

BRIDGE

Unit 8

IMPROVE YOUR DEFENCE



This is the final unit in the foundation bridge course and we will take another look at the most difficult aspect of the game - defence.

In the first couple of weeks we will look at the best card to lead after partner has bid a suit, and we will explore the difference between safe and attacking leads. We will encourage you to think about what the auction might have revealed and how many points partner is likely to have.

We will then look at McKenney suit preference signals and when to use them. Then, the appropriate card to play in 2nd, 3rd and 4th positions and the importance of playing the lower of touching cards to try to win tricks.

Towards the end of this unit we will give you some guidance on the rules relating to common misdemeanours such as revokes and leads out of turn .

At the conclusion of this unit you will have covered most of the elements of bidding and card play that should enable you to compete comfortably in NEBA clubs.

Becoming a *good* Bridge player might take a little longer, and this will only happen after a few years experience playing club Bridge.

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LEADING PARTNER'S SUIT

During the auction your partner has bid clubs but the opponents bid on to game in 4♥.

You hold
 ♠ 1098
 ♥ 43
 ♦ 87652
 ♣ K72

What do you lead?

If you remember a friend telling you that you "Always lead the top of partner's suit," and you do, your opponents will make their contract! LEAD ♣2

With TWO cards in partner's suit:

7 2 **lead 7** and when you play the **2**, partner will read the hi/lo as showing two.
K 7 **lead K** and when you play the **7**, partner will read the hi/lo as showing two.

With THREE cards in partner's suit:

9 7 2 **lead 7** and when you play the **9**, partner will read the low/high as showing *three small cards* in the suit. This is known as a MUD lead (middle, up, down.)
 Never make a MUD lead from three to an honour. (*10s are honours during play.*)

K 7 2 **lead 2** and partner must know that you have three or four *with an honour card*.
 or, it is a singleton!

K 9 7 **lead 7**. With the cards that partner has and the cards in dummy it is usually possible to work out that the seven is the lowest card you have.

With FOUR cards in partner's suit:

9 7 6 2 **lead 7** and when you play the **6** the hi/lo shows two or four.
 K 7 6 2 **lead 2** and partner must know that you have three or four *with an honour card*.
 or, it is a singleton!

♠ 53		
♥ KQ109		
♦ K85		
♣ QJ63		
♠ K92	3NT by south	♠ AJ1087
♥ 7543		♥ A6
♦ 9642		♦ J3
♣ 53		♣ 10982
♠ Q84		
♥ J82		
♦ AQ107		
♣ AK7		

S	W	N	E
1♦	P	1♥	1♠
1NT	P	3NT	

West leads ♠2 (a low card indicates a holding of three or more cards to an honour)
 East wins ♠A and returns ♠J
 South should duck. West should duck.
 East continues with ♠10 (a high card asking for a heart switch)
 West wins with ♠K and returns a heart.

NOTE ♠K lead gives declarer the contract with four diamonds four clubs and the ♠Q.

THINK BEFORE YOU LEAD 1.

S N
2NT 3NT

♠ 4 3	3NT
♥ 9 8	by south
♦ A K 9 7 5 2	
♣ 10 5 2	Lead ?

It is all too easy to reach for the standard lead of 4th highest of your longest and strongest, but as well as listening to the bidding, you should consider how many points you have (and therefore how many your partner has) before selecting your lead.

In the first example you have 7 HCPs and partner is likely to have 7 or 8 as well. More importantly, you have no outside entry to your hand. If you were to play off the ace and king, you would never regain the lead to cash any more diamonds. Lead 4th highest and hope partner can get in to return the suit.

Remember your declarer play? Give up one trick to make five! It is often the same in defence.

S N
2NT 3NT

♠ A 3	3NT
♥ 9 8	by south
♦ A K 9 7 5 4	
♣ Q J 10	Lead ?

This time you have 14 pts.

It is obvious that your partner has no points at all! You will get in again, so simply lead off your ace to get a look at dummy.

A count signal from partner would be helpful, but unless you can pull in diamond tricks, it looks like declarer will make his contract.

S N
2NT 3NT

	♠ 10 2	
	♥ K Q 7	
	♦ 10 9 8 5 4	
	♣ 9 8 3	
♠ A Q J 9 3	3NT	♠ 8 7 4
♥ J 10 9 8	by south	♥ 6 5 4 3
♦ A 3	Lead ?	♦ 7 6
♣ K 7		♣ 10 6 5 4
	♠ K 6 5	
	♥ A 2	
	♦ K Q J 2	
	♣ A Q J 2	

Here again, with all of the defensive points you will have to set this contract without any help from partner.

It would be great to get a lead of spades from partner, but you know that can never happen.

Lead the ace, then queen of spades yourself. 4th highest would be disastrous.

Yes it 'gives a trick away' but it also sets the contract!

We suggest that east should show count on such leads, (low from three, hi/lo from two or four.)

East knows, that west knows, that east has no points!

THINK BEFORE YOU LEAD 2.

When you have no clues from the auction and two four card majors, which suit would you choose. In spades, any honour in partner's hand would set up tricks for your side. An honour in hearts would not. A simple guide therefore would be, with suits of equal length, **lead the suit with the most honours.**

♠ Q 10 8 6
♥ K 8 6 2
♦ 5 2
♣ K 6 5

If both suits have one honour card, prefer to lead from the suit with a king or queen rather than an ace or jack. Look also at the small cards 9s & 8s are better than 5s & 4s.

