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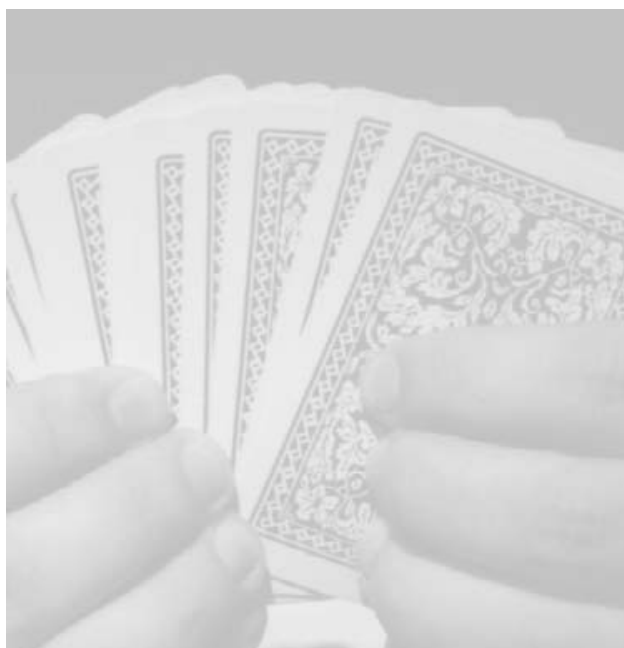
EDDIE KANTAR TEACHES
Modern Bridge Defense

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Modern Bridge Defense



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I know that it is customary for the author to thank the people who have helped with the book you are about to read. I have two people I wish to thank: Ray Lee, the publisher, whose idea and patience (with me) made this book possible, and Yvonne Snyder, who read every word and told me in no uncertain terms when I wrote something that wasn't clear. Since Yvonne plays at the level at which this book is written, I made every change she suggested. If this book turns out to be a winner, it's because of these two people.

Eddie Kantar

Introduction

Whoever said that defense was the hardest part of the game was right on. More tricks are dropped on defense than on bidding and play combined! You can muddle through the bidding if you don't go too berserk, and playing the hand has to be easier than defending because you can see your partner's hand. Not so on defense.

When defending a hand, you are dealing with a partner: a partner whose leads, signals and discards you must trust implicitly. A tall order. Nevertheless, most bridge books are devoted to the bidding and the play of the hand as opposed to defensive techniques. And if the truth be known, zillions of hands are made that should be defeated with normal defense. What's the problem?

The main problem is that most defenders don't know how to organize their thinking. They haven't learned to project the necessary cards in partner's hand that are vital to defeating the contract. Many defenders don't signal or discard properly, and let's not overlook those who have taken a blood oath never to overtake partner's trick, never to unblock for partner, and to cover every honor they see with another honor, regardless.

It goes without saying that you are not guilty of any of these misdeeds, but perhaps some of your partners are. Therefore, think of this book as being aimed at helping your partners defend better! And if you pick up any pointers on the way, so much the better. One thing is certain: after reading this book you will be a much better defender than you are now. That's a promise.

Eddie Kantar

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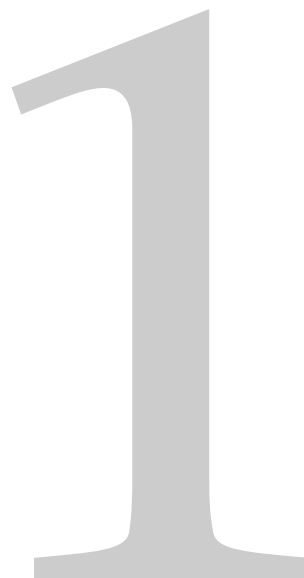
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Leading Against Notrump

Lead, and I will follow

TENNYSON



WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO LEARN IN THIS CHAPTER:

- How to decide which suit to lead against a notrump contract
- How to get clues from the auction and from your own hand
- How to pick the right card to lead once you've chosen the suit

The bidding is over, the opponents have landed in notrump and it's your lead. What should you be thinking about — and which suit and which card in that suit should you lead? And don't tell me you are going to lead fourth highest from your longest and strongest suit no matter how the bidding has gone. What if the opponents have bid your longest suit? What if your longest suit is so scrawny that you can hardly bear to look at it? And what if your partner has bid? Maybe you should lead partner's suit instead of your own... especially if you value your life.

In this chapter you are given some tips on deciding which suit to lead. Then, once the suit is selected, which card to lead. After all, leading the proper card is almost as important as leading the right suit. Your leads are supposed to tell partner what you have in the suit so partner can decide whether that suit is worth pursuing.

