



THE

POCKET

GUIDE TO

DEFENSIVE PLAY

AT BRIDGE

BARBARA SEAGRAM • DAVID BIRD

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CONTENTS

1. LEADS, SIGNALS AND DISCARDS	4	13. CLUES FROM THE BIDDING	33
2. THIRD-HAND PLAY	7	14. THE RULE OF ELEVEN	35
3. OPENING LEADS AGAINST NOTRUMP	9	15. COUNT SIGNALS ON A LEAD BY DECLARER	37
4. SECOND-HAND PLAY	11	16. CHOOSING A HELPFUL DISCARD	40
5. OPENING LEADS AGAINST A SUIT CONTRACT	13	17. COUNTING DECLARER'S TRICKS	42
6. ACTIVE OR PASSIVE DEFENSE?	16	18. KEEPING THE RIGHT CARDS	45
7. LEAD THE RIGHT CARD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PLAY	18	19. UNBLOCKING HONORS	48
8. SHOULD YOU COVER AN HONOR LEAD?	20	20. DESTROYING DECLARER'S COMMUNICATIONS	51
9. SCORING RUFFS ON DEFENSE	23	21. PROMOTING TRUMP TRICKS	54
10. PRESERVING DEFENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS	26	22. PLAYING A FORCING DEFENSE	57
11. ATTITUDE SIGNALS ON PARTNER'S LEAD	29	23. CASHING YOUR TRICKS	59
12. COUNTING TRICKS FOR THE DEFENSE	31	24. DEFENDING DECEPTIVELY	61
		25. PUTTING DECLARER TO A GUESS	63

I. LEADS, SIGNALS AND DISCARDS

WHICH CARD SHOULD I LEAD?

Which card should you lead from various holdings against notrump? (Later in this book we will discuss how you choose which suit to lead, and also whether you should make an aggressive or passive lead.)

- From a **perfect sequence** of three or more honors lead the top card (the ace from AKQ, the king from KQJ).
- From a **broken sequence** again lead the top card (the ace from AKJ, the queen from QJ9).
- From an **interior sequence** lead the top of the touching honors (the jack from KJ10, the 10 from K109).
- From four or more cards including at least one honor, but not a sequence of three, lead the fourth-best card (the two from KQ72, the four from Q7643).
- From three cards including one honor or two non-touching honors, lead the bottom card (the five from Q85, the three from KJ3).
- From three cards including touching honors, lead the top honor (the king from KQ4).
- Lead the top card from a doubleton.
- From three spot-cards lead the top card (the 8 from 865); from four spot-cards lead the second-best card (the 7 from 9743).

When leading against a suit contract, you make the same choice of card, with two exceptions:

- Do not underlead an ace against a suit contract.
- Lead the higher of touching honors against a suit contract, rather than fourth-best (the king from KQ72).

ATTITUDE SIGNALS ON PARTNER'S LEADS

When partner leads a low card to a suit, you will often have to play a high card in an attempt to win the trick or force declarer to win with a higher card. When instead partner leads an honor, you will usually have a choice of spot cards to play and a chance to **signal**.

You should give an **attitude signal** on partner's leads. In other words, you play a high card to show that you like the lead and

would welcome a continuation. A low card passes the opposite message.

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

When partner leads the ♠A, you play the ♠9 to encourage him to continue the suit.

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

Here you would discourage with the ♠2 and partner would switch to a different suit.

COUNT SIGNALS ON DECLARER'S LEADS

When declarer plays a suit, there would be little point in giving an attitude signal. Instead, you should **show your count**. You play a high spot card with an even number

of cards in the suit, a low spot card with an odd number.

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

Declarer leads the ♣8 and West signals his (odd) count with the ♣2. East will therefore hold up the ♣A for one round, to disrupt declarer's communications.

Suppose instead that this was the lie of the suit:

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

West would signal an even number of cards with the ♣9. East would then hold up the ♣A until the third round.

ATTITUDE DISCARDS

When you cannot follow suit, you have a chance to pass a message to partner with your choice of discard. Suppose you are discarding from ♥KQ982 and want to tell partner that you hold strong hearts and would welcome a switch to that suit. You might discard the ♥9 (high to encourage). If instead you were discarding from ♥108752, you would throw the ♥2 to discourage a switch to that suit.

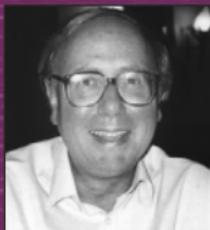
Sometimes you cannot afford to waste a high card in the suit where you have your strength. You might hold ♦KJ102, for example, and wish to retain all four cards. In that case you would discard a low card in a suit that you did not want, implying that your strength is elsewhere. Often partner will have a choice of only two suits to play, and will conclude that your strength is in diamonds.

YOU CAN BE A BETTER DEFENDER!

Using the same format as *The Pocket Guide to Bridge*, this book provides a handy pocket summary of about two dozen basic concepts in defensive cardplay. In a concise but readable manner, it summarizes most of the material presented in *25 Ways to be a Better Defender* by the same author team.



BARBARA SEAGRAM (Toronto, Canada) is one of North America's leading bridge teachers. Her *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know* (with Marc Smith) is the bestselling bridge book of the last fifty years.



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