

Bridge Theory for the Practitioners

Amit Chakrabarti

29. If Only She Had the Ten

Ten is the most underrated honor card in Bridge. In this column on defense, I will give you examples that will make you think of the Ten more fondly. The most beautiful hand constructions come when setting the contract depends on *partner* holding this card. Without further ado, let's start with hands.

Example 1. Both White.

1H P (me) 1S P
2H all pass.

I lead the A of D holding the hand below as West. Dummy's hand (North) is also shown.

A K 9 8 7
5 4
J T 5 4
Q 2

4 3
J 8 7
A K 8 2
A 9 8 3

Partner plays the 9. We play *standard count* at trick 1. I continue with the K and she plays the 2. I dutifully play the 2 of D showing her my entry in C and she ruffs with the 3 of H. Now she does something very interesting. She plays the K of C which wins and she plays the 4 of C to my Ace. So this is what has happened so far:

Trick 1. **A of D**, 4, 9, 6.
Trick 2. **K of D**, 5, 3, 7.
Trick 3. 2 of D, T, **3 of H**, Q of D.
Trick 4. **K of C**, 5, 9, 2.
Trick 5. 4 of C, J, **A**, Q.

We have won all 5 tricks so far and the contract is booked. What do I do at trick 6? I thought, **if only she had the Ten** of Hs and played the 4th D which she ruffs with the Ten and my Jack of H is promoted for the setting trick.

Example 2. They are Red, we are not.

1H P 1S 2C (me)
 2S P 4S All pass.

I lead the A of C holding the hand below. Dummy's hand is also shown.

K Q 9 7
 A K Q T 7
 T 8
 8 2

A J 5
 4 3
 5 4 3
 A K J 7 5

Partner plays the 3 showing an odd number of cards most probably 3 (with 5Cs, she is not letting them play in 4S at this vulnerability). What to do now? Are we setting this? I was thinking what to do and then it came to me: I have the AJx of trumps, **if only she had the Ten**. I continue with the K of Cs and then play the 5 of Cs at trick 3.

So this is what has happened so far:

- Trick 1. **A of C**, 2, 3, 9.
- Trick 2. **K of C**, 8, 6, T. --- Note that 6 of C from partner. She had the 4 and yet played the 6 as a suit preference card telling me that she has no interest in D. When count is known, the next play points to suit preference.
- Trick 3. 5 of C, 8 of D, 4 of C, **Q of C**.

Now at trick 4, Declarer plays the 2 of S and I jump with the A. And then, thinking if she only had the T of S, I play a 4th C for a ruff and a sluff. To tell you the truth, I was scared; if I am wrong what would come is this: "Just exactly what are you doing over there setting up declarer's Q of C, giving him a D discard, and now a ruff and a sluff?"). But today was my lucky day. Not only does she show up with the Ten of S but ruffs with the Ten as well. 4S down one.

Example 3. Both White.

1C Pass (me) 3NT all pass.

Partner leads the 3 of H and I see the dummy (North) holding this hand as East

A J 5
T 9 8 7
K Q J
J 3 2

Q 8 7 2
5 2
A 5 4 3
8 7 6

- Trick 1. H-3, 7, 5, **J**.
- Trick 2. **K of C**, 4, 2, 8 (my 8 tends to show S interest --- we play Suit Preference when declarer first plays suit number 2).
- Trick 3. **Q of C**, 5, 3, 7. (Now my 7 confirms the S interest).
- Trick 4. T of C, **A**, J, 6.

After winning the A of C, partner goes to the tank. I know she is thinking about the playing S but which card?. And I thought: **if only she had the Ten of S**. Lo and behold, she puts that card on the table. This is the only card that sets the contract as the S suit breaks like:

	A J 5	
K T 3		Q 8 7 2
	9 6 4	

Note that a small S play by her does not work and neither does the K of S play by her. After the hand was over, she said, I was hoping for the 9 in your hand but this exact holding would work too. Yes, if the S suit breaks like

	A J 5	
K T 3		Q 9 4 2
	8 7 4	

