

## CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

### LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION AND OPENING LEADS

#### WHERE TO START WHEN THE BIDDING IS DONE

There are four chairs around a Bridge table. One is for the Declarer, the opposite one is for Declarer's partner (Dummy), and the other two are for the Defenders.

Guess what? By the Law of Averages we spend a quarter of our Bridge life in each of those four chairs. Which means we spend half of our Bridge life defending – that is, trying to prevent Declarers from making a contract, or preventing them from making overtricks.

It is most important to know how to interpret the bidding – what did each player bid, and what did they NOT bid? What did they repeat, and did they jump at any point. You must be aware that you can ask for the meaning of a bid when it is your turn, provided you have the intent and the means to make a bid yourself. If your hand is weak you can still ask – ask after the auction is over, when the whole auction can be explained, but BEFORE the opening lead is exposed.

When we start learning Bridge, defence is a mystery. To begin with, it's unusual to see a person spreading her cards on the table while the Declarer plays both hands. Understanding the role of Defender isn't easy but you're doing great so far. So let's take a look at our responsibilities:

BEING ON LEAD is a great responsibility, and we're about to look closely at it. It's a privilege, a pre-emptive strike, the chance to fire the first shot. Don't waste it. Think hard on the bidding and how it relates to your hand, and consider how to lead in the face of this auction.

Here we go then with the first lesson. Please ask questions any time you need further explanation.

There are three purposes of leading - to open the attack, to get a look at dummy and to give information to partner.

Leading should be different at No Trump and Suit contracts.

- In NT you want to try to develop and win tricks in your suits before declarer can make all his.
- In a suit contract you want to take your winners without them being trumped, and want to get rid of your short suits in case you can trump tricks in those suits yourself.

When you have to open the play, a lot will depend on the bidding and how much strength you have

- (a) in your own hand
- (b) in your hand and partner's, combined, and how that strength is divided

If your hand is strong or has great potential for taking tricks, you will want to develop that potential.

If your hand is very weak, you might try to find the length and strength in partner's hand and lead to that.



Notice here that we have two leads from top of sequence, but they work in very different ways. The first example shows a lead from safe sequence with no great hopes of setting up tricks.

The second one is intended to establish a Spade trick or two, depending on how the enemy's spades lie. That should provide at least one Spade trick to E/W, depending if they are played before South can discard one on a Club.

**EXAMPLE 3.**

Nothing should stop North/South from bidding a slam in Spades here. East could open the bidding but with no help from West, would not bid again.

Board: 18	♠ 1043	
Dealer: E	♥ Q762	
Vul.: NS	♦ A764	
♠ 5	♣ K5	♠ J87
♥ 10853		♥ AKJ94
♦ 1052		♦ Q98
♣ 108632		♣ 94
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♠ AKQ962	9
N 5 7 1 5 3	♥	0 HCP 11
S 2 7 1 4 3	♦ KJ3	20
E	♣ AQJ7	
W		

What should West lead to a 6 Spade contract?  
 May I suggest a Heart. It's a clear cut lead if East does bid, and if not, West should assume some Heart strength in partner's hand and lead the 8.  
 The play of the hand is just a formality – the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Clubs takes care of North's two small Diamonds. The Heart lead here is an attacking lead which doesn't work because of South's void in Hearts.

By now you should be thinking about two questions: What should I lead, and what should I NOT lead? The second question should remove doubt and answer the first one, if you think about it.

Happy Bridging, everyone!!  
 Sue Levy