

Learning Points – Defending the Balancing Act

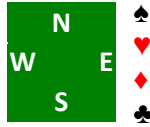
By Steve Moese

October 1, 2012

Bidding & Defense Level: Basic / Intermediate

Board 5
 North Deals
 N-S Vul

♠ A 5
 ♥ A K Q 8 6
 ♦ A Q
 ♣ Q 8 7 5



W 4♥ 3N
 3♠ 4♦;
 EW 4♣;
 E 3♥ 2N
 2♠ 3♦

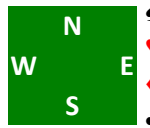
North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	Pass	1♥??
Pass	1N??	Pass	3N
All Pass			
North leads ♦4			

back the ♥10. This causes declarer a moment's thought. Finally she discards the ♦6 and partner follows low. The ♣7 finds your ♣J and declarer's ♣K, and partner playing low. A 3rd ♣ back catches South's ♣9 and the dummy's ♣Q. What do you discard? The ♠4 invites a ♠ lead from partner so that's what's best now. Declarer plays the 4th ♣ from dummy, you pitch a ♦ and declarer pitches a ♦. Here's what South sees →

South must resist any temptation to lead a 3rd ♥ or a 2nd ♦. A small ♠ is right. How does South know? North's 1st ♠ card was the discard of the ♠4 showing a ♠ preference. We use upside down attitude (first card) then count signals (second card) when discarding. Besides, North played the ♣AJ, and ♦K with no ♥ honors. North must hold the ♠K for the opening bid. A red suit lead risks end-playing North in ♠s.

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W 4♥ 3N
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 E 3♥ 2N
 2♠ 3♦

♠ Q 9 7 3
 ♥ 3
 ♦ 10 9 8 3 2
 ♣ K 4 2

the ♠2. Declarer loses 5 tricks for down 1. NS earned 5.5 of 7 MPs for 3N W down 1.

Thursday Night Club Championship, Annease & Marvin Comer Directing at the CBA. Amy Gerowitz is my partner.

Big hands in Balancing Seat need care. When defending against a strong dummy think end-play (Dummy of course!).

The Bidding - North's opens 1♦ with 4=4=3=2 shape. This is the only time we open 1♦ with a 3-cards suit. South's Pass shows extreme weakness (< 5 HCP). West has 21 HCP, 4.5 losers and 7 controls. 1♥ led to 1N by partner and 3N was destiny.

The Play - North led the ♦4 (low from Hxx in partner's suit) and declarer finessed the ♦Q. Winning the ♦K, North has a decision. Partner is broke (<5 HCP). Returning a ♣, ♦, or ♠ appears to give away a tempo or a trick. Better to not continue ♦s as they are blocked. Can a ♥ hurt? If declarer has the ♥J, then they have 7 tricks for sure. If not then we can sever communications in their trick source by leading them now. A small ♥ brings the ♥J from partner and declarer must lead away from dummy. Declarer tries the ♣5. North must choose again. Since you want to play one more round of ♥s from your side and have a safe exit later (♣J) you Win the ♣A and play

♠ A 5
 ♥ Q 8 6
 ♦ A
 ♣

♠ 10 8 2
 ♥ 7
 ♦ J 7
 ♣

Post Mortem

West's bidding was risky. A 1♥ bid in balancing seat might be as weak as 8 and not as strong as 17 HCP. Double is better. (2N shows 20-21 but 5332 shape not 5422. A modern balancing cue-bid shows a 2-suited hand). East's response of 1NT is off the mark holding 4 ♠s. 1♠ would have been better (What if EW have a 4-4 ♠ fit? 1N will never allow them to find it). East's 1NT bid wrong-sided their NT contract! West always makes 3N when declaring. (What can North lead?)

North's switch to ♥s leading into dummy's length and strength might seem strange – it's not. Holding ♥109xx it's perfectly safe if South holds ♥J, and neutral if not. When declarer lacks entries to hand, end-playing dummy is good strategy. Since East rated to hold 2♥ cards, leading ♥s would cut communications and develop a H winner (if South has the ♥J). By eliminating what can't be right the ♥ lead was chosen. Declarer's attempt to endplay South in ♣s would have worked has South not led