

DEFENCE – (A) ELEMENTARY

Def_A

Defending is difficult

BUT early steps up the competency ladder are easy ones.

Start by learning a few simple “rules” and **sticking to them**.

As you gain experience you will identify situations where the rules should be broken, but *don't break any of the rules without a reason*.

And importantly: **WATCH ALL THE CARDS**.

You and Partner are a Team!

Partner is not an idiot but is unable to read your mind.

Partner is not blind but is unable to see your cards.

Feed partner the correct information and study the information partner feeds you.

IMPORTANT: *Never base any decisions on the assumption partner has goofed.*

The Opening Lead:

[1] WHICH SUIT?

First select the **suit** to lead:

Study the bidding and follow these priorities

ALWAYS: lead partner's bid suit [1] [8]

OTHERWISE: a suit nobody bid

AVOID: a suit the opponents bid.

Then, if that doesn't identify **ONE** suit:

Look at your holdings in your selected suits and follow these priorities:

Against a notrump contract:

Your **longest** suit [2] [3] [5]

(if 2 or 3 suits are equal-longest: see next)

Otherwise:

1st: honours in sequence [4] [6]

Next: **honour(s) not in sequence**

or: **a suit with small cards only**

Last: a suit with Ace but not King

[2] WHICH CARD?

Then select which **card** to lead

Honour sequence: **top card** [2] [4]

Honour(s) no sequence: **4th card** [3] [5]

Small cards only: **top card**

Any 2-card holding: **top card** [1]

ALSO: WITH A TRUMP SUIT

[a] **NEVER LEAD A SMALL CARD IN A SUIT YOU HOLD THE ACE IN**

and assume partner never does either

*This is **IMPORTANT***

“Underleading an ace” often gives declarer a cheap trick and/or you lose your ace.

[b] **A short suit:** a suit with just one card in it is a good lead; you may be able to trump declarer's good card(s) later [7]

[c] **The trump suit:** is a good lead more often than most people think.

Subsequent Leads:

Keep on doing what you or partner started trying to do.

Keep leading the same suit **your side** led unless there is a **good** reason not to. [7]

*If you win a trick declarer has led, **never** immediately lead another winner in the same suit (that's what declarer wants)* [2]

Generally it is Ok to lead a suit declarer can trump, but **NOT** if dummy can trump [1] [6]

Playing to Partners Lead:

THIRD HAND HIGH is a good rule. [5]

but **IMPORTANT - With a sequence** of “equal-highest” cards play the **lowest** of that sequence [3]

Note **this is opposite to what you lead** because it helps partner “see” your cards

Playing to declarer's side's lead:

SECOND HAND LOW is a **very** good rule.

Exceptions are rare (other than glaringly obvious ones!) [3]