



Establish Dummy's Suit

A key technique in declarer play is to know when, and how, to set up a long suit in dummy.

♠ A J 2
♥ 6 5
♦ J 6 3
♣ A K 6 4 2

N
W E
S

♠ K Q 10 7 5 4
♥ A 9
♦ 10 7 4
♣ 8 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♣	End	2♣

Partner decided simply to raise your weak two opening to game. Even if 4♣ went off, it might be a good save against 4♥ the other way.

The defenders take three rounds of diamonds before switching to a heart. How can you find 10 tricks?

Since dummy cannot ruff anything, a careless declarer might well start by drawing trumps. If you do that, though, the contract will be in severe danger. If the trumps turn out to break 3-1, there are only 9 tricks. Even if the trumps are kind enough to break 2-2, you will still need an unlikely 3-3 club break if you try to set up the suit at that point. There is a better way to play this hand.

The correct play is to try to set up dummy's club suit for a heart discard before drawing trumps. Most days, the clubs will break 4-2 – so you should assume that you need two club ruffs to set up a third club trick. This, in turn, means that you need three entries to dummy, two to ruff clubs and another to get back to the long club.

Appreciating this, you draw just one round of trumps, with the king of spades (both defenders follow), and then start on the club suit, cashing the ♣A-K. If East or West can ruff one of these, the clubs were 5-1, and you could never have made the contract.

After the ♣A-K both survive, you ruff a club with the ten of spades. If everybody follows, the clubs were 3-3, and you can claim at this point. If there is still a high club out, you are still OK. You continue setting up the clubs by crossing back to the jack of spades and ruffing yet another club, this time with the queen of spades. Finally, you can cross back to the ace of spades and cash dummy's established fifth club, discarding your heart loser.

Of course, some suits need more setting up than others:

♠ 10 9 8
♥ 9 6
♦ 7 5 4 3 2
♣ K 8 3

N
W E
S

♠ A K Q J 6 3 2
♥ A K
♦ 6
♣ A 6 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♣	Pass	3♣
End		Pass	6♣

After you showed your solid suit with 3♣, partner's club cue bid was all the encouragement you needed to jump to 6♣. Dummy, alas, is not all you hoped for. ♣K-Q-x or ♣K-x would have given you twelve easy tricks. ■

As things are, West leads the queen of clubs and you need to find a way to get rid of one of your minor suit losers.

What are your thoughts?

Look at the Diamonds

There is nothing else for it but to try to establish dummy's rather diminutive diamond suit. Needing to preserve entries to the table, you win the lead with the ace of clubs and play the six of diamonds. Believe it or not, so long as the diamonds are 4-3, the defenders are powerless, and cannot stop the world's worst suit from being established.

Say they win and return a trump. You can win this with the ten of spades and ruff a diamond with the ace of spades. After this, you cross to the nine of spades and ruff a second diamond with the king of spades. If both defenders follow to this trick, you are home. Cross to the eight of spades and ruff yet another diamond with the queen of spades. When the diamonds were 4-3 it only remains for you to cash your major suit winners, cross to the king of clubs and cash the long diamond, discarding the club loser.

It is amazing what suits you can set up once you put your mind to it!

Entries Are Important

It is worth noticing that an initial trump lead would have beaten this contract. You needed four entries to dummy – three to ruff diamonds, and a fourth to get to the established diamond. A trump lead removes one of those entries before you are ready to use it. Even on the club lead, if you were to win it in dummy, you would be an entry short for your diamond ruffs. Setting up a long suit is a close cousin to another bridge maxim that is well worth knowing – watch your entries. ■



DEFENCE QUIZ

by **Julian Pottage**

(Answers on page 47)

You are West in the defensive positions below. It is your turn to play.

1. ♠ 10 5 3
♥ A K J 6 2
♦ J
♣ A Q 7 2

♠ A Q 9
♥ 10 7
♦ Q 9 6 5 3
♣ K 9 5

		N	E
		W	S

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♣	End	3♠

You lead the ♦5: ♦J, ♦A, ♦K. Partner switches to the ♣3, covered by the ♣4. What do you play?

