


Defending vs. Suit Contracts

Board 1

North Deals ♠ A 6 2
 None Vul ♥ A K J 6 5 4
 ♦ 7 4 3
 ♣ 2

♠ J 9 ♥ 9 2 ♦ A Q 8 6 5 2 ♣ Q 10 4		♠ 10 8 7 3 ♥ 10 7 ♦ 9 ♣ A J 9 6 5 3	
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♠ K Q 5 4
 ♥ Q 8 3
 ♦ K J 10
 ♣ K 8 7

	West	North	East	South
		1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
	All pass			


East leads his **singleton** ♦ 9. Declarer will probably play ♦ 10 from dummy. West wins ♦ Q and because there is no diamond missing higher than ♦ 9. West can tell that East has led a singleton or doubleton. (With three small cards including the ♦ 9 East would have led her second highest card on the first round of diamonds, followed by the ♦ 9 on the second round, to show that she started with three diamonds so no third round ruff opportunity. For the same reason if West started with four small cards headed by the ♦ 9 East would have led her second highest followed by the ♦ 9.)

West cashes ♦ A, gives East a diamond ruff. ♣ A is the fourth defensive trick.

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Board 2

East Deals ♠ J 9
 N-S Vul ♥ 10 9
 ♦ A Q 8 6 5
 ♣ Q 10 4 3

♠ K Q 5 4 ♥ Q 8 3 ♦ K J 10 ♣ K 8 7		♠ A 6 2 ♥ A K 7 6 5 4 ♦ 7 4 3 ♣ 2	
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♠ 10 8 7 3
 ♥ J 2
 ♦ 9 2
 ♣ A J 9 6 5

	West	North	East	South
			1 ♥	Pass
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
	4 ♥	All pass		

South leads ♦ 9, **top of a doubleton**. Declarer will probably play ♦ 10 from dummy. North wins ♦ Q and because there is no diamond missing higher than ♦ 9 he can tell South has led a singleton or doubleton. North cashes ♦ A, on which South throws a small club or spade. North then gives South a diamond ruff and ♣ A is the fourth defensive trick.

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Board 3	♠ A J 10 8 6			
South Deals	♥ K J 6			
E-W Vul	♦ 6 5 2			
	♣ 9 4			
	♠ 5 3		♠ Q 4 2	
	♥ 8 7 4		♥ A Q 10 2	
	♦ A Q 10 3		♦ 8 7 4	
	♣ 10 7 6 5		♣ K J 3	
			♠ K 9 7	
			♥ 9 5 3	
			♦ K J 9	
			♣ A Q 8 2	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
Pass	2 ♠	All pass	1 NT	

East does best to lead ♦ 7, **second highest from a bad suit**. (Vs. a No Trump contract East would lead the ♦ 8, 'High for Hate' but vs a suit contract that would mislead partner on the next round of diamonds, because playing the ♦ 7, a **high – low signal**, would strongly suggest a doubleton and a third round ruffing opportunity). Whichever card is played from dummy is covered cheaply by West. From West's point of view ♦ 7 could be from a doubleton, but with all his diamond honours well placed West should be content to wait for diamond tricks. West switches to ♥ 7, leading up to dummy's weakness. East wins as cheaply as possible and switches back to diamonds. The defenders take the first six tricks, West leading hearts and East leading diamonds, and they may well make a seventh later with ♠ Q.

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Board 4	♠ 10 4 2			
West Deals	♥ 9 2			
Both Vul	♦ J 10 8 5			
	♣ A J 7 6			
	♠ K 9 3		♠ A Q J 8 7 6	
	♥ Q J 10		♥ 7 4 3	
	♦ Q 9 6 4		♦ A K 2	
	♣ K Q 4		♣ 2	
			♠ 5	
			♥ A K 8 6 5	
			♦ 7 3	
			♣ 10 9 8 5 3	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
1 NT	Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

South cashes ♥ A (top of a 2+ card honour sequence). North plays ♥ 9, starting a **high-low signal** to encourage. South can see all the hearts bigger than ♥ 9 so he knows North has one or two hearts. He continues with ♥ K and gives North a ruff. ♣ A is the fourth defensive trick. Note that South would have led ♥ 6 (**fourth highest**) against a no- trump contract.

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Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A		♠ 10 4 2
♥ K Q 8 6 5		♥ 9 2
♦ 7 3		♦ J 10 8 5
♣ 10 8 7 5 3		♣ A J 9 6

N
W E
S

♠ Q J 8 7 6 5		
♥ 7 4 3		
♦ A K 2		
♣ 2		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	1 NT	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

West leads ♥ K, top of a **2+ card honour sequence**. East plays ♥ 9, starting a **high-low signal** to encourage. West can see all the hearts bigger than ♥ 9 so knows East has one or two hearts. North's ♥ A wins. West soon regains the lead with ♠ A and is able to cash ♥ Q and give East a ruff. ♣ A is the fourth defensive trick.

