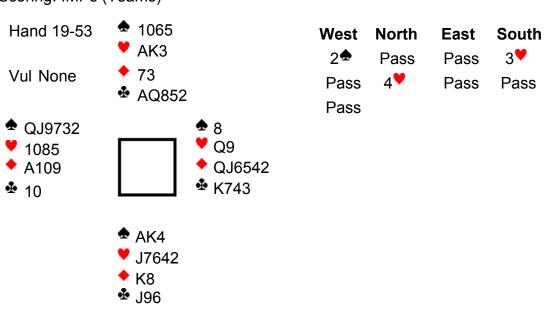
IMPROVE YOUR PLAY

With Larry Matheny

Too often players spend most of their time on bidding and declarer play. The equally important area of defense seems to come in last. Good defense can be fun.



Bidding: South was reluctant to introduce such a poor suit at the 3-level but did not want to allow the opponents to buy the contract at $2^{\textcircled{A}}$. He realized this could go badly. Fortunately, his partner who was unable to compete earlier, had enough values to bid game.

Play: At this table West led his singleton club. Declarer saw four possible losers: 1 spade, 2 diamonds, and 1 club. He ducked hoping the lead was not a singleton. East won the king and saw that the defense needed diamond tricks to defeat the contract. He shifted to the queen of diamonds and declarer ducked. Next, East led a low club for his partner to trump. West then cashed the ace of diamonds for down one. If East has simply returned a club at trick two, the defense would have found only three tricks. Declarer would have succeeded if he had won the first club with the ace.

At the other table, West led the queen of spades to declarer's ace. Declarer drew trumps and felt lucky when the queen was doubleton. Next, he led a low club to the ten and queen. East ducked but won the continuation when declarer next led a low club from dummy. East then shifted to the queen of diamonds, but the defense could only take one club and two diamonds. Declarer discarded his low spade on a good club.

Scoring: IMPs (Teams)