

MORRINSVILLE BRIDGE CLUB - CARD PLAY 101

A series of elementary card play tuition sessions at Morrinsville

Defence: Active or Passive

"How To Adapt Your Defence Strategy To Suit The Situation"

Whether to take risks or play safe

Imagine: You are going out to bat in an important cricket match

Your side needs 20 runs to win the match. What is your approach?

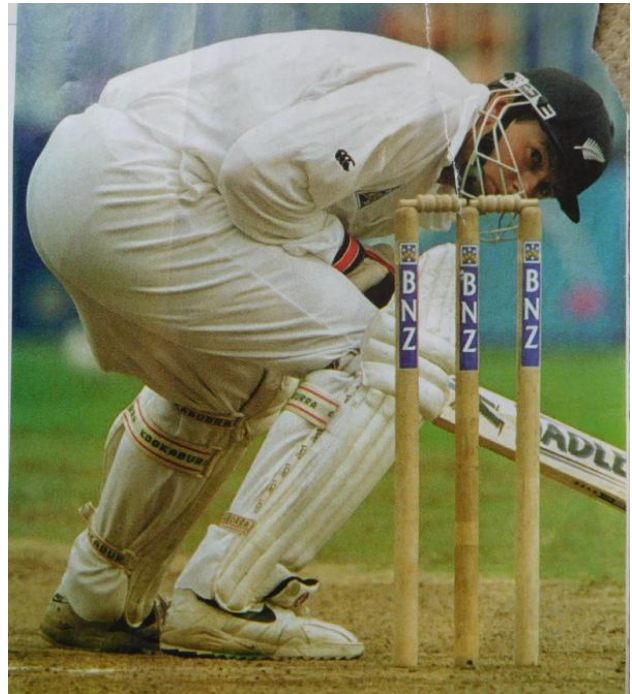
Do you try to hit every ball over the boundary? **TAKE RISKS**

or Do you block (or duck) the good balls and try to hit one run off every bad ball? **PLAY SAFE**

TAKE RISKS

OR

PLAY SAFE



(You need to know more about the state of the game before you can decide your approach)

Situation 1: There are *two overs* before the scheduled end of the match and your side has *seven wickets* in hand

Situation 2: There are *two hours* before the scheduled end of the match and your side has *one wicket* in hand

Contents:

Page 2: Notes to be handed out (and talked about) at the start of the session (red numbers refer to the board which demonstrates this point)

Pages 3-5 Travellers to go with the boards (a set of 9).

Place these on top of the board with the bottom folded up so only the bidding can be seen.

Play the hand then open up the travellers and discuss the comments there

Pages 6-8 Hand records with expanded comments to be handed out at the end

DEFENCE (basic): ACTIVE or PASSIVE

“Defensive Strategy” effectively just means:

“What suit should you lead?”

That choice calls for one of two approaches.

[1] **ACTIVE**

You need to set up tricks quickly

That means **take risks**; lead from unsupported honour(s) and hope partner can help. ③

If partner can't help you lose trick(s)

[2] **PASSIVE**

You need to avoid giving tricks away

That means **play safe** because the privilege of choosing what suit to lead comes with a downside. That is the side playing last on a trick (which must be the opponents) generally has an advantage.

For example:

	North: ♦ Q 7 5	
West: ♦ A 9 3		East ♦ K 10 2
	South: ♦ J 8 6	

If North or South leads first they get no tricks, but if East or West leads first North-South gets one trick.

So to **play safe** means lead a suit which doesn't give declarer any tricks *other than those which he can never be prevented from making*. ⑥.

You won't lose unnecessary trick(s) in **that** suit but might miss out on trick(s) elsewhere.

How to decide: [1] THE OPENING LEAD:

[1a] **Notrump contracts:**

Passive defence is best at the slam level but below that situations which call for passive defence are rare and *hard to anticipate*.

So “Active” strategy is best. Lead longest suit ② (but **always** lead partner's suit if he has bid one)

How to decide: [1] THE OPENING LEAD:

[1b] **Trump-suit contracts:**

The key is: ***Study the bidding***.

A long suit outside the trump suit indicates the need to set up tricks quickly. ⑤

So does confident bidding (like 1♠, 2♥, 3♠, 4♠)

Tentative bidding (like 1♥, 2♥, 3♥, 4♥) favours passive defence.

If in doubt prefer passive defence at low level and active at game or small slam level.

At Grand Slam level look for the safest lead. ①

How to decide: [2] SUBSEQUENT LEADS

The key is: ***Count declarer's tricks***.