Note that West would have led ♥ 6 (fourth highest) against a no-trump contract.

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Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A J 7 5		♠ K Q 10 8
♥ A 9 8		♥ 7 6 2
♦ 9 4		♦ K Q J 7 6
♣ K Q 6 2		♣ J

N
W E
S

♠ 9 4 3		
♥ 5 4 3		
♦ A 3 2		
♣ 10 9 8 7		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♦	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

North leads ♥ K. **Top of a solid sequence** is as good a lead against a suit contract as against no-trumps. Attacking hearts forces out the ♥ A, establishing two heart winners which must be taken as soon as the defence regain the lead.

With two aces the defence now have four tricks.

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Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

	♠ K Q 5 3 2		
	♥ Q 7 6		
	♦ 6 3		
	♣ 9 7 3		
♠ J 6	N	♠ A 10 9 8	
♥ 5 3 2	W	♥ A 4	
♦ K J 7 2	E	♦ 10 9 8 4	
♣ K 8 6 2	S	♣ Q J 10	
	♠ 7 4		
	♥ K J 10 9 8		
	♦ A Q 5		
	♣ A 5 4		

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♥
All pass			2 ♥

West doesn't fancy making a dangerous lead away from an unsupported honour so he makes a **passive trump lead**, the ♥ 2 (don't lead high-low when leading a trump). East wins ♥ A and returns ♥ 4. Declarer wins in dummy and should finesse ♦ Q. West wins ♦ K and plays his last trump. Deprived of a diamond ruff in dummy declarer now cannot make more than seven tricks.

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Board 8
 West Deals
 None Vul

	♠ A Q 10 9 6		
	♥ 6 5 2		
	♦ Q 3		
	♣ 8 7 2		
♠ K J 5 4 2	N	♠ 7	
♥ K Q J 7	W	♥ 10 9 8	
♦ A 8 2	E	♦ K 7 6 4	
♣ 6	S	♣ K J 5 4 3	
	♠ 8 3		
	♥ A 4 3		
	♦ J 10 9 5		
	♣ A Q 10 9		

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♥	All pass		

With good spades, declarer's first suit, North should be very keen to prevent declarer ruffing spades in dummy. He leads a trump. South wins ♥ A and returns ♥ 3. Declarer wins and may cross to dummy's ♦ K to take a spade finesse. North wins as cheaply as possible and plays his last trump. Deprived of any spade ruffs in dummy declarer will now struggle to make more than five tricks if North keeps leading clubs and South leads spades and diamonds.

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Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ K J 10 5	♠ 3 2	♠ A Q 9 8 7
♥ —	♥ A Q 8 7 6	♥ 10 9 5 4
♦ 10 9 8 5 4	♦ J 2	♦ A
♣ J 8 7 4	♣ K Q 10 2	♣ 6 5 3

	♠ 6 4	
	♥ K J 3 2	
	♦ K Q 7 6 3	
	♣ A 9	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♥	1 ♠	4 ♥
4 ♠	All pass		

South knows that his side has the majority of points but unless he **leads a trump** declarer will cash ♦ A and make all his nine trumps separately by cross-ruffing. Consider leading a trump to cut down opposition ruffs if your side has most of the points and declarer will be relying on ruffs to make his contract or a profitable sacrifice.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

♠ 8 7 6 5 4	♠ 10 9 3	♠ 2
♥ 5 4 3	♥ A	♥ K Q J 10 8
♦ Q J 10	♦ 5 4 3 2	♦ A K 8 7 6
♣ A Q	♣ 10 7 5 4 3	♣ K J

	♠ A K Q J	
	♥ 9 7 6 2	
	♦ 9	
	♣ 9 8 6 2	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
4 ♥	All pass		

West has bid spades but here it is natural for South to lead ♠ A (top of an honour sequence) and continue ? K. Declarer ruffs and seems to have eleven tricks, but the 4-1 trump break will give him a problem. He plays ♥ K at trick 3. North wins ♥ A and must persevere with spades, even though he knows declarer will ruff. Declarer ruffs and cashes ♥ Q, but is now in trouble because South has more trumps than he does.

