

IT'S ALL IN THE SIGNALS

You are sitting in the South and the bidding has started by your right hand opponent.

	South			
	♠AQ10			
	♥J9762			
	♦83			
	♣1065			
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
		1NT	Pass	
3NT	All Pass			

You make the standard lead of the ♥6, 4th down from the longest suit. You see this dummy:

	North	
	♥A	
West		East
♠8653		
♥K5		♥4
♦AQ75		
♣874		
	South	
	♠AQ10	
	♥J9762	
	♦83	
	♣1065	

The declarer plays the ♥K which is captured by partner's ♥A. The declarer plays the ♥4. You are surprised and delighted when partner tables the ♥Q at Trick 2. Declarer plays the ♥10. Which card do you play on this trick?

	North	
	♥Q	
West		East
♠8653		
♥5		♥10
♦AQ75		
♣874		
	South	
	♠AQ10	
	♥J972	
	♦83	
	♣1065	

You should realize that the declarer started with only two hearts. He would not have played the ♥ 10 if he had another low heart. Therefore your partner started with four hearts and you are going to set the contract since your ♠ A will furnish the setting trick. But you can do better. If your partner can lead a spade to your tenace, you can finesse your ♠ Q. So you need him to discontinue hearts and lead a spade through the declarer's probable ♠ KJ.

This is where defensive signaling comes in. Play the ♥ J under his queen! This will wake him up. Throwing an honor on his trick is not the normal play and he will realize that your card was a signal to shift to the higher ranking of the two available suits: spades and clubs.

	North	
	♠ 2	
West		East
♠ 8653		♠ K
♥ 5		
♦ AQ75		
♣ 874		
	South	
	♠ AQ10	
	♥ J972	
	♦ 83	
	♣ 1065	

Now you've set them two tricks. Can you do better?

You need to have your partner get on lead again and lead another spade through the declarer's remaining honor, the ♠ J. You know partner must hold the ♥ 8, so you lead the ♥ 2 over to him, and declarer, of course shows out. Now he leads the ♠ 4 and you capture East's ♠ J with your ♠ Q.

At this point you can win the last ♠ 10 and finish the heart suit. You've taken the first 8 tricks and can feel magnanimous and let the declarer have his five remaining winners. Down four!

This is the complete board:

	N North	
14	♠ 942	W N E S
	♥ AQ83	3NT P 1NT P
	♦ J1064	P P P
	♣ J2	
W West		E East
♠ 8653		♠ KJ7
♥ K5		♥ 104
♦ AQ75		♦ K92
♣ 874		♣ AKQ93
	S South	
	♠ AQ10	
	♥ J9762	
	♦ 83	
	♣ 1065	
		3NT E NS: 0 EW: 0

Without the signal and the analytical reasoning you did on the heart suit, you would have allowed East to take 8 tricks – an average score for this board.

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/nnyrnnk>
Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick.