

# WednesdayGame.Com

Education and Entertainment for Bridge Players

2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2011

## DECLARE & DEFEND

We'll start you out gently. On **Board 1** you are declaring and here is the Spade suit:

**AJT** opposite **K865**

With no clues from the bidding, how do you play this suit? Yes, of course, you will lead towards the **AJT** and finesse, and if it works you will finesse again. That's better than finessing the other way because you'll get four tricks if the finesse works and the suit is 4-2 or 3-3. Going the other way requires a 3-3 break. The next one is not so easy!

On **Board 6**, South showed 18-19 HCP along the way to becoming Declarer in 3NT. How many tricks will you make?

	♠ A974 ♥ 87632 ♦ QJ ♣ K8	
♠ T863 ♥ KJ ♦ A83 ♣ QT65	Dummy West                  East Declarer	♠ J2 ♥ T954 ♦ 742 ♣ J732
	♠ KQ8 ♥ AQ ♦ KT985 ♣ A94	

Against 3NT, West leads a low Club, and we are going to make you play low from Dummy (you'll see why later), winning East's Jack with your Ace.

Looking at all four hands you can count 11 tricks by guessing the Spades correctly. But you're only supposed to be looking at the N-S hands! No matter, after West's opening Club lead there will be no guess! Look what happens:

**Low Club, low from Dummy, Jack, Ace**  
**Diamond to Dummy's Queen**  
 Diamond to West's Ace  
**Club to Dummy's King**  
**Spade to Declarer's King**  
**Diamonds are cashed**

*Dummy*

♠ A97

♥ 876

♦

♣

*West*

♠ T85

♥ KJ

♦

♣ Q

*East*

♠ J

♥ T954

♦

♣ 7

*Declarer*

♠ Q6

♥ AQ

♦ 9

♣ 9

On the last Diamond what does West pitch? He knows from the bidding that Declarer must have the ♥Q and that pitching a Heart is out. He also knows that pitching a Spade will give away that suit. And, depending on the E-W carding methods, he may or may not know where is the ♣9. If West is an optimist, and is not sure of the whereabouts of the ♣9, he might dump the ♣Q which is fatal! Now Declarer cashes the ♣9 and West is squeezed in the majors! 12 tricks on a (pseudo-) Progressive Squeeze!

When the last Diamond is played, West must pitch a Spade. That gives Declarer 11 tricks but there is no 12th, as West sits over Declarer's Heart and Club holdings and cannot be further squeezed on the run of the Spades.

Declarer made a good play at Trick 1! By ducking in Dummy, East was forced to play the Jack, meaning that now only West could guard Clubs. If Declarer had won that trick on the board then there would be no squeeze (as East can guard Clubs) and Declarer must guess the Spades for 11 tricks. Well, not entirely true because, if Declarer guesses wrong and plays the Spades from the top, then West can be thrown in with a Spade and forced to lead a Heart!

**Footnote:** How could West know that he must hang on to the ♣Q because East did not have the Nine? The answer lies in the Club Seven! Once the Eight has been played from Dummy on the first trick, the Club Seven and Nine are equals. So, if East held both the Seven and Nine it would behoove him to pitch the Nine as early as possible. It's the same situation as, for example, when you cavalierly discard the Queen from QJT9, saying "I don't have the King and I can afford to squander the Queen!"

On **Board 19** East declares 4♠.

♠ A974 ♥ J4 ♦ A2 ♣ AKT74	North  Dummy Declarer  South	♠ J8632 ♥ AT8 ♦ K765 ♣ 2
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Suppose that South leads a Diamond. How does Declarer score 11 tricks? He could try to set up the Clubs with careful use of his entries but the simpler line is simply to go after two ruffs in Dummy:

**Win Dummy's ♦A**

Lose a Heart

**Win the Diamond return**

**Ruff a Diamond**

**Cash the ♠A**

**Cross to the ♥A**

**Ruff a Heart**

**Cash ♣AK, pitching a Diamond**

Now a Spade is led and Declarer has 11 tricks.

