

Teams: Club Championship -- Defending with a Strong Suit

Board 11
East Deals
None Vul

	♠ J 8 2
	♥ Q 6 3
	♦ 8 7 3
	♣ Q J 10 4
	♠ 7 4
	♥ J 9
	♦ A Q J 10 9 2
	♣ 7 5 2

Deal rotated for convenience.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		2 ♦	2 ♠

All pass

2 ♠ by South

Lead: ♦ K

You make a textbook weak two diamond opening: a strong suit of exactly six cards in less than an opening hand. South overcalls in spades and plays there. Plan the defense.

Board 11
 East Deals
 None Vul

<p>♠ 9 5 3 ♥ K 10 5 4 ♦ K ♣ A 9 8 6 3</p>	<p>♠ J 8 2 ♥ Q 6 3 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ Q J 10 4</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>♠ 7 4 ♥ J 9 ♦ A Q J 10 9 2 ♣ 7 5 2</p>
	<p>♠ A K Q 10 6 ♥ A 8 7 2 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ K</p>	

NS 2♠; EW 1N; EW 2♦; NS 1♥; EW 1♣

Partner would lead the ♦K if it were singleton or doubleton. On some occasions, it is correct for partner to lead the king from ♦Kxx, but this is not one of them. He would do in case he might want to retain the lead: if (1) he was already known to have diamond length, likely by raising; and (2) he thought it likely a shift would be correct. Besides, with most hands containing ♦Kxx, he would have raised. So this time, you know for sure that you want to play a second round of diamonds.

You could signal that you like the suit. How would you do that? The ♦Q might be interpreted as a suit preference request for an emergency heart shift. Maybe the ♦J or 9 would do it most of the time, but not this time. Partner cannot get it right, having only the one diamond.

When you know what has to be done, and you can do it without partner's help, do it! Win the ♦A and continue with top diamonds. As it turns out, you cannot set the contract, but you can get five tricks: three diamonds, the ♣A and the ♥K. You will shift to a heart after cashing the diamonds, won't you?

- Pete Matthews