

vulnerable.

♠ 109432
 ♥ -
 ♦ KQJ632
 ♣ AQ

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J8
 ♥ AKQ643
 ♦ 104
 ♣ K86

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	
-	1♦	pass	1♥	
pass	1♠	pass	3♥	
pass	3♠	pass	3NT	all pass

A difficult misfitting hand to bid, most Souths finished in 3NT.

West leads ♣J, "count your winners and immediately develop more".

1st step: Top tricks, 3♥+3♣ = 6. But you have blockages.

2nd step: Develop extra tricks options: ♠ = 2 tricks, ♥ = 1 or 2 tricks, ♦ = 5 tricks.

3rd step: Your plan. Key is, when EW gain the lead how many tricks can they win? 3♠+1♦. So you cannot play ♥s (and give up a ♥ trick) and playing ♠s is too slow as EW will keep playing ♣s and establish ♣s first. You must play ♦s making sure you make use of your ♦10.

Trick 1: ♣J, ♣A, ♣3, ♣6. Win ♣A to keep option of playing ♣Q to ♣K.

Trick 2: Lead ♦2, ♦7, ♦10, ♦5. An unexpected entry to South's hand.

Trick 3: Cash ♥A, discard ♠2. No more ♥s, keep four ♠s in North else EW may win four ♠s when in with ♦A. Back to ♦s.

Trick 4: Lead ♦4, ♣2, ♦K, ♦A. East wins ♦A and continues ♣s making it awkward. But as there are four ♠s in North including a combined ♠J, ♠10, ♠9, South is safe.

Trick 5: ♣4, ♣8, ♣5, win ♣Q.

Tricks 6, 7, 8: Run only three of four ♦ winners. South's last five cards:

(continued next page:)

♠ 10943
 ♥ -
 ♦ 6
 ♣ -

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J8
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ -
 ♣ K

If South cashes ♦6 and pitches ♠8, EW win the next 3 tricks with ♠AKQ and South needs to guess whether to keep ♥K or ♣K to win the last trick. Think ahead and avoid this dilemma, do not lead ♦6, lead ♠3. Now EW cash ♠AKQ and there are two tricks left and South keeps ♥K and ♣K and must make 3NT.

Good defence, attacking South's club communication, meant South had to play well to make 3NT; however, all the club Easts let South win extra tricks. Where did the club Easts err?

♠ AQ6
 ♥ J752
 ♦ A987
 ♣ 43

Club Results: After East won ♦A (Trick 4) they either led South's heart suit or more baffling returned a diamond, and then later discarded hearts (on ♦s) allowing South to enter their hand with ♣K and win all their hearts. If East thinks and returns a club, they force South to cash diamonds and to make unpleasant discard choices (East knows South has no more diamonds to enter North). East can see after cashing diamonds, South must lead spades and South must keep cover in clubs and hearts in their hand. If East appreciates South's problems they would continue clubs.

Summary:

When declaring, check what you'll discard before leading a winner. When defending, think how declarer might make their contract, think "what problems does declarer have?". "How might I minimize the number of tricks declarer will make?". If you never ask yourself these questions you'll never come up with answers. As a defender, be constantly thinking of all the "what ifs".