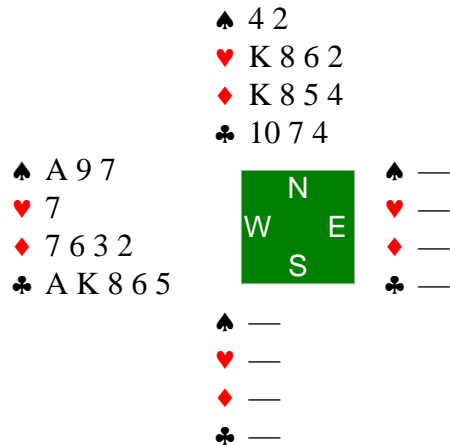


<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		2 ♠	4 ♥
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
All pass			

4 ♠ × by East

You are sitting North and your LHO opens 2 ♠. Your partner jumps to 4H, West bids 4S, you pass. It goes Pass X Pass back to you. Your bid? Bidding on to 5H is very tempting, but you have a lot of losers outside of the trump suit, so you reluctantly decide to pass. Partner leads the A of hearts and you see the following dummy...

I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
4 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	4 ♥
All pass		Pass	Dbl
4 ♠ × by East			

Your play?

This looks terrible, you are really wishing you had pulled your partner's double. Partner might have a trump trick and you might score a couple of diamond tricks, but you have to ensure partner shifts to the Ace of diamonds NOW! You have to make the dramatic play of the K of hearts! This will wake up your partner, and he will shift to the A and Q of diamonds, as declarer follows with the 9 and 10. Your play?

You MUST OVERTAKE and return a third round - any other defense will result in declarer scoring up this doubled game contract! Here's the full hand....

I'll Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

East Deals
None Vul

♠ 4 2												
♥ K 8 6 2												
♦ K 8 5 4												
♣ 10 7 4												
♠ A 9 7	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%; height: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q J 10 8 6 5	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 7		♥ 10 5										
♦ 7 6 3 2		♦ J 10 9										
♣ A K 8 6 5		♣ J 3										
		♠ K 3										
		♥ A Q J 9 4 3										
		♦ A Q										
		♣ Q 9 2										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
4 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	4 ♥
All pass		Pass	Dbl

4 ♠ × by East

Down 1 is great bridge!

Hope you enjoyed today's hands. I hope you will start looking for opportunities to help your partner's find some winning plays. I also want you to listen aggressively to your opponent's bidding in order to find some ways to help you find brilliant, winning lines of play as declarer!

See you all next week!