

Keeping danger hand off lead

Following on from a theme of previous feature hands earlier this year.

Here is another example of the care needed to ensure a particular defender does not gain the lead.

	852		
	K984		
	74		
	AQJ10		
QJ107		K43	
5		72	
AQ632		1098	
984		K7653	
	A96		
	AQJ1063		
	KJ5		
	2		

Dealer South E/W vulnerable

North	East	South	West
		1H	2D
3H	Pass	4H	All pass

The 2D overcall is a bit marginal vulnerable but with a shortage in opponents suit and a reasonable second suit it is worthwhile. If nothing else it could be lead directing for partner.

With 8 losers and good trump support North bids 3H -an invitation to game which is readily accepted by South.

Not wishing to lead the AD or away from it the QS is a standout start for West.

It is clear to declarer that the danger lies in East leading diamonds to partner leading to a potential loss of two tricks each in diamonds and spades. One possibility is to win the lead, draw trumps and finesse against the KC with a reasonable expectation of success (West made a vulnerable overcall) and discard a losing spade on the AC.

Alternatively, a safer option would be to win with the AC and play a ruffing finesse against East discarding a losing spade if the QC is not covered. In this case even if West wins they pose no danger as they are on lead.

This plan will fail though because West can put partner in with the KS (South knows East has this card assuming the QS lead is a true card).

Having hopefully thought this through before playing to the first trick South ducks the first lead and takes the spade continuation (best defence). Now, after drawing trumps, when South leads to the AC and discards a spade on the QC (if not covered) it will be their last one. South can ruff a third round of spades (assuming West wins the KC) keeping East off lead. There are sufficient entries in dummy's trump suit to access the winning clubs to discard the losing diamonds.

In the event the KC is with East and is trapped and declarer will make 3 club tricks in the fullness of time, but by adopting the line suggested the contract is safe regardless of the whereabouts of the KC.