♠ 7 6
♥ A 8 6 2
♦ Q 8 5 2
♣ K 6 5

Generally you would **lead a major rather than a minor against NTs.**

It is so easy to offer a nursery rhyme as an excuse when something goes wrong.

"I led my 4th highest/top of a sequence partner." "I played 8 ever 9 never partner." We've all said it!
but when you are WEAK, think about partner's hand before you lead!

You are east, holding

♠ 8 6
♥ 9 8 6 4 2
♦ 5 4 2
♣ J 6 5

The bidding has been

N	E	S	W
1NT	P	3NT	

You hold a five card major against a 3NT contract! What do you lead?

Do you really think that your hearts are ever going to make tricks with no outside entry?

If the opponents have 25-27 pts., how many points has partner?

The defence is supposed to lead their best suit, but **the defence is you, AND your partner!**

Your partner has 12+pts. and at least four spades. Try leading the ♠6 for your partner.

Usually however you should be trying to find a safe lead, and with this holding you may be wise to make the standard lead of ♥Q top of a sequence.

It's not that you would expect to make heart tricks

but it's certainly not going to give declarer a trick!

It's the safest lead in the book!

♠ 8 6 3
♥ Q J 10 4 2
♦ 5 2
♣ J 6 5

When you are STRONG, think about partner's hand before you lead!

Hand 1.

♠ K 8 7 6
♥ K 8 6
♦ 5 2
♣ A 6 5 2

Against game contracts in a suit, remember to ask yourself how many points partner is likely to hold.

If you held hand 1, a doubleton lead is not likely to be effective because partner cannot have the honours to win and return the suit for your ruff.

With hand 2. which has very few points, there is much more chance of finding points in partner's hand.

Hand 2.

♠ 9 8 7 6
♥ K 8 6
♦ 5 2
♣ 8 6 5 2

FINALLY - Always ask for the meaning of your opponents conventional bids BEFORE you select your lead! The explanation will tell you more about the shape/strength of the hidden hand.

ON THE LEAD OF A KING AGAINST NTS

How do you signal when partner leads a king against a NT contract?

First of all, what has partner got? Well, it must be '*top of a sequence*' and against NTs it must be a sequence of THREE top cards i.e. **KQJx** or at worst - a '*near sequence*' i.e. **KQ10x**

	♠ AQ86	
	♥ 83	
	♦ AQJ	
	♣ Q1084	
♠ J53		♠ K92
♥ KQ1094	A	♥ J72
♦ 862		♦ 109743
♣ K7	♠ 1074	♣ 63
	♥ A65	
	♦ K5	
	♣ AJ952	

In hand 'A', west leads ♥K.

Which card should east play? J, 7 or 2?
And is it an attitude signal or is it count?
On this hand, it doesn't matter as long as west continues the suit and east unblocks the jack on trick 2, declarer will fail.
Would an encouraging 7 be best here?

	♠ AQ86	
	♥ 83	
	♦ AQJ	
	♣ Q1084	
♠ J53		♠ K92
♥ KQ1094	B	♥ 762
♦ 862		♦ 109743
♣ K7	♠ 1074	♣ 63
	♥ AJ5	
	♦ K5	
	♣ AJ952	

In hand B, west leads ♥K.

Which card should east play? 7, 6 or 2?
And is it an attitude signal or is it count?
On this hand, if west continues hearts declarer would make lots of tricks!
Would a discouraging 2 be best here?

	♥ A83	
♥ KQ1094	C	♥ 762
	♥ J5	

In hand 'C'. a discouraging 2 would not work well because a continuation of the ♥Q would be best for the defence.

	♥ A83	
♥ KQ1094	D	♥ 72
	♥ J65	

But not on hand 'D'

THE SIMPLE SOLUTION

When you are defending a NT contract and your partner leads a king, you are being instructed *to throw any honour card you hold in that suit, or, without an honour, you must show count.*

In 'A', knowing that declarer doesn't have the jack, west can continue the suit in safety.

In 'B' without an honour east gives a count signal (not attitude) and plays the 2. West knows a switch is required.

In 'C' without an honour east gives a count signal (not attitude) and plays the 2. West knows a continuation of the Q will drop the now singleton jack.

In 'D' the count signal (playing hi-lo) tells west that declarer has three, and that he must not continue the suit.

LEADS AGAINST SLAMS

Against slams, we only need two tricks to defeat the contract, so normal lead rules don't apply.

If you have two aces try to cash them. With ace and king of a suit, try to cash them.

With a king queen holding play the king to set up an early winner.

Generally do not lead away from unguarded honours.

Try not to give anything away if opponents have bid their slam with great doubt. (Find a safe lead.)

If they have bid very confidently try something unexpected.* (An attacking lead.)

♠ J1092
♥ A84
♦ 642
♣ 1098

Against a suit contract you would never lead an unguarded ace, but against 6♠ the lead of the ace is reasonable.

Cash it before declarer throws away a singleton heart on a long side suit. You almost certainly have a trump trick!

♠ Q75
♥ KQ74
♦ AKQ5
♣ 63

♠ AK8643
♥ 4
♦ 83
♣ AKQJ

S	N
1♠	2♦
3NT	6NT

♠ Q108
♥ 8632
♦ Q1098
♣ Q10

Against 3NT ♦10 would be appropriate, but against a slam, leading from your queen is unwise. Let declarer try to find them and play a safe ♥6

♠ A97
♥ KQ7
♦ AK76
♣ 987

♠ KJ65
♥ AJ5
♦ J53
♣ AKJ

♠ 108
♥ 98632
♦ J109
♣ Q107

Partner has eased our problems on this hand. The double of a conventional bid is lead directing and we therefore lead ♥6 a neutral lead saying that I have no preference for your return partner.

S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1♥	P
4NT	P	2♠	P
6♠	P	5♥	X
		P	P

♠ J654
♥ AKJ75
♦ 85
♣ AK

Partner duly ruffs the heart lead and cashes the ♦A for one down. If partner doubles this contract the opponents may convert to 6NT which makes. They should have been warned by the double of 5♥ anyway.

♠ AKQ97
♥ Q104
♦ KQ76
♣ 9

♠ 953
♥ K965
♦ J742
♣ 82

*Similar Auction but bid with great confidence. What about putting south to the test immediately, leading into what you expect to be ♥AQJxx.

S	W	N	E
1♠	P	1♥	P
4NT	P	2♠	P
6♠	P	5♥	P
		P	P

Lead the 9, suggesting no honour in the suit. If declarer has two options he may reject the heart finesse and rely on a another way to make his slam.

MID GAME SWITCHES.

CAN YOU GET IN AGAIN ?

Your choice of leads in defence will depend on whether you are likely to get in again.

This hand cropped up at Cramlington Bridge Club.

E /W vul.	♠ AKJ1042		
	♥ KJ2		
	♦ K7		
	♣ 64		
♠ 8		3♠ by	♠ 93
♥ AQ7543		North	♥ 96
♦ J9853			♦ AQ2
♣ 9			♣ <u>A</u> KJ732
	♠ Q765		
	♥ 108		
	♦ 1064		
	♣ Q1085		

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♣	2♠	3♥
3♠	P	P	P

East led ♣A.

West's ♣9 is of course ambiguous and could be a singleton or a doubleton.

East therefore switches to the ♥9, which is again ambiguous! It could be a singleton. This would put north with four hearts.

West naturally plays ♥A.

West now knows that north started with *at least* three hearts to the king & jack.

With **four**, to the king jack, north might have given thought to a double especially as E/W were vulnerable.

Because west will only ever be on lead once he should switch to a diamond.

With ♦10 on table, the ♦J would not be wise but on this occasion, it is irrelevant.

♦3 might even suggest a 2nd club! ***If west continues hearts, declarer will make the contract as east will be end played when north leads his 2nd club after drawing trumps.***

N	S	
	1♥	
2♣	2NT	
3♥	4♥	West leads ♣3

	♠ Q 9 4		
	♥ K 9 3		
	♦ 5		
	♣ K Q J 9 4 2	YOU.	
♠ K 10 6 5		4♥ by	♠ 7 3 2
♥ 8 6 2		South	♥ A 7
♦ J 10 9 3 2			♦ Q 8 6 4
♣ 3			♣ A 8 7 5
	♠ A J 8		
	♥ Q J 10 5 4		
	♦ A K 7		
	♣ 10 6		

1. The bidding has revealed a 5-3 fit in hearts. North has a club suit and three hearts.
2. South has a balanced hand with five hearts. (No singleton or void.)
3. The lead shows that south has only two clubs, and therefore has three diamonds and three spades.
4. You have 10 pts.
5. Partner can only have about 4 pts. Where are they?
6. Partner has three trumps.
7. Why has partner led the enemy suit? Can you read the lead? It must be a singleton.

If partner had held 10-3 or 6-3 he would have have led the high card to show two.

Your immediate thought is to win the ♣A and give partner his ruff.

Well yes, that would be three tricks, but now it is impossible to get a 4th trick to set the contract.

Even if west found the trump return to your ace, declarer would ruff the 3rd club high, draw trumps and throw his losing diamond and spades on the established club suit.

Your trump control means that you can *always* give partner his club ruff. There is no rush to do this. Return a spade, hoping that partners points are the ♠K or ♠A.

If partner has the ♦A and not the spade honour, he will cash it after he gets his ruff.

QUIZ ON LEADS AGAINST NTs

West on lead

♠ 8 6 3
♥ 9 2
♦ K J 10 9 5
♣ A 10 9

N	S
1♥	1NT
3NT	

Top of internal sequence.
Lead ♦J.

♠ Q 10 8 6 3
♥ 6 4 2
♦ J 5 2
♣ 9 5

N	S
1♥	1♠
2♥	3NT

You will not set up spades when south has bid them. With at least five hearts in RHO's hand, ♥4 would not be wise. Try the strongest minor.
Lead ♦2. or ♣9 might work.

♠ 6 3
♥ Q J 10 8 7
♦ 9 5 2
♣ A 6 5

N	S
1♠	1NT
P	

Good five card suit and an entry.
Lead your own suit. ♥Q. (Top of a sequence)

♠ Q 9 8 6 3
♥ 4 2
♦ J 8 7
♣ 8 6 5

N	S
P	2NT
3♣	3♥
3NT	

3♣ is Stayman, so north must have four spades
Partner could have doubled ♣3 for a lead. Try ♦7 even though partner has at least four hearts.

♠ 8 6 2
♥ 8 6 4 2
♦ K J 9 5 2
♣ 5

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♣	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

Tough choice! How confidently did south bid NTs. Lead the singleton of partner's suit or could partner have ♦Qxx / ♦Axx ? You don't have to lead partner's suit but be quick with an apology if it goes wrong. Try ♦5.

♠ Q J 10 9
♥ 4 2
♦ 7 6 5
♣ J 8 6 5

N	E	S	W
		1NT	P
2♥*	X	2♠	-
4♠	P	P	P

*The double of a conventional bid is lead directing. Lead ♥4. Partner may have HA & HK.
Your hi-lo could give you a ruff on the 3rd round.

2♥* is a transfer bid

NOTES - For partnership harmony, be very certain before *not* leading a suit bid by partner! Be ready with an immediate- "Sorry partner." if an attacking lead doesn't work.

The language of signalling is vital to good defence. Count signals are the primary method, and the saying '*ace for attitude and king for count*' should be simplified to ace for attitude. On any other high card lead from partner, we recommend that you show count. Occasionally, suit preference is required.

Count signals

When partner leads an honour card against NTs, he will have a sequence of three cards.

We suggest that the most useful information you can give partner is to show how many cards you have in the suit. This is done by playing your cards hi-lo to show 2 or 4. With three or five play the lowest card first.

(If partner played ♥Q and you only held ♥K6, you obviously must unblock by playing ♥K.)

Unblocking simply means that you are getting your king out of the way of your partner's long suit.)

If partner leads a king against a NT contract, you are required to throw any honour you hold, OR to give count if you do not have an honour card!

Attitude signals

Attitude signals are simply playing an *affordable* high card to tell partner that you like the suit and wish him to continue. They should be kept for the rare occasions when partner has struggled to find a lead and eventually led an unsupported ace. If you have K93, play the 9 to encourage!

McKenney suit preference signals

<i>Discards</i>	<i>Switch required</i>	<i>Returns to partner</i>
When you cannot follow suit: Discard a suit you don't want.	Against a suit contract, if partner has led an ace and a singleton of the suit appears in dummy, there is little point in continuing that suit. Tell partner which suit to switch to, by :	Against a suit contract, if your partner has signalled for a ruff, the card you return for that ruff will tell partner which suit will get him back into your hand for a second ruff!
Discard a high card to ask for the higher of the other two suits. Discard a low card to ask for the lower of the other two suits.	Playing a high card to ask for the higher of the other two suits, or by playing a low card, to ask for the lower of the other two suits.	Return a high card for the ruff, to ask for the higher of the other two suits, or return a low card, to tell partner that your next entry is the lower of the other two suits.

The switch

If, during the play to a NT contract, partner switches to a different suit to the one he led originally, his *lead of a high card in the new suit would deny an honour card* or any interest in that suit.

He obviously wants to get you on lead to, **return his original suit.**

The lead of a *low card in the new suit would promise an honour card*, and would be telling you to return this **new suit** if you get in!

Not as complicated as you might think. Its the same as the information you give on any opening lead, and as you know, sometimes your first lead is not the best one.

MCKENNEY SUIT PREFERENCE SIGNALS 1.

Suit preference while following suit.

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

4♠ by south. Lead ♦K*

East follows with ♦3, (a count signal)
Declarer carelessly plays the 2 ?!!!

Thank you declarer. West now knows that east has three diamonds.

On the ♦A, east now plays the ♦9 (a high card) asking for the higher of the other two suits, hearts.

The heart switch is won with the ace, and the diamond ruff sets the contract.

***By agreement with partner, playing the ♦K first, and following with the ♦A, shows specifically a doubleton ace, king!**

Suit preference when discarding

	♠ K J 2		
	♥ 9 6 5 3		
	♦ K J 10		
	♣ K J 10		
♠ 10 8 5 4 3		4♥ by	♠ Q 9 7 6
♥ <u>A</u> K		south.	♥ 10
♦ 9 7 3			♦ A Q 5 4
♣ 4 3 2			♣ 9 8 7 6
	♠ A		
	♥ Q J 8 7 4 2		
	♦ 8 6 2		
	♣ A Q 5		

4♥ by south. Lead ♥A, then ♥K

On the ♥K east can discard a small club OR a high spade to tell partner to switch to diamonds.

Obviously the ♠9 would be the clearer signal because the ♣6 is not a particularly low card.

(Sixes and sevens tend to be neutral showing no preference).

♣6 is your lowest club but if west is a lazy thinker he may take the 6 to be neutral, and make the wrong guess.

MCKENNEY SUIT PREFERENCE SIGNALS 2.

Suit preference . The card you return.

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



4♠ by south. Lead ♥2

The lead must be a singleton! (Why?)

East wins with ♥A and returns the ♥9 (an unnecessarily high card) for west to ruff.

The **high** return tells partner to play back diamonds, the **higher** of the other two suits (excluding trumps).

The diamond is returned and east can now give his partner a second ruff.

If the aces were switched, east would return the ♥3 to ask for a club return.

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

Suit preference . A singleton in dummy.

S	W	N	E
1♠	2♥	3♠	p
4♠	p	p	p

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

4♠ by south. Lead ♥A

When dummy goes down it is obvious that a continuation would be futile.

Therefore count or attitude signals would have no relevance.

East must give partner a suit preference signal with the ♥2.

This low card asks for the lower of the other two suits - clubs.

Switch the ♣A and ♦A and now east will play the ♥9 to signal for a diamond.

TOUCHING HIGH CARDS

As defender in 3rd position you should always try to win a trick with the lower or lowest of touching cards. e.g. Holding KQ75, try to win with the queen. With J10953 try to win with the 9.

Defending against 3NT west leads ♠4.
 East wins with ♠K and returns ♠3.
 Declarer wins with ♠A and cashes ♣A
 Then he finesses ♣J which loses to west's ♣Q

West now considers what to do next.

*"Because east played ♠K he cannot hold ♠Q.
 Therefore south must have it! I'll switch to diamonds."!?!?"*

East explodes, but his play of the ♠K was absolutely wrong and the mis-defence was entirely his fault.

East of course should have won trick 1 with ♠J!

	♠ A2	
	♥ A32	
	♦ KJ2	
	♣ A6542	You
♠ 10654		♠ KQJ83
♥ J107	3NT	♥ K98
♦ 764	by	♦ 953
♣ Q97	south	♣ 108
	♠ 97	
	♥ Q654	
	♦ AQ108	
	♣ KJ3	

You are west and lead ♠2 (4th highest) against 3NT.
 Dummy goes down with ♠1054 and partner plays ♠8

	♠ 1054	
♠ Q632	♠ 8	
	♠ A	

Now you can tell exactly who has got what!

Who has the ♠7 Declarer has ♠7 because partner would have played it, instead of ♠8

Who has the ♠9 Partner has ♠9. Otherwise declarer would not have played ♠A

Who has the ♠J Partner has ♠J for the same reason

Who has the ♠K Declarer, because partner *would* have played it.

	♠1054	
♠Q632	♠J98	
	♠AK7	

♠ QJ6		On this hand west makes a mud lead of ♠7.
♠ 974	♠ AK105	Declarer plays ♠Q and east plays ♠K.
♠ 832		When declarer doesn't win the trick with the ♠A --- west knows that partner must have the ♠A as well!

It IS obvious, but you need to train yourself to apply this simple principle.

Remember though, that as declarer, you are trying to hide your hand.
 Win tricks with the HIGHER or HIGHEST of touching cards.

WHICH CARD TO PLAY

When partner leads a suit.

<p>♠ 65 ♥ 2 ♦ J7643 ♣ J7542</p>	<p>2♠ by South</p>	<p>♠ Q842 ♥ QJ107 ♦ Q98 ♣ K9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You</p> <p>♠ A7 ♥ A86543 ♦ AK ♣ 1063</p> <p>♠ KJ1093 ♥ K9 ♦ 1052 ♣ AQ8</p>
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Defending against south's 2♠ contract west (partner) leads ♥2

How does east know that it is a singleton*?

East wins with the ♥A. 1 trick
 East cashes ♦K & ♦A (Creating a void) 3 tricks
 East then returns ♥8** (Remember McKenney?)
 West ruffs. 4 tricks
 West returns a diamond. East ruffs! 5 tricks
 East cashes ♠A to set the contract 6 tricks

* 6 in hand, 4 in dummy, 3 missing! ♥2 cannot be doubleton!

** Asking for the higher of the other two suits.

or

By agreement, leading king then ace shows a doubleton.

When declarer/dummy leads a suit.

In 2nd position you would normally play low, but not always!

<p>♠ A7 ♥ Q10653 ♦ A63 ♣ K64</p>	<p>2♠ by South</p>	<p>♠ KJ1093 ♥ K9 ♦ 1052 ♣ AQ8</p>
--	------------------------	---

Declarer, south leads :

A low spade. Play ♠7 Partner may have the ♠Q doubleton.

A low heart. Play ♥3

A low diamond Play ♦3

A low club Play ♣4

♣J Play ♣K
 (cover his honour. If partner has ♣10xx, it will make a trick!)

Playing 4th in hand.

<p>♠ 82 ♥ K9 ♦ 652 ♣ QJ1032</p>	<p>3NT by South</p>	<p>♠ 93 ♥ A1086 ♦ 1074 ♣ A76</p>
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In 4th position you would normally try to win the trick, but not always!

In 3NT declarer, south, leads the ♣K.

Do not win this trick.

Watch partner's cards!

If partner plays hi-lo, showing two, declarer has three.

Declarer cannot get to dummy if you hold off for *two* rounds.

Win the third round and switch to a safe spade.


When declarer tries the hearts, win ♥A and return spades or, ♥10.

If you trust partner and he plays the ♣4 (from ♣854) you can win the second round because declarer only has two clubs! (♣K9)

PLAYING IN 2ND POSITION

When an honour card is led, there is a slight difference between playing after the closed hand (declarer) and playing after the open hand (dummy).

If declarer leads an honour card from the closed hand, you do not know whether she has the touching lower card. e.g. Declarer leads the queen towards A86. You should generally cover this card.

You A86
K 9 5 


Q??? It may be: Q, Q7, Q107, or QJ7!