The message for the defence is: **don't automatically stop playing a suit just because you know declarer is going to ruff.**


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Board 11

South Deals

None Vul

♠ 8 7 6 5			
♥ 5 4 3			
♦ Q J 10			
♣ A Q 2			
♠ K Q J 10		♠ A 9 4 3	
♥ 2		♥ A 9 7 6	
♦ 5 4 3 2		♦ 9	
♣ 10 7 5 4		♣ 9 8 6 3	



♠ 2			
♥ K Q J 10 8			
♦ A K 8 7 6			
♣ K J			

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	

North bid spades but it here is natural for West to lead ♠ K (top of a sequence) and continue ♠ Q. Declarer ruffs and seems to have eleven tricks, but the 4-1 trump break will give him a problem. He plays ♥ K at trick 3. East wins ♥ A and must persevere with spades, even though he knows declarer will ruff. Declarer ruffs and cashes ♥ Q, but is now in trouble because East has more trumps than he does. **The message for the defence is: don't automatically stop playing a suit just because you know declarer is going to ruff.**


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Board 12

West Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 5 2			
♥ A K 9 7			
♦ A 10 5 4			
♣ 10 9 8			
♠ A Q 7 6		♠ K J 10 3	
♥ J 4		♥ Q 5	
♦ Q 3 2		♦ K 7 6	
♣ A K Q 4		♣ J 7 6 5	



♠ 9 8 4			
♥ 10 8 6 3 2			
♦ J 9 8			
♣ 3 2			

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

North cashes ♥ A K and should wait patiently for whatever is coming in diamonds.

Whichever side breaks open the diamonds is likely to do so at the cost of a trick. He exits passively with a club at trick 3.

There are various tests that declarer can set North. If declarer leads ♦ 2 from his hand North must play low (**Second hand plays low**).

If declarer leads ♦ Q from his hand, North must play ♦ A (**Cover an honour with an honour**).

If North passes every test his side will eventually come to two diamond tricks.

Note that if North wrongly cashes ♦ A at trick 3 that is the last trick for the defence. North's

♦ A has a role: to kill West's ♦ Q.

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Board 13

North Deals

Both Vul

♠ 9 8 6		♠ 5 2
♥ 10 8 6 3 2		♥ A K 9 7
♦ 9 8 6		♦ K 10 5 4
♣ A 3		♣ 10 9 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 7 4 3
♥ Q 5
♦ A J 7
♣ K 7 6 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

East cashes ♥ A K and should wait patiently for whatever is coming in diamonds. He exits passively with a club at trick 3.

West takes ♣ A and returns a club. There are various tests that declarer can set East.

If declarer leads ♦ 2 from his hand East must play low (**Second hand plays low**).

If declarer leads ♦ Q from his hand, East must play ♦ K (**Cover an honour with an honour**).

If East passes every test his side will eventually come to a diamond trick.

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Board 14

East Deals

None Vul

♠ J 9 7 6		♠ A K Q 8 5 2
♥ 9 7 3		♥ K J
♦ J 5 4		♦ 9 7
♣ A K Q		♣ J 7 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 4 3
♥ Q 8 4 2
♦ A K Q 8
♣ 10 9 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♠	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

South starts with ♦ A K Q. Declarer ruffs, draws trumps and at some stage leads a heart from dummy. North plays low (**second hand plays low**) and declarer has to guess whether to play ♥ K or ♥ J. If he guesses correctly he makes 4 ♠. If he guesses incorrectly he fails.

If North wrongly jumps in with ♥ A declarer has no guess and cannot fail.

Defending vs. Suit Contracts

Board 15

South Deals

N-S Vul

♠ Q 6		♠ 7 5
♥ Q 4 3 2		♥ A J 10
♦ Q 7 6		♦ 9 5 4 2
♣ A 4 3 2		♣ 10 9 8 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A K J 10 8 4
♥ 9 8 7
♦ A J
♣ K Q

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 NT	Pass	1 ♠
Pass			4 ♠

All pass

West has a difficult lead: perhaps best ♥ 2 (**fourth highest from an honour**) If declarer tries ♥ K from dummy the defenders easily take four tricks but what if declarer plays ♥ 5 rather than throw her ♥ K 'under a bus'? East should realise that West has ♥ Q because without an honour West would have led a high spot card (**high for hate**) rather than her lowest heart, so should play ♥ 10, which holds the trick. East switches to a club (dummy's weakness). West takes ♣ A and switches back to hearts, allowing the defenders to take the first four tricks

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Board 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A K J 7 6 5		♠ Q 10 9 8
♥ J 6		♥ A K 4
♦ 6 5		♦ K Q J
♣ K 8 5		♣ 4 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 4 3
♥ 10 9 8 7 2
♦ A 10 7
♣ J 10 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

North leads ♦ 8, '**second highest from a bad suit**', preparatory to playing the ♦ 9 on the second round to let partner know that he has not led high-low from a doubleton hoping for a ruff on the third round. South wins ♦ A and knows that if North had a singleton diamond declarer would have six; hardly likely. South switches to ♣ J, top of a 3+ honour sequence and up to dummy's weakness. The defenders take three club tricks.