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Most notrump contracts basically evolve into a race: a race to set up and cash tricks. The defense is trying to set up enough tricks to defeat the contract, while the declarer is racing to set up enough tricks to make the contract. Who will win? The declarer usually has the preponderance of high card strength, but that is balanced by the head start the defenders have: the opening lead.

It is safe to say that if you could peek at your partner's hand before you made your opening lead, you would be a World Champion ten times over even if you are no more than an average player. That's how important the opening lead is.

Picking the right suit to lead

Here are some of the factors to consider before making your opening lead. If you can just pick the right suit, you will be off to a flying start.

Partner has bid

Whenever partner bids a suit, you have to give some consideration to leading that suit, particularly an overcalled suit. Overcalled suits tend to be reasonably strong five or six card suits. Indeed, many overcalls are made with one thought in mind: to direct the opening lead.

West (You)	North	East	South	You hold:
	1♣	1♠	1NT	♠ Q 5
pass	2NT	pass	3NT	♥ Q J 5
all pass				♦ 10 7 4 3 2
				♣ 10 8 7

It would be insulting not to put a spade on the track.

Partner has opened in third seat

Third seat openings with a strong suit can be a trifle light in high-card points. They might even be made with a strong four-card major playing five-card majors! ♠AKJ10 ♥K4 ♦9432 ♣987 is a possible (some would say mandatory) third seat 1♠ opening bid. Why? First, you can pass any response partner makes so you don't have to worry about getting too high. Second, if the opponents play the

hand, you know you want a spade lead. Therefore, if your partner opens third hand and the opponents fly into game, there is a good chance that partner has opened light to direct your lead. Don't cross partner's intentions unless you have a strong suit of your own.

Partner could have doubled an artificial bid

Before landing in a notrump contract, your opponents may go through a Stayman, Jacoby Transfer or 'fourth suit' sequence. These all entail artificial bids and an experienced partner, like yourself, will be on the alert to double any of these bids with suitable high card length and strength. If partner is the one that can double and doesn't, that's a clue too.

A complete discussion of lead-directing doubles can be found in the follow-up book to this one, *Eddie Kantar Teaches Advanced Bridge Defense*.

West (You)	North	East	South	
			1NT	You hold:
pass	2♣	pass	3♥ ¹	♠ Q 8 4 3 2
pass	3NT	all pass		♥ K 8 4 3
				♦ 8 2
				♣ 7 5

1) Five card suit

South has five hearts and North figures to have four spades so a major suit lead does not look appetizing. What about a minor? Is it a guess? Not entirely. Partner did have a chance to double 2♣ and didn't, so your best shot is a diamond.

You have a weak five-card suit and a strong four-card suit

No law on the books states you must lead from your longest suit. Common sense may dictate otherwise.

West (You)	North	East	South	
			1♣	You hold:
pass	1♦	pass	1NT	♠ 10 7 4 3 2
pass	2NT	pass	3NT	♥ K Q J 9
all pass				♦ 9 4
				♣ Q 6

Surely it must be right to lead a heart.

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Eddie Kantar's various bridge books have sold hundreds of thousands of copies in ten languages, not least because of his unique style and the humor that he introduces into the learning process. *Modern Bridge Defense* is intended to cover the basic concepts of bridge defense, and will undoubtedly be a standard reference work and teaching tool for many years to come. The topics covered here (which include leads, signaling, second- and third-hand play, and discarding) are handled so thoroughly that even more advanced players will benefit from studying this book.

Designed to be used by students learning on their own or by bridge teachers, this book contains a host of features that help the reader to grasp the material: clearly laid-out concepts, margin notes, practice hands, chapter-end quizzes, key-point summaries at regular intervals, and an index. This book covers less complex topics than its companion, *Eddie Kantar teaches Advanced Bridge Defense*.

Praise for *Eddie Kantar teaches Modern Bridge Defense* and *Eddie Kantar teaches Advanced Bridge Defense*:

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Eddie Kantar is a professional bridge player, writer, and teacher, and has been inducted into the Bridge Hall of Fame. He has been World Champion twice, and has won thirteen North American Championship titles. Among his many books are *Defensive Bridge Play Complete*, *Introduction to Defender's Play*, *Bridge for Dummies* and *Roman Key Card Blackwood*. He writes regularly for numerous bridge magazines around the world, and is a frequent host on bridge cruises. He lives in Santa Monica, CA.



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