If declarer leads an honour card from dummy, you can obviously see whether it is; the top of a sequence e.g. QJ10, or top of touching honours e.g. QJ6, or unprotected e.g. Q73


Do not cover honours which are part of a sequence.

Do not cover touching honour cards, unless your honour is doubleton.


Cover unprotected honour cards

Q J 8 7
 K 6 3 2
?

If dummy plays the queen, **do not cover**.

J 8 7
 K 6 3
?

If the unprotected jack is then led, **cover with the king!**


Q J 7 2
10 8 4  K 5
A 9 6 3


When holding only two cards -


If you duck the queen, declarer can lead a low card from north and you will be forced to play the king on the second round.


As you can see this will give declarer all four tricks. **Cover with the king!**

Don't cover these leads from dummy

Dummy J 6		Declarer can never catch your king unless you cover. With only two cards he can only finesse twice!
8 5  K 4 3 2		
A Q 10 9 7		

Dummy J 7 4 2		If, during the bidding, declarer has revealed a five card suit and he plays the jack towards it.
K  Q 8 3		
A 10 9 6 5		

Dummy Q J 10 7		Here your king is well protected with three small cards. Do not cover, if declarer leads the queen from table. Do not cover if he continues with the jack.
9 8 6  K 5 3 2		
A 7		

Dummy A J 9 2		On the bidding, south is known to have five cards. It is clear that he is looking for the queen. He has a two way finesse and he is tempting you. Don't help him by fumbling/hesitating etc.
7  Q 5 3		
K 10 8 6 4		

Are you prepared?

Finally, try to prepare yourself for what declarer is going to do. He is *entitled* to take inferences from any uncertainty or hesitation by you, and use it to his advantage. You are not entitled to give the impression that you hold certain cards when you do not hold them. That would be cheating!

PLAYING THE '9' 3RD IN HAND

Against 3NT, partner leads a diamond. Dummy has an honour which you can beat. Dummy plays low. The general rule is that you play the *2nd highest card if it is a 9 or better*.

West leads ♦7. Dummy plays ♦2. We start with an exception that proves the rule. Playing the king in this layout will set a 3NT contract. Playing the 9 will give declarer a trick in the suit.

♦ J52
♦ AQ876 ♠ K93
♦ 103

♦9 ☒ loses a trick.
♦K ☑ sets 3NT.
(Against a *suit contract* partner will not lead away from an ace).

On this layout playing the 9 saves a trick. The 9 forces the ace and your king will capture the jack.

♦ J52
♦ Q10876 ♠ K93
♦ A3

♦9 ☑ saves a trick.
♦K ☒ loses a trick.

Here declarer is always entitled to one trick if your side open the suit. Declarer cannot make a trick if he opens the suit.

♦ J52
♦ A10876 ♠ Q93
♦ K3

♦9 ☑ saves a trick.
♦Q ☒ loses a trick.

West leads ♦6. Dummy plays ♦4. On these three examples, playing the 9 gains on two layouts and doesn't lose on the 3rd.

♦ Q84
♦ AJ765 ♠ K93
♦ 102

♦9 = Makes no difference.
♦K = Makes no difference.

If declarer has two honours, he is likely to make one trick, BUT playing the 9 will stop him from making two.

♦ Q82
♦ J10765 ♠ A93
♦ K4

♦9 ☑ saves a trick.
♦A ☒ loses a trick.

If declarer has only one honour, playing the 9 can often stop declarer from making any tricks in the suit.

♦ Q82
♦ AJ1065 ♠ K93
♦ 73

♦9 ☑ saves a trick.
♦K ☒ loses a trick.

EXCEPTIONS

Please note that when *no honour cards appear in dummy*, east must play the highest card and return the 9.

♦ 72
♦ AJ1065 ♠ K93
♦ Q84

♦9 ☒ is insane!
♦K ☑ saves a trick.

Against a NT contract, with *only two cards in dummy*, play the king. Against a *suit contract* partner is unlikely to lead away from an ace.

♦ Q5
♦ AJ876 ♠ K93
♦ 1042

♦9 ☒ loses a trick in NTs.
♦K ☑ saves a trick.

When your *2nd highest card is lower than a 9* you are expected to play your highest card.

♦ J74
♦ Q1063 ♠ A82
♦ K95

♦8 ☒ loses a trick.
♦A ☑ saves a trick.

NOTE All of west's leads are from two honours.

Think twice before leading from fourth highest from four to a POOR SINGLETON HONOUR!

PLAYING 3RD IN HAND

THINK TWICE BEFORE LEADING FROM FOUR TO A POOR HONOUR!

♦ J74
 ♦ Q863 □ ♦ A92
 ♦ K105

If west leads ♦3 and dummy plays low, east may play the 9. South wins with ♦10 and will win a 2nd trick with ♦K. As you can see on this layout, if east plays ♦A and returns ♦9, declarer will win only one trick - but should he??

Normally if partner has led a low card, you will play high, trying to win the trick, but ---

♦5 led ♦942 ♦A73
 □

In this 1st example you must play the ace & return the 7
 The 7 is now from two cards (7-3) Return as a doubleton.

♦5 led ♦942 ♦AQ3
 □

In this 2nd example you must play the ace & return the queen
 which is now from two cards (Q-3) Return as a doubleton.

