

Defensive strategies (ii) building tricks

If the opponents are in 4Sp then the defenders need 4 tricks to beat the contract. Sometimes the defenders have to just sit back and wait to see if 4 tricks come their way but keeping an eye on the number of tricks they can already count on and how many more they will need is a useful exercise. Something like this.

	{dummy}
	KQ87
	K43
{you}	AK3
A3	932
J87	
QJ109	
K654	

You lead the Q diamonds and note that dummy's diamonds are something of a pain. Never mind, you count the defender's "likely" tricks as follows :-
1x spade {Ace} 1x club (probably) {King}

Two tricks aren't enough and partner will have to contribute something if we are to beat the 4Sp contract. Perhaps partner has the Ace clubs ? (not that likely really but it's something to consider). What else might partner have ? Possibly the Q/A hrts. This is all speculation but you can at least postulate that partner could help produce a trick. We will have to play something of a waiting game to get our trick(s) in clubs and hearts but we can possibly build a trick in diamonds by continuing to lead them whenever we get the lead.

Probably dummy will lead a spade at trick 2 and we will take the Ace { no point in hanging around ducking the Ace when we have work to do !}; next we will try the J diamonds which will lose to dummy's King. Now it may be that our 10 diamonds is now established as a trick. (We don't know yet). It is possible though and when we next take a trick we will try the 10 diamonds to see if it is a winner. The target of 4 defensive tricks is getting closer....

Try the next hand again the contract is 4Sp and both defenders are involved. Partner leads the 2 diamonds and dummy wins. A spade will be led from dummy....

	{dummy}	
	KQ87	
	K43	
	AK3	{you}
	1032	A42
		A10952
		J98
		97

Certain tricks for the defence are :-
1x Sp {Ace} 1x Hrt {Ace}

Possible extra tricks may come in clubs if partner has the Ace or King (or even a Queen if the declarer takes a finesse); an extra Hrt could come our way and also a diamond trick could materialise. We should win the Ace sp a.s.a.p and return the 9 diamonds. If partner has the Q, that will promote our J (hopefully) and we are on our way to beating the contract.