

DEFENSIVE PLAY OF THE HAND

INTERFERING WITH DECLARER: Defenders have available multiple methods of minimizing the number of tricks that can be achieved by a Declarer under specific conditions. Knowing and then applying them will lead to maximizing the results for the defense. Some of the major ones are as follows:

1. The Defensive Holdup: Declarer often needs to establish tricks in his/her long suit. Once he/she has established winners in a suit, he/she requires an entry in order to get to them. Defenders cannot alter the cards Declarer has been dealt; but they can try to prevent Declarer from using the cards to best advantage. In each of the following examples, Declarer has no other entries to Dummy other than the cards in the suit shown. To limit Declarer to the minimum number of tricks, which cards would you and your Partner play on the first trick assuming Declarer were to lead the 10, and then again on the second trick if Declarer were to lead a small card to the Dummy's Queen?

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Conclusion: The defensive holdup play is one method the Defenders can use in order to prevent Declarer from getting any undeserved tricks. Success of operation of this method depends upon cooperation between the Defenders; i.e., one of them giving count while the other rejects his/her winner until Declarer is playing his last card in the suit. If no other outside entries are available to Declarer, his/her established additional winners are, thus, stranded.

2. Attacking Entries: If, unlike as in exercise 1, Declarer holds an outside entry which will eventually serve as transportation to winners that are being developed. Defenders must work together so as to eliminate the outside entry before Declarer is ready to use it, and before Declarer has the opportunity of setting up his/her long running suit. In each of the following, you are on lead. Which card would Partner lead to prevent Declarer from later using the suit shown as an entry to the Dummy?

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Conclusion: When you can see that Declarer is planning to develop a long suit and may have some entry problems, it is often a good idea to drive out any entries in the hand with the long suit *before* Declarer has established his/her winners.

3. Watching Your Discards: Small cards in any suit are usually assumed to be of no value. The unwary Defender, thus, unthinkingly may tend to throw them away, preferring to hold on to higher cards in other suits instead. Sometimes, however, these, seemingly inconsequential small cards, make the difference between success and failure for the Defenders. How do the Defenders know which suits to guard? Often it is obvious when you see the cards held in Dummy. In each of the following layouts, how many tricks does Declarer get if Partner unwittingly discard a small card in the suit shown and how many does Declarer get if Partner does not?

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Conclusion: A card as low as a 2 can have as much power as an Ace. When discarding, try and keep the same length in a suit as you can see in the Dummy or as you imagine might be held by Declarer. The defending Partners must share the responsibility for guarding all of the suits. You never want, as a Defender, to be left with high cards in one suit while Declarer is taking tricks with small cards in another suit in which you have made discards.

4. Defending Against Finesses: One of the methods by which Declarer gets the extra tricks he/she needs is by finessing. Many times the Defenders can do something about this. In each of the following layouts, you are defending against a No-Trump contract. Declarer leads a small card toward Dummy's Jack. Which card should Partner play and which card should you play in order to give Declarer the most difficulty?

1)

	<u>DUMMY</u> AQJ2
<u>PARTNER</u> T87	<u>YOU</u> K63
<u>DECLARER</u> 954	
8 ; 3	

Conclusion: Keep Declarer guessing as to how to play a suit. Do not reveal any information that will assist Declarer in deciding how to play the cards in a particular suit unless you have to. The more guesses you give Declarer, the more opportunities Declarer has to go wrong.