♦5 led ♦942 ♦KQ3
 □

Here you must play the queen.
 If it holds, return the king. (Unblocking)

♦5 led ♦A76 ♦K94
 □

If declarer calls for the 6 you will of course win with the king and return the 9.

♦5 led ♦K42 ♦AQ7
 □

After winning the queen, cash the ace and return the 7 to clear the suit.
 (A switch may be best, so consider the rest of the hand!)

♦5 led ♦K42 ♦AJ72
 □

When declarer plays low play the jack. If declarer has the queen, he was always entitle to one trick! Playing the ace will give him two tricks! If partner has the queen and an entry, declarer won't make a diamond trick. Your ace is kept to guard the king in dummy.

♦5 led ♦K42 ♦A83
 □

Declarer plays the 2. Because your 2nd highest card is lower than a 9, you will have to play your ace! Return the 8!

♦5 led ♦Q4 ♦K63
 □

With only two cards in dummy, defending NTs, you should rise with the king in case partner has the ace. (Against a suit contract, partner would not lead away from an ace!)

When no high card appears in dummy 3rd in hand will nearly always play to win the trick. If an honour appears in dummy 3rd in hand will try to maintain a guard of this honour by playing their 2nd best card if it is a 9 or higher. If they cannot guard the honour, they must play their highest card, (assuming that they don't have touching honours).

HOLD UP PLAY BY DEFENDER

♠6 LEAD West's fourth highest lead works well.

Declarer tries the ♠Q which east captures with the king, and the ♠5 is returned.

Declarer comes to hand with the ♥A and leads ♦9
West MUST play ♦8 to give east a count and east must decline this trick knowing that south started with THREE diamonds.

If east takes the trick, declarer will make nine tricks and score 600.

If east ducks *twice*, declarer can only make seven tricks, because he cannot get to the established diamond tricks. +200 to the good guys!

3NT by south on all three hands.

♠ A Q		
♥ 5 4		
♦ K Q J 10 6		
♣ J 8 4 3		
♠ J 9 8 <u>6</u> 4		♠ K 5
♥ Q 10 7	3NT	♥ 9 6 3 2
♦ 8 2		♦ A 5 4
♣ 7 6 5		♣ Q 10 9 2
♠ 10 7 3 2		
♥ A K J 8		
♦ 9 7 3		
♣ A K		

♦10 LEAD. An excellent 'Top of Sequence' lead .

If declarer plays ♦K east must overtake with the ♦A, and return ♦J to unblock*.

*Get it out of the way of partner's ♦98

If declarer plays low east must overtake with the ♦J, play the ♦A and return the ♦3.

East has played well so far but must continue by ducking two rounds of clubs before taking ♣A

Now south cannot get to the established clubs.

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

♠K LEAD - Standard

Although declarer ducks one round of spades, (Rule of 7), west's excellent lead has managed to remove declarer's outside entry to dummy and all those lovely clubs.

All you have to do is resist the temptation to take your ♣A too early.

When you take ♣A, lead back a heart - up to the weakness in dummy.

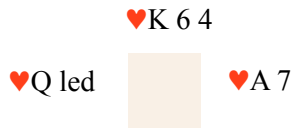
♠ A 10 8		
♥ 9 5		
♦ J 8		
♣ K Q J 8 6 5		
♠ <u>K</u> Q J 4 3		♠ 6 5
♥ J 10 8 4	3NT	♥ 7 3 2
♦ 10 4 7		♦ Q 9 5 3 2
♣ 4		♣ A 9 7
♠ 9 7 2		
♥ A K Q 6		
♦ A K 6		
♣ 10 3 2		

UNBLOCKING IN DEFENCE

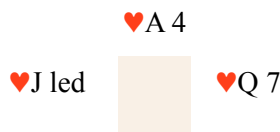
Unblocking

On these two examples against NT contracts, partner has bid hearts and led the suit.

On the first example you must play ♥A and return the ♥7, otherwise you will block partner's suit.



On the second example, when declarer plays the ace, you must still *unblock* by playing ♥Q



♠ K9 ♥ J109753 ♦ 87 ♣ KJ4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> 3NT by </div>	♠ 108762 ♥ Q4 ♦ A32 ♣ 832
♠ J54 ♥ A2 ♦ KJ4 ♣ A10965		♠ AQ3 ♥ K86 ♦ Q10965 ♣ Q7

West leads ♥J. Declarer surprisingly plays ♥A. If east plays low, declarer will tackle diamonds immediately and then, when east takes the ♦A, declarer can allow your ♥Q to hold.

Your spade switch does not give west enough time to knock out the ♥K and enjoy his three heart tricks!

West's ♥J lead would have paid off handsomely if you had unblocked the ♥Q, and returned a low heart when in with the ♦A.

West still has the ♠A entry.

NOTE: Declarer *should* have ducked at trick 1, (rule of 7) but nobody is perfect!

Unblock even though you are winning!

	♠ K Q 4 2 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ A J 6 ♣ 9 7 6	
Partner leads ♣K	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> 3NT </div>	♠ 9 8 6 3 ♥ J 6 ♦ 9 8 7 2 ♣ A 3 2
	Declarer <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px 10px; display: inline-block;"> ? </div>	

West leads ♣K. It looks natural to play low. There would be two possible continuations.