From **Board 25** (rotated to make South Declarer):

	Dummy	
	West      East	
♠ K532 ♥ T742 ♦ 953 ♣ 95	Declarer	♠ AJT94 ♥ 9 ♦ A8 ♣ AKJ73
		♠ Q7 ♥ QJ83 ♦ J7 ♣ QT862
		♠ 86 ♥ AK65 ♦ KQT642 ♣ 4

*How do you play 6NT?* West leads a Heart and you can count 11 tricks if the Diamonds behave. The best chance for a 12<sup>th</sup> is to finesse twice in Spades, hoping that West has at least one of the missing honors. As you are short of entries to your hand you must take the first Spade finesse at Trick 2. That loses and East will probably give you an extra entry to hand by continuing Hearts. That entry can be gainfully employed by taking the second Spade finesse immediately. It won't help on the actual layout, but taking both those Spade finesses before playing Diamonds gives Declarer a chance to make 12 tricks even if Diamonds don't behave (four Spades on a lucky day, two Hearts, three Diamonds, and three Clubs if the finesse works). Anyway, it's 12 easy tricks when the Diamonds oblige and one of the Spade honors is onside.

On **Board 31** you are South, you boldly preempt 3♥, and you play it there doubled. Now all you have to do is to make 9 tricks!

	Dummy	
	West      East	
♠ AT54 ♥ AJ8 ♦ T643 ♣ 82	Declarer	♠ 8632 ♥ 32 ♦ Q9 ♣ AKQ43
		♠ KQJ7 ♥ Q ♦ A87 ♣ JT975
		♠ 9 ♥ KT97654 ♦ KJ52 ♣ 6

West    North    East    South

3♥

Pass    Pass    Dbl    Pass

Pass    Pass

Yes, we freely admit that South's 3♥ is not straight out of the text-book on vulnerable preempts, that suit could certainly be better. But let's not underestimate the value of the ♥T9, added to which there is extra offense in that 7-4 shape. Anyway, West guessed to pass the Takeout Double and you are in the hot seat.

Let's say that West cleverly finds the best lead of the ♠A and continues the suit. You ruff the second round, of course, now what? Some Declarers will manage to go down to ignominious defeat by crossing to Dummy's ♣A, cashing a second Club (pitching a Diamond), then a Heart to the Queen, King, Ace. Next, West leads a Diamond to East's Ace, after which another Club promotes the setting trick for the defense. Declarer can ruff with the Ten and West *must not overruff!* Now with the ♥J8 sitting over Declarer's Nine the defense has two more trump tricks. Down one!

The less-than-obvious route to 9 tricks is for Declarer to play on Diamonds before Clubs. This well-timed play cuts the communications between the defenders. It's called a Scissors Coup, and well done to all those Declarer who found it! And at those tables where Declarer did not find the Scissors Coup, well done to all those Wests who declined to overruff Declarer, thereby ensuring a third trump trick and defeat of the contract.

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## BIDDING 6-PACK

### Problems

<b>Board 1</b>	<b>None Vul</b>				
♠ K865	South	West	North	East	
♥ AT7			1♦	Pass	
♦ AJ95	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	
♣ AQ	2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass	
??					

<b>Board 5</b>	<b>N-S Vul</b>				
♠ T5	West	North	East	South	
♥ 9754	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣	
♦ T	??				
♣ QJT963					

<b>Board 12</b>	<b>N-S Vul</b>				
♠	North	East	South	West	
♥ 6				1♠	
♦ KQ9753	??				
♣ KJT543					

<b>Board 18</b>	<b>N-S Vul</b>				
♠ 54	East	South	West	North	
♥ J543	??				
♦ AJ9543					
♣ 5					

<b>Board 22</b>	<b>E-W Vul</b>				
♠ KJ5	East	South	West	North	
♥ J832	Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass	
♦ 93	2♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl	
♣ KJ72	??				

<b>Board 24</b>	<b>None Vul</b>				
♠ T7	South	West	North	East	
♥ AQ86532		Pass	1♦	Dbl	
♦ 7	??				
♣ KQ3					

### Solutions

<b>Board 1</b>	<b>None Vul</b>				
♠ K865	South	West	North	East	
♥ AT7			1♦	Pass	
♦ AJ95	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	
♣ AQ	2NT	Pass	3♦	Pass	
	??				

South's 2NT was the so-called MinMax asking bid to which the answers are:

- 3♣ is "bad hand, 3-card support"
- 3♦ is "good hand, 3-card support"
- 3♥ is "bad hand, 4-card support"
- 3♠ is "good hand, 4-card support"

When Partner shows a good hand but only 3-card support, what do you do? A square 18 opposite a balanced 13+ to 14 makes 6NT somewhat marginal. So we think that a majestic leap to 6♦ is the most sensible call. If North has only three Spades then he presumably has 4+ Diamonds, and a ruff may be needed to get the trick count up to 12.

