

# Even a weak hand can have an important part to play in defence



Heather Dhondy

**E/W Game. Dealer South.**

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

PLAYING teams, South arrives in 3NT having opened 1NT. North bid Stayman to check for a spade fit, South responded 2♦, and North ended the auction with a jump to 3NT.

West, your partner, leads the ten of hearts, which is run round to declarer's king. Declarer now runs the jack of diamonds, partner following with the two; he then plays another diamond to the queen, and continues by leading the ace of diamonds. What discard do you make?

Unfortunately you will have to make two discards before you have any help from partner. Let's examine what we know so far.

Starting with hearts, declarer's 2♦ response tells us that partner has four or five hearts. If declarer had the ace as well as the

king, he would surely have tried the jack from dummy at trick one. Therefore it looks most likely that partner began with A-10-9-x-x or A-10-9-x. If this is the case, you need to hold on to your hearts.

Now let's think about spades. The only time it will cost you to discard a spade is if declarer holds A-Q-x, in which case he has nine tricks, so you can afford to throw one, and partner follows with the king of diamonds.

A second spade discard looks too risky since it will give the contract if declarer began with A-x-x, so you discard a club and declarer also discards a club. Now for the first time we can get a piece of information from partner. He discards the ♣4.

What do you discard on the fifth diamond?

This is the position we have reached:

♠ K 10 5 4	
♥ J 6	
♦ 8	
♣ Q	
	♠ J 8 2
	♥ Q 7
	♦ —
	♣ 9 3 2

Partner must hold four more hearts and an ace to defeat the contract. Trust him to be helping you out with an attitude card. He must hold the ace of spades and needs you to guard clubs. Discard a second spade.

This was the full deal:

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

♠ Q 7 3	
♥ K 4	
♦ J 7 4	
♣ A K 8 7 6	

Note that declarer cannot unscramble his entries, so he had little legitimate chance for the contract. His best chance was to cash his long suit, and hope the defence discarded wrongly.

## A riddle where I am the answer, So tell me what I am, sir.



*Fifty-two's your due, not less, not more.  
Though away go those forever unused.  
A sideways glance shows a missing four.  
Come; don't say you're still bemused!*

*Observe that ours are never crossed.  
Scan the figures till they agree.  
Discount the two the hard man's lost.  
Makes forty-two, so plain to see.*

by Mike Chanter (solution on page 36)

## Heather's Hints

- Even a very weak hand can have an important part to play in defence. On this deal you had to defend very thoughtfully to beat the contract.
- When searching for the right discard, go through each suit and work out if there is any lie of the cards where it can cost the contract.
- Look at how declarer has played to your partner's suit at trick one to give you some clues. □