You can get a surprisingly good indication of how many tricks declarer has by looking at what is in dummy and what you can ascertain about declarer's hand (points and distribution) from the bidding and earlier play.

If declarer has enough tricks for his contract you need to attack his likely weak suit. ③ ④ ⑧

That involves some risk but *it is a necessary risk*.

If declarer's weak suit is not as weak as expected you have lost nothing. In that case their contract would be unbeatable.

If declarer does not have enough tricks for his contract you should try to avoid leading any new suit as that might give him a vital extra trick.

Choose to lead a suit in which declarer already has **sure** tricks. ⑥

Or, if in doubt, stick to leading suit(s) which have already been led (by your side or declarer). ⑦ ⑨.

- a:** transfer to hearts
- b:** maximum with good hearts
- c:** 3 aces

On that bidding the trumps must be solid so lead a trump. Any other lead kills partner's honour card in that suit and gives declarer his 13th trick.

Board 2	Dealer E	Vul NS	
E	S	W	N
1NT	p	3NT	all pass

Although a club lead gives declarer an “extra” trick with his ♣Q that is the only lead which can beat 3NT.

Declarer needs to set up the diamonds to make nine tricks and that gives South three clubs tricks along with his two diamonds.

Board 3	Dealer S	Vul EW	
S	W	N	E
1NT	p	2♣	p
2♠	p	4♠	all pass

West leads ♦A and sees East will have 3-5 points. Dummy has 7 tricks and South two aces. One diamond ruff will be declarer's 10th trick.

So South will make 4♠ unless East has ♣A and EW can take 3 club tricks now, so West must lead a small club next.

<div style="font-size: 2em; margin-right: 10px;">3</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: top;"><div>♠ KQJ8</div><div>♥ KQJT2</div><div>♦ T</div><div>♣ 542</div></div>		Dir: S																								
		Vul: E-W																								
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"><div style="width: 45%;"><div>♠ T9</div><div>♥ 9643</div><div>♦ AKJ5</div><div>♣ K76</div></div><div style="width: 45%;"><div>♠ 543</div><div>♥ 8</div><div>♦ 98743</div><div>♣ AJT3</div></div></div>																										
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"><div style="width: 45%;"><div>12 ♠ A762</div><div>11 5 ♥ A75</div><div>12 ♦ Q62</div><div>♣ Q98</div></div><div style="width: 45%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><table style="width: 100%; font-family: monospace;"><tr><th></th><th>♠</th><th>♥</th><th>♦</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3 3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3 3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table></div></div>		♠	♥	♦	NT	N	-	-	3 3	-	S	-	-	3 3	-	E	3	4	-	-	W	3	4	-	-	
	♠	♥	♦	NT																						
N	-	-	3 3	-																						
S	-	-	3 3	-																						
E	3	4	-	-																						
W	3	4	-	-																						

Board 4 Dealer W Vul all

W	N	E	S
1♠	X	1NT	p
2♠	all pass		

Count declarer's tricks

North should start with three rounds of hearts. Declarer ruffs the third, draws trumps and leads ♣Q to North's ♣A. North can see declarer has nine tricks; three clubs and six spades. So North must lead ♦A and NS cash what diamonds they can right now.

4		♠ 43	Dir: W	
		♥ AK84	Vul: Both	
		♦ A93		
		♣ A962		
♠ AK9872		♠ QJ6		
♥ QT		♥ 753		
♦ 8642		♦ Q75		
♣ Q		♣ KJT3		
15		♠ T5		
		♥ J962		
11	9	♦ KJT		
	5	♣ 8754		
		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
		N 2 1 2 - 1		
		S 2 1 2 - 1		
		E - - - 1 -		
		W - - - 1 -		

Board 5 Dealer N Vul NS

N	E	S	W
2♦	p	3♣	p
4♣	p	6♣	all pass

Long suit in dummy means quick tricks required.

The bidding indicates dummy has long diamonds on which any major-suit losers will be discarded after the ♦A is taken. West should lead a spade and hope partner has ♠Q. Otherwise 6♣ will be unbeatable.

5		♠ 74 ♥ 82 ♦ KQJ973 ♣ QT5	Dir: N Vul: N-S	
♠ K8653 ♥ T9764 ♦ A2 ♣ 8		♠ QT92 ♥ QJ3 ♦ 8654 ♣ 74		
8		♠ AJ ♥ AK5 ♦ T ♣ AKJ9632		
7	5			
20				

Board 6 Dealer E Vul EW

E	S	W	N
1♠	p	3NT	all pass

Count declarer's tricks and points; make passive lead

North can work out partner doesn't have *any* points.

