

Card reading in defence

Just as declarer can take inferences from the bidding so can the defenders. The opening lead can be very revealing and can pinpoint the location of missing cards.

	J4	
	AJ1074	
	AKJ92	
	5	
AQ5		108632
Q3		K92
653		74
QJ943		862
	K97	
	865	
	Q108	
	AK107	

Dealer North

E/W vulnerable

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

The 3H bid by South is invitational, promising eight losers. North with six losers determines that 8 + 6 in their own hand = 14 subtracted from 18 determines the level of contract (4) and so bids to game.

With nothing obviously superior East starts with the 3S (4th highest of unbid suit). West plays the Q on the 7 from dummy and declarer follows with the J. This costs nothing for declarer who hopes West will switch enabling the second spade loser to be discarded on a club winner. West is not fooled however, having seen partner's 3S which cannot be from a six card suit if leading 4th highest. Thus West cashes the AS and continues a third spade.

A trump from dummy to the J is won by East with the KH.

East counts North as having at least 5:4 in the reds and thus two clubs at most. Moreover, North has bid game without any top honours in the blacks or the KH so the diamonds must surely be solid and offer no chance of a trick for the defence. Holding the 9H holds one glimmer of hope and may be promoted.

Accordingly East leads a fourth spade (a ruff and discard can be of no use to declarer) and West ruffs with the QH forcing declarer to overruff with the A. Now with 9 and 2 of hearts behind the 10H the 9H makes the setting trick.