

## Lesson 6

### Strategies for Declaring and Defending

(Student pages)

#### Declarer - Strategies to Take More Tricks

##### **Tip #1: Get Rid of the Opponents' Trumps**

The reason you and partner decided to name a suit as trumps was so that you, not your opponents, would benefit. If you leave trumps in your opponents' hands, they might be able to trump (also called "ruff") at some point when you're trying to take tricks in other suits.

Here's one way to think about it. Count how many trumps you and your partner have before you play to the first trick. If you have 8, then the opponents have \_\_\_\_\_. If you have 9, then the opponents have \_\_\_\_\_. Once you begin leading trumps, you will draw 1 or 2 of the opponents' trumps at a time. Keep track until you have pulled them all, but don't go beyond that, or else you won't have any trumps of your own or in dummy to use as "magic cards" later.

##### **Tip #2: Use Your Trumps to Ruff Losers in the Side Suits**

Look especially for singletons and doubletons in dummy or your own hand. Once the hand that started with a short suit has no more cards in that suit, you may trump. Sometimes you want to trump before you draw the opponents' trumps; sometimes you may need to pull their trumps first. Each case requires planning.

#### Plan your play as declarer

<u>Dummy</u>	<u>You (Declarer)</u>
♠AQJ3	♠K962
♥KQ942	♥A87
♦Q104	♦872
♣10	♣864

- A. Count Quick Tricks in Each Suit
- B. Count Quick Losers in Each Suit
- C. Count Tricks that can be developed with HCP
- D. Count Tricks that can be made by ruffing
- E. Assuming a Club is led, winning the first trick, and a Club is led to the second trick, how do you proceed?



As Defenders:

**Tip #1: Lead the Top of Touching (Consecutive) Honors**

As defenders, you may have noticed that leading a King without the Queen can be very costly. If either of your opponents has the Ace, the King will lose every time you lead it. However, if you have the King AND the Queen of a suit, then leading the King isn't so costly. No matter which opponent has the Ace, your Queen is poised for superiority the next time that suit is led. When you lead the King, you deny having the Ace.

But here's what's even better: **your partner will know you have the Queen, too!** If you agree that leading a King guarantees the Queen, then your partner, who may win a trick later in another suit, will know to come back to your suit so you can take your Queen. So this tip can earn your side precious tricks. First, you drive out the Ace to set up your Queen, and your partner knows to return to this suit if he or she should win a trick before you do. That's communication without saying a word!

**Congratulations!**



The same rule applies for when you hold KQ, KQJ, QJ, QJ10, J109, etc. If you have 3 cards in a row, you have what's called a sequence. But don't get "sequence happy." Every situation is different. If you're on opening lead or leading a new suit, sequences are usually considered "safe" leads. Don't lead a sequence after several tricks just because you have one; think about whether you have established tricks first.

**Tip #2: Follow Suit by Playing the Lower of Touching (Consecutive) Honors**

This tip is similar to tip #1, except it applies to when you are following to a suit rather than leading a suit. When following to a suit that is led, play the LOWER of touching honors. For example, as defender, when you are following suit and hold QJ10, play the 10 (if you were leading you would lead the Q, but following suit, play the 10). The 10 definitely denies having the 9, but it doesn't deny having the next higher card, namely the Jack. If partner sees you play the 10, and the declarer next plays the King to win the trick, it will sure look like you might have the Queen and Jack, and partner may persist with the suit if given a chance to lead again.

When defending, lead HIGH from...

AK	J10
AKJ	J109
KQ	J1062
KQJ	1098
KQ10	1097
QJ	10987
QJ10	many more
QJ86	



and follow LOW with...

AK	J10
AKJ	J109
KQ	J1062
KQJ	1098
KQ10	1097
QJ	10987
QJ10	many more
QJ86	

**Tip #3: Set up a trump trick before your trumps are taken**

If you have a **short side suit**, they could be used effectively to ruff one of declarer's winners. Fair is fair. Declarer's strategy is to trump your good cards with his trumps, so you can do the same.

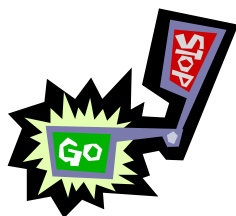
If you determine you want to promote your trumps and you are on lead, here are a couple of things you can do:

**Lead a singleton.** If your partner gets on lead later and returns this suit, you might still have trumps to ruff with. Your partner might be able to deduce that you are short in the suit by counting how many cards he and the dummy hold in the suit you lead.