On the actual deal, Partner turns out to have 5 Diamonds, and the cards are friendly enough for 6NT to make (in fact 13 can be made with a successful Spade guess). Undeterred by the poor outcome, we *still* like that 6♦ bid ☺

<b>Board 5</b>	<b>N-S Vul</b>				
♠ T5	West	North	East	South	
♥ 9754	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣	
♦ T	??				
♣ QJT963					

At this vulnerability, anything less than 4♣ would be utterly feeble, don't you think? The auction will proceed:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♣
4♣!	??	7♣!	??

If you bid 4♣ then North *might* find a 4♠ call, and over Partner's bold 7♣ it's *possible* that South will manage to bid 7♠ or 7NT (both make), but at least E-W won't have given them a free ride.

Actually, West could have done much better, and at this vulnerability *really* needs to open 3♣ in our opinion. We suggest that the auction commence:

West	North	East	South
3♣	Pass	7♣	??

Your call, South, holding: ♠AQ2, ♥AKQJT, ♦A974, ♣A. 7♣ doubled is 1100 which is not even enough to compensate N-S for the *small* slam.

**Board 12**

N-S Vul

	North	East	South	West
♠				
♥	6			1♠
♦	KQ9753	??		
♣	KJT543			

Many will bid the Unusual No Trump here, in other words a 2NT bid showing the minors. Is that really a good idea? If the enemy bidding has reached 4♠ by the time the auction gets back to North, won't she want to bid 4NT (again for the minors), notwithstanding the vulnerability? That being the case, surely it is better for North to bid 4NT directly over 1♠, making it impossible for the opponents to bid constructively.

After North has bid a direct 4NT, should South consider slam with this hand: ♠AT932, ♥KJ95, ♦A, ♣876? We don't think so. She has only one high card in Partner's suits, the ♥K is quite useless, and the ♠A might well be worthless too (as it happens, it is). So South satisfies herself with 5♣.

**Board 18**

N-S Vul

	East	South	West	North
♠	54			
♥	J543	??		
♦	AJ9543			
♣	5			

What do you think about a 3♦ bid here? Purists will recoil in horror, complaining that East has a 4-card major, and a moderate Diamond suit with only six cards. Well, we say "Phooey!" to that! Here are some reasons (some might call them excuses) for bidding 3♦:

- E-W are White vs. Red and preempting one more than usual is often a good ploy at those colors.
- The 6-4 shape adds to East's offense without providing much defense (unless, that is, that Hearts are actually the N-S suit!)
- While it is true that E-W might miss a Heart fit, the fact of the matter is that, given West's overall weakness, even if there is an E-W Heart fit, it will probably be outmuscled by a N-S Spade fit.

In last month's Wednesday Game there were no fewer than three hands where some "extreme" preempting reaped rewards. This is another such hand (and see also Board 5). 5♦ doubled down one is a fine save, and when North pushes on to 5♠ (down one), that is just a bonus.

**Board 22**

E-W Vul

	East	South	West	North
♠	KJ5			
♥	J832	Pass	Pass	1♥ Pass
♦	93	2♥	Pass	Pass Dbl
♣	KJ72	??		

East is close to making a Drury raise (assuming that this is a part of the E-W methods). But East holds back with a modest 2♥ and then, after North balances with a Double, what are East's choices?

- **Redouble?** Having bid 2♥ with absolute maximum values, East could redouble to announce a good hand. But perhaps that bid is best reserved for good hands with only *three* trumps. The Redouble invites Partner to penalize the opponents with good defensive values, and doing that, when E-W have a presumed 9-card fit, is a dangerous proposition.
- **Pass?** East could pass, but then when the opponents bid 2♠ he will probably want to bid 3♥.
- **3♥?** Yes, if that's the case then East might just as well bid 3♥ directly, making it harder for the opponents to compete to 3♠ when it is right (which on this particular hand it isn't!).

**Board 24**

None Vul

	South	West	North	East
♠	T7			
♥	AQ86532		Pass	1♦ Dbl
♦	7	??		
♣	KQ3			

What are South's choices here?

- **2♥ or 3♥ or 4♥?** No, these bids are all preemptive and unworthy of this hand.
- **Redouble?** The South hand is certainly strong enough for a Redouble, but that bid is best reserved for more balanced hands.
- **1♥?** This bid is forcing for one round, but does not necessarily show a good hand. South's next bid will be 4♥, a sequence which shows a *real* 4♥ bid, not a preempt.

There is a down-side to South's scientific approach. If South bids 1♥, West will preempt to 2♠, East will compete to 3♠ and West will find the opening Spade lead, holding Declarer to 10 tricks. But if South is the uncomplicated sort who bids game just because she thinks it might make, then she'll trot out 4♥ directly over the Double. Now it is not obvious for West to lead a Spade. Sometimes the old ways work best!