

Good Defence

♠ K Q 10 7

♥ A K J 10 6

♦ 10 7

♣ A Q

♠ A 2

♥ 7

♦ A 9 5 3 2

♣ J 8 6 3 2

You are sitting South

The opposition bid to 4S and partner leads the King of Diamonds

A low diamond is played from dummy and immediately you have a critical decision to make – what card should you play to this trick?

Holding the Diamond Ace, the instinctive play is to make an encouraging attitude signal to get partner to continue the suit so your side can get their diamond tricks. You can see probably 2 diamond tricks and a sure trick with the spade Ace.... that is not enough to defeat the contract.

How can your side get a 4th trick?

Looking at dummy you can see nothing but high cards, even if partner holds the ♠ J, ♥ Q or the ♣ K, partner's cards will be trapped by dummy's higher cards.

The only chance is to use the trump suit against declarer and get a ruff in hearts

To accomplish that your side is going to need to lead a heart to get rid of your singleton before declarer can draw trumps and you are going to need an entry to partner's hand so partner can lead a second heart for you to ruff.

Partner's lead of the ♦ K promises the Q which can be your entry

Therefore should you make an encouraging or discouraging attitude signal at trick one? **No !**

You are the one with the plan so you must overtake the King with the Ace at trick one, now lead your singleton heart which is won by declarer.

Declarer leads a trump and you can't afford to wait so you play the ace, and immediately lead a diamond which partner wins with the queen as planned.

By now your clever partner has figured out what is happening , considering why you overtook the first diamond and shifted to a heart straight away, right into dummy's strong suit.... Partner duly returns a heart which you ruff with your lowly ♠ 2

Your side has found a way to take four tricks with 2 diamonds and 2 spades.... 4S is down one.

Summary

When partner makes an opening lead and dummy comes down it is time to make a plan on defence

Just as declarer considers tricks that may be won or lost so must a defender and as we learnt from Andy Hung's lesson you have to decide on active or passive defence. When you know what to do, you should take charge. Partner may be a little surprised when you overtake the king with the ace and lead a heart straight into dummy's strength, but partner will be pleased with the end result!