

DEFENCE 14 - IMPROVING DEFENSIVE SIGNALS I

	♠ AKQ3	
	♥ 109632	
	♦ J2	
	♣ J4	
♠ 1054		♠ J9862
♥ 754		♥ Q
♦ 4		♦ KQ86
♣ AK9652		♣ Q107
	♠ 7	
	♥ AKJ8	
	♦ A109753	
	♣ 83	

In pairs, South was in 4H (after somewhat oddly opening the bidding with 1H).

West led CAK and East encouraged with the C7 then the C10 (low encourage). West led a further club. South threw the D2 from dummy and ruffed in hand with the H8.

Declarer played HA felling the HQ. They can now play a spade to the SA, ruff a small spade with the HJ, HK, DA and a diamond ruff. Dummy draws the last trump with the H10 and has the rest of the tricks for 11 tricks and a good score.

The defenders should have got 2 clubs and a diamond on this hand.

In a suit contract, when partner leads an ace in a suit in which dummy has only 2 cards, you generally should only encourage if you can overruff dummy on the third round (ie you have only 2 cards yourself) or for some reason you want to make dummy ruff the third round. You generally should not encourage with a queen.

I have seen this sort of thing repeatedly in club bridge where a defender encourages because they have the queen of the suit led and cause their partner to give a ruff and discard to declarer.

Where might you encourage without a doubleton because you want dummy to ruff the third round? A common situation is where dummy has the markedly longer trumps (usually because of a transfer over a 1NT opening) and forcing dummy to ruff gives nothing away and might cause declarer problems by shortening trumps.

	♠ KQ105		
	♥ J3		
	♦ J97542		
	♣ 5		
♠ 986			♠ A32
♥ AK94			♥ Q752
♦ 8			♦ Q103
♣ Q6432			♣ J107
	♠ J74		
	♥ 1086		
	♦ AK6		
	♣ AK98		

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2C	P
2D (1)	P	P	P

(1) No 4 card major

West led the HA. I think it's acceptable here for East to encourage with the HQ. Forcing dummy to trump the third round of hearts is unlikely to give anything away given dummy has the long trumps. These small trumps will make tricks anyway when trumps are drawn.