

## Immaculate Defense, by Steve Nellissen

Once in a while you are fortunate enough to be given a virtual double dummy problem at the bridge table. "Double dummy" means you are looking at all four hands.

Playing in the finals of the Flight A Reitman teams against an expert declarer, you hear:

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>You</u>
		1NT <sup>1</sup>	P
2♦ <sup>2</sup>	P	2♥	P
3♥ <sup>3</sup>	P	4♥	all pass

<sup>1</sup>15-17, <sup>2</sup>transfer, <sup>3</sup>invitational with 6 hearts

You hold:

♠ A 10 8 6   ♥ K 5 4   ♦ A 6   ♣ K 10 8 2

Your lead? Well if they have 24-26 points, what do you imagine your partner has? Right, practically nothing. So your first thought is, "Let's not give away a trick on opening lead." You try a small heart.

Thirteen more clues appear in dummy:

<u>Dummy</u>	<u>You</u>
♠ Q 5 4	♠ A 10 8 6
♥ J 10 9 6 3 2	♥ K 5 4
♦ J 2	♦ A 6
♣ A 3	♣ K 10 8 2

Declarer calls small and partner produces the ♥Q! Declarer wins the ♥A and plays the ♦K. What are you thinking?

Well you should be thinking: "I have three tricks: ♥K, ♦A, ♠A. How will I beat the contract?"

You know from the bidding that declarer has:

♠ K J ?   ♥ A x ?   ♦ K Q T x   ♣ Q J x x ?

The question marks are just the low cards, but *the high cards are all known on the auction.*

Can you keep declarer from taking the club finesse? What's up with the ♦K play?

Obviously declarer has ♦K, ♦Q, ♦10 and wants you to take the ace. He is hoping to get rid of dummy's club loser on the high diamond, so let's duck this trick. Declarer continues with the ♦Q which you win. Now what?

You could quickly lead a club hoping declarer will win the ace, but he has no quick way back to his hand to play that ♦10 to discard the club, so he'll have to finesse. Let's try the ♠8 just to be a bit deceptive. (Partner is out of the picture so it's safe.) The idea is to give declarer a chance to play the high diamond, which you can trump with your little trump; but you also retain the ♠A to keep him from re-entering his hand in case he has the ♦9 as well.

Your spade play goes to declarer's known jack, and he plays the ♦9. You trump, declarer overruffs and tries to get back to his hand with a spade, but you win, cash your ♥K (partner following) and stick him back in dummy with the ♠Q where he'll eventually surrender the ♣K.

The full hand:	♠ Q 5 4
	♥ J 10 9 6 3 2
	♦ J 2
	♣ A 3
♠ A 10 8 6	♠ 9 7 3 2
♥ K 5 4	♥ Q 7
♦ A 6	♦ 8 7 5 4 3
♣ K 10 8 2	♣ 5 4
♠ K J	
♥ A 8	
♦ K Q 10 9	
♣ Q J 9 7 6	

Your nice defense has you up 6 imps at half-time, but unfortunately the opponents have their bidding shoes on in the second half and beat you by similar margin. Still, it's nice to go home with second place and a clean defense.