Therefore to lead a club or diamond at any time would give declarer an extra trick with ♦Q or ♣J.

North must make the passive lead of a spade after cashing the hearts. Sooner or later he will make his fifth trick with ♦K or ♣Q.

6	♠ 42	Dir: E	
	♥ AKQJ	Vul: E-W	
	♦ K84		
	♣ Q863		
♠ 753	♠ AKQJT		
♥ T93	♥ 8642		
♦ AQ52	♦ J7		
♣ AKT	♣ J9		
15	♠ 986		
13	♥ 75		
12	♦ T963		
0	♣ 7542		
		♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
		N	- - - - -
		S	- - - - -
		E	- 2 2 3 3
		W	- 2 3 3 3

Board 7 Dealer S Vul all

S	W	N	E
---	---	---	---

1♠ X 1NT p

2♠ all pass

Count declarer's tricks

West should start with three rounds of hearts. Declarer ruffs the third, draws trumps and leads ♣Q to North's ♣A. West sees declarer has just 7 tricks, one club and 6 spades. A passive club lead after ♣A is best as a diamond lead might give declarer his eighth trick.

7	♠ QJ6	Dir: S					
	♥ 753	Vul: Both					
	♦ Q75						
	♣ K632						
♠ 43	♠ T5						
♥ AK84	♥ J962						
♦ A93	♦ KT2						
♣ AJT9	♣ 8754						
8	♠ AK9872	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
10	♥ QT	N	-	-	-	1	-
12	♦ J864	S	-	-	-	1	-
	♣ Q	E	3	1	3	-	1
		W	3	1	3	-	1

Board 8 Dealer W Vul none

W	N	E	S
---	---	---	---

2♠ X 4♠ all pass

Count declarer's tricks

North leads ♣A and sees that once his ♦A has gone dummy has four diamond tricks. Those, along with declarer's six spades, make ten tricks. So 4♠ can't be beaten unless NS can set up two heart tricks *now* before the diamonds are set up.

North must lead a heart next.

8	♠ 64	Dir: W																															
	♥ K743	Vul: None																															
	♦ A93																																
	♣ AKT6																																
♠ QJT932	♠ AK75																																
♥ A95	♥ T62																																
♦ 2	♦ KQJT4																																
♣ 973	♣ Q																																
14	♠ 8	<table><tr><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr></table>			♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3	-	1	-	-	S	3	-	1	-	-	E	-	2	-	3	1	W	-	2	-	3	1
	♣			♦	♥	♠	NT																										
N	3			-	1	-	-																										
S	3			-	1	-	-																										
E	-	2	-	3	1																												
W	-	2	-	3	1																												
7 15	♥ QJ8																																
	♦ 8765																																
4	♣ J8542																																

Board 9 Dealer N Vul EW

N	E	S	W
---	---	---	---

1♠ 2♣ 4♠ 5♣

5♠ all pass

Count declarer's tricks

Declarer is likely to draw trumps then lead ♦K.

East can see declarer has 4 diamond tricks and 6 spades. That is 10 but he needs 11. So East must lead a diamond when he wins ♦A. *Not* a heart which might give North his 11th trick if he has ♥K.

9	♠ AQT762	Dir: N	
	♥ K9752	Vul: E-W	
	♦ K8		
	♣		
♠ 9	♠ 53		
♥ Q43	♥ AT8		
♦ 7652	♦ A3		
♣ A9543	♣ QJT862		
12	♠ KJ84	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT	
6	♥ J6	N	- 3 1 4 -
11	♦ QJT94	S	- 3 2 4 -
11	♣ K7	E	4 - - - 1
		W	4 - - - 1

Board 1	Dealer N	Vul none	
N	E	S	W
2NT	p	3♦ ^a	p
4♥ ^b	p	4NT	p
5♠ ^c	p	7♥	all pass

a: transfer to hearts

b: maximum with good hearts

c: 3 aces

Find safe lead against grand slam.

On that bidding the trumps must be solid so a trump if the safest lead.

Declarer has 12 sure tricks, 6 hearts, a club, two diamonds, two spades and a spade ruff.

He needs a finesse for his 13th trick and a choice of three suits (and either direction in each) in which to try it.

A non-heart lead kills partner's honour there and gives declarer his 13th trick.

