

Dummy

♠A87
♥Q105
♦1097
♣KQ43

You

♠42
♥862
♦Q6
♣A107542

You LHO Partner RHO

P	P	P	1H
P	1N	P	2D
P	3H	P	4H
P	P	P	

The opponents are playing 2/1, with 1N forcing even by a passed hand. Therefore, this auction shows responder has an invitational hand with 3 hearts.

You choose to lead the 2 of hearts, dummy plays low, partner the J and declarer the A. Declarer now leads the 6 of clubs. Given that you can see 10 clubs between you and dummy, it is quite possible this is a singleton. Discuss whether or not you think you should take your A of clubs and why.

Send your answers to me: billpuzzles@bridgesights.com

The Answer

Your dilemma is as follows. Assume declarer has a singleton. If you duck the club A, you are giving away a club trick. However, if you take the Ace, you are setting up two tricks for discards in dummy.

At this point, you do not have enough information to make your decision clear cut. However, my instinct would be to duck the Ace. It is likely at worst you will simply be trading tricks, because you will be depriving declarer of two discards. The only time it is right is if you need 4 fast tricks, which is unlikely on this hand, since your only source of possible fast tricks is diamonds, and they were bid by declarer.

When this hand was played at the table, it turns out taking the Ace of clubs gave declarer his 10th trick. Here is the hand:

Dummy

♠A87
♥Q105
♦1097
♣KQ43

Declarer

♠K653
♥AK743
♦A42
♣6

If you duck the Ace of clubs, declarer only has 9 tricks – 5 hearts, 2 spades, 1 diamond, and 1 club. If you take the Ace of clubs, you give declarer a second club trick, which allows him to make the contract.

In general, the defensive adage “2nd hand low” is a good one. When in doubt, it is best to follow it.