2. ♠ K 5 3
♥ J 10 6 2
♦ A Q 9 6 2
♣ Q

♠ A 7 4
♥ 9 7
♦ 8 5 3
♣ K 9 7 5 2

		N	E
		W	S

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
End			

You lead the ♣5. Partner wins with the ♣A and switches to the ♠J. What do you do when declarer plays low?

3. ♠ Q 8 3
♥ J 10 2
♦ A Q 7 4
♣ J 5 4

♠ A 9 4
♥ Q 8 7 3
♦ J 5
♣ 9 8 7 2

		N	E
		W	S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	End	

You lead the ♣8: ♣4, ♣A, ♣K. Partner switches to the ♠J and declarer plays low. What do you play?

4. ♠ Q 4 3
♥ A K 6 2
♦ A Q 9 7 4
♣ 5

♠ A J 8
♥ 8 7 3
♦ K J 5
♣ J 9 7 2

		N	E
		W	S

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
End			

You lead the ♣2. Partner wins with the ♣A and switches to the ♠2, on which declarer plays low. What do you do?

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Bidding Tips

- 1 Always consider bidding spades if you can
- 2 Bid more aggressively when non-vulnerable
- 3 Always double when the opponents steal your deal
- 4 A take-out double shows shortage in the suit doubled
- 5 'Borrow' a king to keep the auction open
- 6 After a penalty double, don't let the opponents escape
- 7 Halve the value of a singleton honour when opening
- 8 Only add length-points for a suit that might be useful
- 9 Isolated honours are bad except in partner's suit
- 10 Use the jump shift sparingly
- 11 Consider passing and letting partner decide
- 12 You need two top honours for a second-seat pre-empt
- 13 Put the brakes on if you have a misfit
- 14 Strong and long minors work well in no-trumps
- 15 One stop in the opponents' suit can be enough for no-trumps
- 16 Keep your two-level responses up to strength
- 17 Use your normal methods in response to a 1NT overcall
- 18 Don't overcall just because you have opening points
- 19 Overcalls can be quite weak, so be prudent when responding
- 20 Weak overcalls must be based on strong suits
- 21 6NT requires 33 points not 4 aces and 4 kings
- 22 Raise immediately, if weak with four-card support
- 23 In a competitive auction, show support immediately
- 24 Bid to the level of your fit quickly with weak hands
- 25 With strength and support, use the opponents' bid suit

Declarer-play Tips

- 26 When your contract depends on a finesse, think 'endplay'
- 27 Consider what a defender might be thinking about
- 28 Always take your time at trick one
- 29 Establish extra tricks before cashing your winners
- 30 Use your opponents' bidding to your advantage
- 31 Avoid the 'baddie' gaining the lead
- 32 Use the Rule of Seven when holding up in no-trumps

- 33 A low lead usually promises length and an honour
- 34 When declaring 1NT try to be patient
- 35 Duck an early round when you are short of entries
- 36 Lead up to your two-honour holding
- 37 Do not always assume a suit will break well
- 38 Drop a high card to put off the defence
- 39 Play your highest card to tempt a defender to cover
- 40 Draw trumps first unless you have a good reason not to
- 41 Do not waste your trumps
- 42 Consider leaving a lone defensive trump winner out

Defence Tips

- 43 Keep four-card suits intact whenever possible
- 44 Give count on declarer's leads
- 45 Keep the right cards rather than signal
- 46 Take your time when dummy is put down
- 47 High cards are for killing other high cards
- 48 Do not waste intermediate cards
- 49 Pick two key suits to concentrate on during the play
- 50 If in doubt, cover an honour with an honour
- 51 If a lead is from two honours, it is best not to cover
- 52 Keep your honour to kill dummy's honour
- 53 Try to show partner your solid honour sequences
- 54 Lead the normal card when leading partner's suit
- 55 Never underlead an ace at trick one in a suit contract
- 56 Be wary of leading from four cards to only one honour
- 57 Lead a higher card from a suit without an honour
- 58 Lead through 'beatable' strength and up to weakness
- 59 Cash your winners before trying for a trump promotion
- 60 Be patient when defending 1NT
- 61 Trump leads can be safe throughout the play

General Tips

- 62 Do not put important cards at either end of your hand
- 63 Avoid being declarer when you are dummy
- 64 Before you lead ask for a review of the auction
- 65 Enjoy the Game!

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