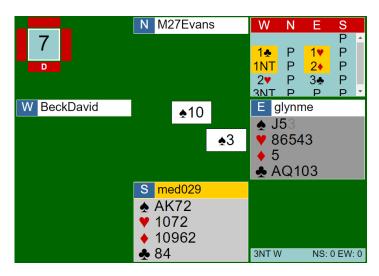20/07/202 Hand of the Week 24: Ducking plays

Martin and I recently played in the YCBA Swiss Teams event over the weekend of 18th-19th July. Here are a couple of defensive hands which illustrate the need to duck to preserve communication
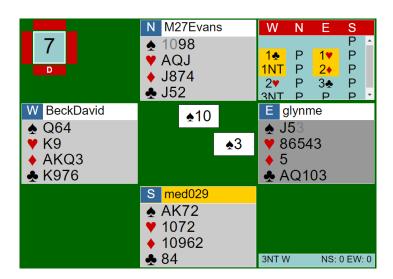
Hand 1: The opponents bid to 3NT and Martin leads the unbid major:

	N	M27Evans		W	N	E	S
							P
				1♣	P	1♥	P
				1NT	P	2♦	P
				2♥	P	3♣	P
				3NT	P	P	P

7 D

♠10

♠3

W	BeckDavid		E	glynme
			♠	J53
			♥	86543
			♦	5
			♣	AQ103

S	med029
♠	AK72
♥	1072
♦	10962
♣	84

3NT W   NS: 0 EW: 0

I would expect Martin to lead 4th highest, so the suit is likely breaking 4-3-3-3. I can see that if Martin has Q♠ we can make 4 spade tricks, if the opposition hold it we can still make 3 tricks but my only entry to hand is in spades.
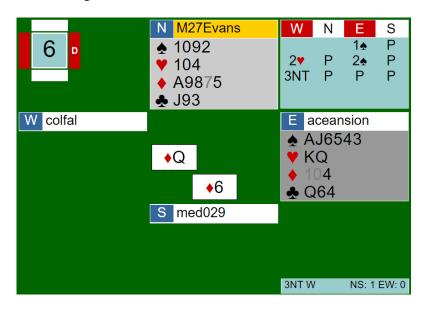
I should win the King and lead back a small spade. When Martin gets in he can lead his third spade and I can take my spade tricks.

The full hand:

	N	M27Evans		W	N	E	S
	♠	1098					P
	♥	AQJ		1♣	P	1♥	P
	♦	J874		1NT	P	2♦	P
	♣	J52		2♥	P	3♣	P
				3NT	P	P	P

7 D

♠10

♠3

W	BeckDavid		E	glynme
♠	Q64		♠	J53
♥	K9		♥	86543
♦	AKQ3		♦	5
♣	K976		♣	AQ103

S	med029
♠	AK72
♥	1072
♦	10962
♣	84

3NT W   NS: 0 EW: 0

Declarer has 8 tricks off the top- 4 clubs and 3 diamonds and Q♠. If declarer runs diamonds, Martin will get in with the J♦ - he can then lead his 3rd spade and we win 3 spades, a diamonds and a heart. The heart finesse also loses so if declarer goes down that route we also take the contract off.
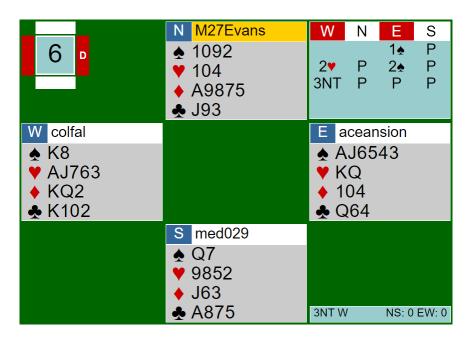
Hand 2: The opponents bid to 3NT again

		N	M27Evans		W	N	E	S
6 D		♠	1092				1♠	P
		♥	104		2♥	P	2♠	P
		♦	A9875		3NT	P	P	P
		♣	J93					

W	colfal				E	aceansion
					♠	AJ6543
	♦Q				♥	KQ
		♦6			♦	104
S	med029				♣	Q64

3NT W   NS: 1 EW: 0

Martin leads 4th highest to the 10♦, J♦ and declarer plays the 2♦.

I lead back the 6♦, on which declarer plays the Q♦.

Again, the only entry to hand is through diamonds. Partner would have played the K♦ if he had it, so started with J63 or J6, declarer therefore had KQ32 or KQ2. If partner had 2 diamonds the suit cannot be established as there are no further entries to hand. The play is to duck the Q♦, then hope partner gets in to lead their 3rd diamond.

The full hand:

		N	M27Evans		W	N	E	S
6 D		♠	1092				1♠	P
		♥	104		2♥	P	2♠	P
		♦	A9875		3NT	P	P	P
		♣	J93					

W	colfal		E	aceansion
♠	K8		♠	AJ6543
♥	AJ763		♥	KQ
♦	KQ2		♦	104
♣	K102		♣	Q64

S	med029
♠	Q7
♥	9852
♦	J63
♣	A875

3NT W   NS: 0 EW: 0

Declarer has 8 tricks off the top- 5 hearts, 2 spades and the diamond. The percentage play is to finesse the Q♠. This gives a small additional chance as if North started with 6 diamonds and South holds A♣ there will be no entries to the winning diamonds.

As the cards lie the finesse fails and the defence should make 4 diamonds, Q♠ and A♣.

Think about ducking tricks to help establish suits and preserve entries!