**Lead the higher card from a doubleton,** but be cautious about leading the King or Queen if the other card is small unless you know partner is long in this suit. The second time the suit is led, you play the small card. If partner is paying close attention, he will notice that you led a high card first, then a low card: this is a common signal players use to communicate that they started with only 2 cards on the suit. If your side is lucky, your partner will get the lead later and play the suit a third time, allowing you to ruff if you still have trumps.

**Tip #4: Use agreements and signals to help your partner make more educated decisions.**

**Attitude signals:** When partner has led a suit, wouldn't it be great if you could convey to him that you like the suit that he led or that you would prefer that he switched? Well, you can't nod your head, and you can't scowl and make faces or say anything, so you have to let your cards do the talking for you. The most basic agreement is that a **low card discourages**, and a **high card encourages**. A "low card" is the smallest card that can be played in the suit. That's easy and clear. What's not so easy is how to decide what a "high card" is. It needs to be high enough that partner can ascertain that you probably have smaller cards, but it shouldn't be so high a card that it costs your side a trick.



**4<sup>th</sup> best:** Being on opening lead is not easy. If you have a trick, you might want to take it. If you have a sequence, that can be a good lead, too. Otherwise, you may consider leading your longest suit, no matter how good or bad it is. In this situation, many partnerships agree beforehand that they lead the **4<sup>th</sup> best** card from such suits. This is useful information for your partner and the declarer, and a little math goes a long way. Whenever you lead 4<sup>th</sup> best, the 3 other players will have a known number of cards higher in rank which is simple to compute: **11 minus the spot value on the card** (see additional exercises). Your partner can count the number of cards which are higher in the dummy and his own hand, subtract from the known number, and draw some conclusions about what cards the declarer has in the suit. Similarly, the declarer can do the same thing to gain information about RHO.

Multiple choice review:

1. If you and your partner agree to make 4th best leads when leading from a long suit, which card do you lead from K10873?
  - a. 10
  - b. 8
  - c. 7
  - d. 3
  
2. Partner leads a suit in which you hold KJ83. Which cards would you play to encourage and to discourage partner?
  - a. Jack to encourage; 3 to discourage
  - b. 8 to encourage; 3 to discourage
  - c. 3 to encourage; 8 to discourage
  - d. 3 to encourage; Jack to discourage
  
3. You lead the 3 from 1073, and dummy has J94. When declarer calls for the 9 from dummy, your partner plays the King, which wins the trick. Who is most likely to hold the Queen and Ace?
  - a. Partner probably has both Queen and Ace
  - b. Declarer probably has both Queen and Ace
  - c. Declarer probably has the Queen, partner the Ace
  - d. Declarer probably has the Ace, partner the Queen
  
4. What are the tricks the declarer can take in a suit before the opponents can win or ruff?
  - a. trumps
  - b. HCP cards
  - c. quick tricks
  - d. long suits
  
5. Partner has announced 5 HCP and makes an opening lead of ♣K. What else do you know about your partner's HCP cards?
  - a. he has the ♣Q and nothing else
  - b. he has some other Queen or 2 Jacks
  - c. he has another King
  - d. too little information to say



Which card would you lead? We'll discuss the answers in class.

	<u>No trump declared</u>	<u>Trump suit declared</u>
K872	_____	_____
QJ852	_____	_____
A754	_____	_____
AQ942	_____	_____
Q953	_____	_____
9753	_____	_____
97532	_____	_____
976	_____	_____



<b>Deal 1- North</b>	HCP	Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
North					
South					
-- NS Total					
East					
West					
-- EW Total					
Total for NS and EW					
Estimated number of tricks _____					
Actual tricks taken _____					

<b>Deal 2 - East</b>	HCP	Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
North					
South					
-- NS Total					
East					
West					
-- EW Total					
Total for NS and EW					
Estimated number of tricks _____					
Actual tricks taken _____					

<b>Deal 3 - South</b>	HCP	Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
North					
South					
-- NS Total					
East					
West					
-- EW Total					
Total for NS and EW					
Estimated number of tricks _____					
Actual tricks taken _____					

<b>Deal 4 - West</b>	HCP	Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
North					
South					
-- NS Total					
East					
West					
-- EW Total					
Total for NS and EW					
Estimated number of tricks _____					
Actual tricks taken _____					