

Don't Relax When Dummy Is Strong

By Anders Brunzell

Do you recognize the following situation? The enemy has reached a game after some hesitation. You attack hopefully and dummy comes down with quite a lot to spare. It's now apparent that your left-hand opponent had been considering slam prospects and decided against, so the game seems easy enough. You doze off and wait for the next board to come.

Mostly this is OK, but occasionally you let declarer make a game you could have defeated. As a matter of fact, it is easy to defend against these 'over-strong' contracts. You can't wait for declarer to go down on his own because you'd be waiting forever! No, most often this is a case of now or never. Try this deal:

Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

	♠ K J		
	♥ A Q 10 4		
	♦ Q 8 7		
	♣ K 10 9 3		
♠ A 9 5 3 2	N	E	
♥ 5 2	W	S	
♦ 5 4 3			
♣ 8 7 6			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT ¹
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 NT	All pass	
	1. 15-17		

North hesitated a bit before bidding 3NT and you hope he has aimed too high. Trying to find partner's suit you lead a diamond and the impressive dummy goes down. You relax and observe, without real interest, that North follows low and South wins your partner's nine with the ace. Next comes a spade and, indifferently, you duck. Just as indifferently declarer wins the jack and cashes out exactly nine tricks. The full deal:

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

The strong dummy put you to sleep instead of alerting you. Let South have it his way and you will never defeat the contract, even if all his guesses are wrong. Therefore, assume, by a stroke of luck, you have found the winning lead. Jump up with the ace of spades and continue diamonds!

Should South have tried to take nine tricks at once? Perhaps, but when the hearts did not break you might have stopped acting the Sleeping Beauty, so he obviously played for the better chance!