

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

PARTNERSHIP DEFENSE

By: Brian Gunnell

	♠ AQJT7 ♥ Q32 ♦ A76 ♣ 74	
♠ K6532 ♥ K86 ♦ 92 ♣ J32	North West East Declarer	♠ 4 ♥ T95 ♦ K84 ♣ AKQT85
	♠ 98 ♥ AJ74 ♦ QJT53 ♣ 96	

None Vulnerable

South West North East

1♠ 2♣

Dbl 3♣ Pass Pass

3♦ All Pass

It's often said that defense is the toughest part of the game. But sound partnership agreements are a big help, and on this board E-W work together like a well-oiled machine to get a ruff and defeat the contract.

A part-score battle lands N-S in 3♦. West leads a Club and this is where the partnership agreement comes in. On opening lead against a suit contract, with three small in a suit, common practice is to lead a low one. But an exception occurs when the opening leader has bid the suit, as she did in the auction above. In such a case, it is customary to lead the top card, denying an honor, safe in the knowledge that Partner won't misread the lead as a doubleton.

Alert readers will have noticed that West does not actually have three small. Precisely! So her opening lead is a *low* Club, promising an honor. East wins that with the Queen and tries to figure out where the defense might be getting their five tricks. The ♦K is one ... two Club tricks hopefully ... surely not more than one Heart (West would no doubt have led a high Heart holding AK) ... and no Spades. That's only four, and a Spade ruff is needed to get to five. So, At Trick 2, East shifts to a Spade, leading into Dummy's imposing suit. West plays low on this (otherwise Declarer's Heart losers will all disappear), and Declarer now loses the trump finesse to East's King. East confidently underleads his ♣AK to West's Jack, gets his Spade ruff, and eventually the ♥K becomes the setting trick. Nicely done!

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