



## POTTAGE ON DEFENCE continued from page 15

trumps for one, continues the club suit. Whether or not the jack is played, East wins a heart and a club, and the contract goes down.

### Example No. 3

Contracts in the majors are more common than those in the minors, in part because you need eleven tricks for game in a minor. Nevertheless, that is what declarer seeks to do in the next deal and, naturally, the defenders will want to prevent it:

♠ K 8 2 ♥ A J 9 3 ♦ 7 5 4 3 ♣ 9 4	♠ A 10 5 3 ♥ 10 7 6 4 ♦ Void ♣ Q J 10 6 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ J 7 6 ♥ K Q 8 2 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ 8 7 2
N	E						
W	S						
♠ Q 9 4 ♥ 5 ♦ A K 10 9 8 2 ♣ A K 3							

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♦
End			

We have already touched on the unattractiveness of a lead from an unsupported ace and the attraction of a lead from an honour sequence, so West's choice of the club queen is easy. East plays the two, discouraging as before. Declarer wins in hand and, rather than laying down a top trump, craftily leads the four of spades.

This is the third time in a row that West has had one ace and been forced to decide whether or not to play it in second seat. However, this is the first time when, depending upon the layout of the unseen cards, one cannot be sure what will work best. If East has a five-card spade suit, making the four a singleton, West wants to take the ace at once. Conversely, if South has Q-x or Q-x-x of spades then going up with the ace could cost a trick, allowing declarer to score two spade tricks instead of one (in the former case allowing declarer to discard a heart).

Two chances seem better than one and there is a slight inference that South's short suit is hearts rather than spades (or South might have tried 4♥ over 4♦ to offer a choice of contracts), so West follows the 'second hand low' rule and ducks.

Dummy's king wins and a trump is led. Now it is vital that East also plays low. Playing the queen or jack, 'splitting honours' as it is known, would give the game away when West shows out – something East can predict as South's jump rebid promises a six-card (or longer) suit. With no reason to assume a 3-0 break, declarer will surely put up the ace after East plays the six. The contract now fails, with the defenders scoring two spades and a diamond.

### Example No. 4

On our fourth and final example, the opponents stop short of game, but do not take this as a cue to relax . . .

♠ 7 4 3 ♥ A K 9 4 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ 8 6 3	♠ 10 8 6 2 ♥ Q 8 6 5 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ A 10	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ 9 ♥ J 3 ♦ 10 7 6 4 3 ♣ K Q 7 5 4
N	E						
W	S						
♠ A K Q J 5 ♥ 10 7 2 ♦ J 5 ♣ J 9 2							

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	End	1♠

Against a suit contract, you usually need look no further when you hold an ace-king combination in a suit not bid by the opponents and West leads the ace of hearts.

Holding a doubleton heart, East envisages scoring a ruff on the third round, so starts a high-low 'come-on' signal playing the jack. Getting the message, West continues with the king of hearts and a third round.

Having scored a trick with the singleton nine of spades, East contemplates the best continuation. If West has the ace of diamonds, it will be possible to win the next trick with it, but how does this help the defensive cause? When West leads a fourth round of hearts, East, who has no more trumps left, will be unable to ruff and the initiative will be lost.

As you can see looking at the four hands, the result is that declarer will be able to discard one club on the fourth heart and a second on the third round of diamonds, thereby avoiding a loser in the suit. Instead, East needs to switch to the king of clubs, knocking out dummy's ace. With any luck, South will hold at least three clubs, in which case a single discard on the fourth round of hearts will be of no value. Sooner or later West will come in with the ace of diamonds and play a club to East's queen.

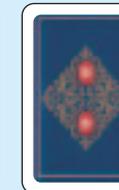
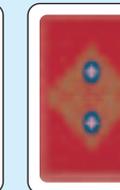
This will give the defenders five tricks: two hearts, a ruff, a diamond and a club.

It is just too bad if partner does not have the ace of diamonds, since in that case declarer can probably get rid of any club losers without touching trumps.

### Watch This Space!

Next time we will pick up where we left off in BRIDGE 63, following to declarer's leads, and we will examine when to cover or not to cover honour leads. ■

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