

## Defense Problem 1: Unblocking



Partner is on lead and leads the ♦K.

Your diamond holding:

♦A2

What do you play?

You play the ♦A and then continue with the ♦2. It doesn't matter if you are in a suit or NT. If you are in a suit, partner has the ♦Q. After partner plays the ♦Q, you can get a ruff. If you are in NT, partner has the ♦QJ or ♦QT. When you play the ♦2, declarer's ♦J (if he has it) will never take a trick, even if he started with ♦Jxxx.

## Defense Problem 2: The Uppercut



Partner is on lead in 4♣ contract. You opened 3 spades. Partner leads the ♠9.

Your spade holding: ♠AKQ7652

You play the ♠Q followed by the ♠A. Your partner plays the ♠3 on the ♠A. At this point, you know that everyone except you is out of spades. What do you do now?

Full deal

	♠JT	
	♥QT6	
	♦AQ763	
	♣942	
♠93		♠AKQ7652
♥K75		♥T43
♦K8542		♦98
♣JT7		♣3
	♠84	
	♥AJ92	
	♦J	
	♣AKQ865	

As the cards lie, it is clear that the declarer is expecting to lose 2 spades and a heart. If the heart finesse works, he expects to lose just the 2 spades. However, you can see that the heart finesse is not working.

You can defeat this contract if you play another spade. This goes against what you have been taught, which is not to give the declarer a sluff and a ruff. However, you know that your partner is also out of spades, which gives you an advantage. If declarer ruffs low in his hand, your partner can overruff. If declarer ruffs high in his hand, partner's J eventually sets up for a trick. If declarer sluffs a card from his hand (no sluff in this case does him any good), your partner has trumps higher than dummy's 9. If your partner continues spades, your side will win 2 spade tricks, a club trick and a heart trick—down 1. Any other lead gives declarer a chance to draw trumps.

*Linda MacCleave  
August 15, 2009*