1		♠ AJ ♥ AJ73 ♦ KJT ♣ AQJ6	Dlr: N Vul: None
♠ Q984 ♥ 9 ♦ Q932 ♣ K952	♠ 7632 ♥ 54 ♦ 854 ♣ T743		
21 7 12	♠ KT5 ♥ KQT862 ♦ A76 ♣ 8	♠ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT N 5 6 7 5 7 S 5 6 7 5 7 E - - - - - W - - - - -	

Board 2		Dealer E	Vul NS
E	S	W	N
1NT	p	3NT	all pass

Lead longest suit against notrumps

The normal defence against notrumps is to lead the longest suit ("active") and there is no reason for South to do anything different here.

Although a club lead here gives declarer an "extra" trick with his ♣Q that comes back with interest.

For all his 28 points declarer can't make 9 tricks without setting up the diamonds and that allows South to set up three tricks with his long clubs.

Any other lead gives declarer time to give up two diamond tricks without any long suit being set up by the defenders.

2		♠ J9652 ♥ QJ104 ♦ 6 ♣ 1098	Dlr: E Vul: N-S
♠ AKQ ♥ AK7 ♦ 8742 ♣ 753	♠ 1084 ♥ 953 ♦ AQ1093 ♣ AQ		
4 16 8	♠ 73 ♥ 862 ♦ KJ5 ♣ KJ642	♠ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E - 3 2 2 2 W - 3 2 2 1	

Board 3	Dealer S	Vul EW	
S	W	N	E
1NT	p	2♣	p
2♠	p	4♠	all pass

Count declarer's tricks & points

West leads ♦A and counts up the points on seeing dummy. His 11 plus declarer's 12 (at least) and dummy's 12 makes 35 so East will have at most 5 points, which means only one ace (if any).

Now count declarer's tricks. Dummy has 3 spade and 4 heart tricks. Declarer's known two aces and a diamond ruff will make 10.

So the only way 4♠ might go down is for West to lead a club now hoping East has ♣A and EW can take 3 quick club tricks.

If that doesn't work there would be no way 4♠ can be beaten.

3		♠ KQJ8 ♥ KQJT2 ♦ T ♣ 542	Dlr: S Vul: E-W
♠ T9 ♥ 9643 ♦ AKJ5 ♣ K76	♠ 543 ♥ 8 ♦ 98743 ♣ AJT3		
12 11 12	♠ A762 ♥ A75 ♦ Q62 ♣ Q98	♠ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT N - - 3 3 - S - - 3 3 - E 3 4 - - - W 3 4 - - -	

Board 4	Dealer W	Vul all	
W	N	E	S
1♠	X	1NT	p
2♠	all pass		

Count declarer's tricks

North should start with three rounds of hearts. Declarer ruffs the third, draws trumps and leads ♠Q to North's ♠A.

North now counts up declarer's tricks. West started with six spades and three club winners are visible in dummy. That gives him nine tricks and after he has cashed those clubs he will have only one losing diamond in his hand.

The only way North-South can make more than one further trick is to cash what diamonds they can now.

Therefore North must lead ♦A and another diamond giving NS two further tricks if South has ♦K and a third (which will beat the contract) if he has ♦J as well.

4		♠ 43 ♥ AK84 ♦ A93 ♣ A962	Dlr: W Vul: Both
♠ AK9872 ♥ QT ♦ 8642 ♣ Q	♠ QJ6 ♥ 753 ♦ Q75 ♣ KJT3		
15	♠ T5 ♥ J962 ♦ KJT ♣ 8754	♠ ♠ ♠ ♠ NT N 2 1 2 - 1 S 2 1 2 - 1 E - - - 1 - W - - - 1 -	
11	9		
5			

Board 5		Dealer N	Vul NS
N	E	S	W
2♦	p	3♣	p
4♣	p	6♣	all pass

Long suit in dummy means tricks required quickly.

The bidding indicates dummy has long diamonds on which any major-suit losers will be discarded after the ♦A is taken.

Declarer surely has the other three aces as he bid the slam without ace-asking.

The only chance of beating 6♣ will be if partner has a trump trick (highly unlikely) or EW can set up a trick in hearts or spades which they can cash after declarer has drawn trumps and led a diamond.

It is more likely partner has ♠Q than ♥K **and** ♥Q so West should lead a spade. It would be harder if East had the first lead

5		♠ 74 ♥ 82 ♦ KQJ973 ♣ QT5	Dlr: N Vul: N-S
♠ K8653 ♥ T9764 ♦ A2 ♣ 8	♠ QT92 ♥ QJ3 ♦ 8654 ♣ 74		
8	♠ AJ ♥ AK5 ♦ T ♣ AKJ9632	♠ ♠ ♠ ♠ NT N 5 5 - - 4 S 5 5 - - 4 E - - 1 1 - W - - 1 1 -	
7	5		
20			

Board 6		Dealer E	Vul EW
E	S	W	N
1♠	p	3NT	all pass

Count declarer's tricks & points

North can work out partner doesn't have any points as declarer must have at least 12 for his 3NT bid.

