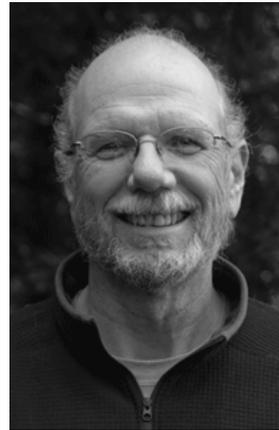


Duck, Duck, Goose



you have no questions. Everyone other than dummy studies the board and plans their play.



Jim Jackson

Last month we discussed ways to make the most out of royalty. This month I want to turn our attention to defensive play when you are blessed with an ace.

South, non-vulnerable vs. vulnerable, opens the bidding with 1♠ in the final deal of a team game. West passes and North pops out with a 4♣ bid. As East with 16 HCPs you were planning on opening 1NT. Now with North's push to 4♣, you study your hand for the required ten-count after a skip-bid and decide someplace around seven that you will double.

Fortunately, at the count of nine you realize it isn't a good double because you have no idea how you are going to set them two tricks, which the experts suggest is the minimum for doubling in an IMP-scored game.

At ten you pull out the green pass card and the contract stays at 4♣.

I always say the best lead is one someone else has to make, and this time partner is on the spot. She turns up the ♣J after you indicate

E-W Vul	♠A J 9 7 5 2										
South Deals	♥5										
	♦4 3 2										
	♣A 8 6										
Opening Lead		♠K 4									
♣J	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♥A J 7 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
			♦K 9 7 6								
			♣K Q 2								
	Wouldn't you like to know?										

At Your Table

You figure the ♠K is good for a trick as is the ♥A. The ♣KQ are in good position to score, particularly given partner's lead. Finally, if declarer has to lead diamonds from his hand, you've got a trick there as well.

Declarer wins the trick in dummy, cashes the ♠A and discovers you have the guarded king. He shoots you a glare and now partner also knows the count on spades.

Declarer calls for the ♥5 and now it's up to you — what's your plan?



If you immediately decided to win the trick with the ♥A and then cash your good clubs for down one, please refer to the title of this article, and then continue reading.

Let's try to figure out what high cards South might hold. Between you, North and partner's lead of the ♣J, you count 26 HCPs. There are only fourteen HCPs outstanding and chances are good that even a free-spirited South is likely to have at least 11 of the suckers, leaving pard with at most 3 HCPs more.

That means South is almost a lock for the ♦A along with the ♠Q. Of the remaining honors (♥KQ and ♦QJ), South is missing at most the king or a queen and jack—but he might have them all.

After driving out your ♠K, dummy will still have four spades available to ruff declarer's remaining hearts. He'll need entries and can use the ♦A as one, but if he tries spades, you have the first spade trick and

(Continued on page 5)

