

DEFENCE 6 – REVISING BASIC PRINCIPLES

♠ K73
♥ K43
♦ Q
♣ AKQ1043

♠ AQJ84
♥ 2
♦ J9853
♣ 86

E	S	W	N
1C	1S	2H	P
4H	P	P	P

North led the DA, South playing the D9 asking for a spade switch. North led the S6, dummy played S3 and South was in with the SJ with declarer playing the S2. What should South play now?

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Dealer: E
Vul: EW

	♠ 65		
	♥ Q109		
	♦ AK1062		
	♣ J52		
♠ 1092		♠ K73	
♥ AJ8765		♥ K43	
♦ 74		♦ Q	
♣ 97		♣ AKQ1043	
	♠ AQJ84		
	♥ 2		
	♦ J9853		
	♣ 86		

E	S	W	N
1C	1S	2H (1)	P
4H	P	P	P

(1) West's 2H bid was an overbid. Normally a 2 level change of suit shows 10+ points.

North led the DA, South playing the D9 asking for a spade switch. North led the S6, dummy played S3 and South was in with the SJ with declarer playing the S2. What should South play now?

There is often a myriad of clues from the bidding and the play telling you how you should defend a hand:

1. A long suit in dummy which is highly likely to run is a flashing warning sign you might have to get busy to take side suit winners NOW.
2. Partner has led the DA suggesting they have the DK (they could have led your spade suit rather than cash an A by itself). Yet with 7 points they couldn't manage a 2S bid suggesting that they don't have 3 or more spades.
3. What is the S6 from? It pays to have clear agreements of what your leads are, and to study those leads carefully. With my partners in relation to the lead of their suit, I prefer to play low/4th highest from 3 or more to an honour (eg 2 from K32) and top of nothing (eg 7 from 7642). This would make life on this hand very easy. The only cards South can't see are S10,9 and 5. Can the S6 be from an honour? No – if partner had 1096, they'd lead the 10. So, the 6 must be a singleton or from 65.

South should immediately cash the SA and give their partner a ruff putting the contract down one.

If you are in any doubt, just make sure you put the opposition contract down. It's usually a good score.

Unfortunately, on this hand South led a passive diamond back. Declarer ruffed in dummy, drew to rounds of trumps with the HAK and then ran the clubs. Declarer discarded both spades before North could ruff in with the HQ and the 4H contract made.

Note how declarer could have made the defenders' lives more difficult – don't play the S2 but the S9! Now South could be in doubt that North led from 652 and that a spade ruff won't happen. This play of the second lowest card is often a good way of confusing defenders and making them miss the correct defence.