Therefore to lead a club or diamond at any time would give declarer an extra trick with his ♦Q or ♣J.

North must make the passive lead of a spade after cashing the hearts.

Sooner or later he will make his fifth trick with ♦K or ♣Q.

[By the way: How East can make 3NT is to cash ♦A before running the spades. On the last spade South will have to either discard ♦K or leave his ♣Q unprotected. That line of play is less likely to work on probabilities than just taking a finesse.]

6		♠ 42 ♥ AKQJ ♦ K84 ♣ Q863	Dlr: E Vul: E-W
♠ 753 ♥ T93 ♦ AQ52 ♣ AKT	♠ AKQJT ♥ 8642 ♦ J7 ♣ J9		
15	♠ 986 ♥ 75 ♦ T963 ♣ 7542	♠ ♠ ♠ ♠ NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E - 2 2 3 3 W - 2 3 3 3	
13	12		
0			

Board 7 **Dealer S** **Vul all**

S	W	N	E
1♠	X	1NT	p
2♠	all pass		

Count declarer's tricks

West should start with three rounds of hearts. Declarer ruffs the third, draws trumps and leads ♠Q to West's ♠A.

North now counts up declarer's tricks. South has six spade tricks and the ♠K in dummy. West's own clubs will prevent declarer from making more than one club trick.

That means declarer has just 7 tricks. West needs to "play safe" to avoid giving declarer his eighth trick in diamonds.

West must lead a club. (A heart lead lets declarer discard a diamond from dummy.)

Declarer must now lead diamonds himself and will lose three tricks in the suit.

7		♠ QJ6 ♥ 753 ♦ Q75 ♣ K632	Dir: S Vul: Both	
♠ 43	♠ T5	♥ AK84	♥ J962	
♦ A93	♦ KT2	♣ AJT9	♣ 8754	
8	♠ AK9872	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
16	♥ QT	N - - - 1 -		
12	♦ J864	S - - - 1 -		
	♣ Q	E 3 1 3 - 1		
		W 3 1 3 - 1		

Board 8 **Dealer W** **Vul none**

W	N	E	S
2♠	X	4♠	all pass

Count declarer's tricks

North leads ♣A and counts up declarer's tricks.

West will have six spades for his bid and dummy will have four diamond tricks after a trick is lost to the ♦A.

That makes ten tricks.

So 4♠ can't be beaten unless NS can set up two heart tricks *now* before the ♦A has gone.

North must lead a heart next.

Any risk in giving declarer an extra trick (say he had ♥AQ) is illusory. On any non-heart lead declarer will always be able to discard all his hearts, winners or losers, on the diamonds.

8		♠ 64 ♥ K743 ♦ A93 ♣ AKT6	Dir: W Vul: None	
♠ QJT932	♠ AK75	♥ A95	♥ T62	
♦ 2	♦ KQJT4	♣ 973	♣ Q	
14	♠ 8	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
7	♥ QJ8	N 3 - 1 - -		
15	♦ 8765	S 3 - 1 - -		
4	♣ J8542	E - 2 - 3 1		
		W - 2 - 3 1		

Board 9 **Dealer N** **Vul EW**

N	E	S	W
1♠	2♣	4♠	5♣
5♠	all pass		

Count declarer's tricks

On the ♣Q lead declarer is likely to ruff, draw trumps then lead ♦K.

East wins with and counts declarer's tricks. Declarer has six spades and has just set up four diamonds in dummy to make 10. Not enough; he needs 11.

So East must lead a passive diamond when he wins ♦A.

After dummy has run the diamonds there will be two hearts left in North's hand.

If declarer has to lead the hearts himself he will lose two tricks in the suit unless he has ♥K and ♥Q.

9		♠ AQT762 ♥ K9752 ♦ K8 ♣	Dir: N Vul: E-W	
♠ 9	♠ 53	♥ Q43	♥ AT8	
♥ 7652	♦ A3	♦ A9543	♦ QJT862	
12	♠ KJ84	♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT		
6	♥ J6	N - 3 1 4 -		
11	♦ QJT94	S - 3 2 4 -		
	♣ K7	E 4 - - - 1		
		W 4 - - - 1		