1. ♣Q. This would be wrong (see page 5.)
2. Partner will trust you and switch.

On the lead of ♣K, unblock *immediately*. Win with ♣A and return ♣3.

Partner has ♣KQJx or at worse ♣KQ10x

	Dummy ♠ KQ42 ♥ 653 ♦ AJ6 ♣ 76	
Partner ♣ J	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> 3NT by </div>	♠ 9863 ♥ J6 ♦ 9872 ♣ A32
	Declarer <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px 10px; display: inline-block;"> ♣Q84 or KQ8 </div>	

When partner leads the jack, the one card you know s/he doesn't have, is the queen.

Therefore declarer has it.

You must overtake your partner's jack with the ace and return the ♣3.

You hope that partner has led from an internal sequence ♣KJ1095.

If not you have not given anything away by this play because partner will have ♣J10974

RULES AND ETHICS 1.

You will have gathered by now that bridge is complicated. Well, so are the rules. Here are two of the most common violations and at the bridge table.

Opening lead out of turn

From lesson one, I have asked you to select your lead and hold it face down on the table until partner has asked questions about the bidding or stated "No questions partner."

Opening leads out of turn remain one of the most common irregularities.

When it happens, declarer has five options:

Declarer can accept the lead out of turn, and then either;

1. Place his hand on the table and allow partner to play the contract from the dummy hand.
2. Ask for dummy to be faced before playing to the trick from his own hand. or

Declarer can insist on the lead being made from the correct hand, and require one of the following:

3. S/he can **insist on** a lead of the suit which was led out of turn.
4. S/he can **prohibit** a lead of the suit which was led out of turn.
If either option 3. or 4. is taken, the *wrong* lead out of turn may be picked up.
5. Declarer may allow the opening leader to lead whatever s/he likes.
If this option is selected the wrongly led card must remain on the table as a penalty card which must be played at the first legal opportunity.

Revokes

In Bridge you **must** follow suit if you can.

A revoke is **not following** to a suit when you hold a card in that suit.

A revoke is only '**established**' when either member of the offending side plays a card to the next trick.

If discovered before that, the revoke must be corrected and the illegally played card (if it is a defenders card,) becomes a penalty card. - There is no further penalty. If a revoke is corrected *before* being '**established**', each member of the non-offending side may withdraw any card played to the trick without penalty.

Trick penalties for established revokes.

1. If the offending side won *neither* the revoke trick nor any subsequent trick, there is no penalty.
2. If the offending side won the revoke trick or a subsequent trick, one trick is transferred to the non-offending side.
3. If the player who revoked, won the revoke trick and his side won a subsequent trick, two tricks are transferred.
4. If the player who revoked, wins a trick with a card which could have been legally played to the revoke trick and his side wins another trick (after the revoke) then two tricks are transferred.

In addition to the technical improprieties, beginners are also prone to, unintentionally, break subtler ethical codes. It would, I suppose, be easy to cheat at Bridge, with scratches of the nose to indicate a club lead etc. but, even at the highest level, Bridge is **the most** ethical competitive game.

RULES AND ETHICS 2.

Hesitations during the auction.

During the auction, it may be that you have a difficult decision.

You ponder for some time and then pass.

This hesitation illegally tells your partner that you nearly had enough for a bid. Your partner must not take advantage of your hesitation, and make a bid because he knows that *you* have sufficient points to nearly bid. Your hesitation means that your partner should pass **unless they can totally justify their bid***! Try to make all bids in tempo.

* The director would judge whether 70% of bridge players would bid on without partners hesitation!

Hesitations during the play.

During the play, you must try not to hesitate before playing a card. If the hesitation is genuine, declarer is allowed to take advantage of your hesitation. If it turns out that your hesitation was unnecessary, there will be a suspicion that you have been unethical. Try to play all cards in tempo.

Questions during the auction.

Do not ask questions about the opponents bidding **unless** you have a serious intention of bidding. If you ask questions, and then *pass*, you are putting the same restraints on partner as hesitating.

If your left hand opponent becomes declarer, wait until partner has selected a lead, before asking questions, and you should ask for a review of the whole auction. Never draw attention to a particular suit in your questions. e.g. Sitting with ♣AQJ987 and asking "Was the 2♣ bid natural?"

The Director.

We have included some of the ethics and rules for your information, but whenever there is any kind of problem at the table you must not try to resolve it yourself. Every duplicate bridge event will be run by a director whose responsibility it is to apply the rules fairly. As soon as you or your opponents have left the table any issues regarding the boards played or alleged improprieties are history.

If you did not ask the director to assist, you have no outstanding complaint.

99% of Bridge players are friendly, sociable people enjoying a night out with like minded people, and the likelihood of you being upset is minimal. (We expect **you** to be similarly friendly.) If anyone passes a remark about your system or ethics and says I should really call the director, and then doesn't, I suggest that **you** call the director to seek clarification about your alleged infringement. You may be surprised to discover that you are right and your opponent is wrong! It will at least be instructive and clear the air!

The director should appear at the table saying "How can I help you?" He doesn't have a whistle like a referee, but s/he should be carrying the rule book, because it is very unlikely that he carries all the rules in his head.

A complete set of the rules are to be found in the EBU orange book which can be accessed from the Home Page of the NEBA web site at www.neba.co.uk