



Pat Harrington

Play & Learn

The bridge player with a good attitude

Good defenders, like good declarers, plan their play. Declarers and defenders think about many of the same things. How many tricks do they see? Where can additional tricks be established? How will the opponents play their cards? What do the cards you have already seen tell you about the location of other missing cards? How should your plays be timed?

Plan your defense on the following deal. The contract is 4♠, so you would like to win at least four tricks. The auction:

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Dummy

♠ 10 9 4
♥ J 7 6
♦ K J 3 2
♣ K 8 5

You

♠ A 3
♥ Q 10 3
♦ 10 8 6 5
♣ 9 7 6 2

Your partner leads the ♥A. What is your defensive plan? First, analyze partner's opening lead. You have agreed to lead the ace from ace-king, so it is likely that partner has the ♥K. If your ♥Q cashes, you can take three heart tricks. The trump ace will be the setting trick.

If the third round of hearts doesn't cash, do you expect to defeat 4♠? South has shown a maximum opener, so it's not likely that partner has much more than the top two hearts. The lead of an ace from ace-king in an unbid suit is nearly automatic against a suit contract, but continuing with the king at trick two should *not* be automatic. West needs guidance from you.

Do you want hearts continued? Yes,

it seems like the best chance to defeat 4♠. When partner makes the opening lead and you are not required to play third hand high (as when partner leads a low card and dummy also plays low), your job is usually to give an *attitude signal*.

Using standard signals, play as high as you can to tell partner to keep leading that suit. Play your lowest card to show no interest in having the suit continued. There are many reasons to encourage partner to continue leading a suit. In this case, you see enough hearts in dummy to have hope for a third heart trick. Play the ♥10, the highest heart you can spare, expecting partner to continue with the ♥K and a third heart (you might have a doubleton ♥10, planning to ruff the third round). The full deal:

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

You can see that declarer will make his contract unless you and your partner take the first three heart tricks. If partner switches, declarer will not give you a second chance by playing on spades immediately. He will unblock one of his minors, cash the ace of the other minor and overtake the queen with dummy's king, using the remaining minor-suit king to discard a losing heart from his hand. □

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