

DEFENCE 21 – DEFEND A HAND WITH ME

Dealer: S
Vul: EW

	♠ A1065	
	♥ AQ72	
	♦	
	♣ A9632	
♠ KQ3		♠ J72
♥ KJ5		♥ 963
♦ J104		♦ AK953
♣ Q1084		♣ KJ
	♠ 984	
	♥ 1084	
	♦ Q8762	
	♣ 75	

S (Me)	W	N	E
P	1♣ (3+)	P	1♦
P	1NT	X	XX
2♥	P	P	3♦
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Partner at North led a 4th highest ♣3 and dummy played the ♣J. With my partners, we have agreed in no trumps:

1. If dummy wins the opening lead with the A or K, we give our normal low encourage,
2. but if dummy wins with a lower card we can't beat (showing we have very little in the suit) we give REVERSE COUNT instead.

So, I played the ♣5 to show an even number of clubs and declarer played ♣4. North knows declarer has 3 or more clubs, limiting South to 3 or fewer. So, North knows I have 1 or 2 clubs and the suit is pretty much dead.

Declarer led ♠2 to the ♠K and partner's ♠A. I played ♠9. This play of a high card on declarer's first lead is REVERSE SMITH's ECHO. It says I didn't like the lead and would like a switch.

Without these signals, many players at this point would play ♣A and another club setting up 3 club tricks for declarer to go with the 2 spade tricks. The diamonds can be set up for 4 tricks and the defence must find a heart switch when South is in with the ♦Q or declarer makes 3NT.

Knowing clubs were a dead end, North continued spades. He knows declarer doesn't have 4 (they would have bid spades over 1D) so the 4th spade can be set up. A heart works alright on this hand, but North could see 12 points in dummy, 14 points in his own hand and presumes 12 points in declarer's hand. This leaves South with only 2 or less points and thus without the ♥K. A heart lead might donate a heart trick to declarer.

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	♠ 984	
	♥ 1084	
	♦ Q8762	
	♣ 75	

(Hand repeated for convenience)

Declarer finessed the ♦J to the ♦Q in the South hand. North threw ♥2. In no trumps, you tend to throw what you DON'T want (ie discourage in a weak suit). You tend to avoid throwing what you do want because you could be throwing tricks away. If you ever throw an encouraging card in a suit you want, you are SCREAMING at partner to lead that suit. You want this suit so badly you are prepared to give up a trick to get the message over to partner.

I returned the ♥10 (in case I needed to retain the lead to repeatedly lead hearts to scoop up a single honour in declarer's hand). Declarer's ♥J was won by partner's ♥Q and he led a third round of spades setting up the 4th card.

We now collected ♥AQ, ♣A, ♦Q, ♠A and another spade and set the contract by 2.