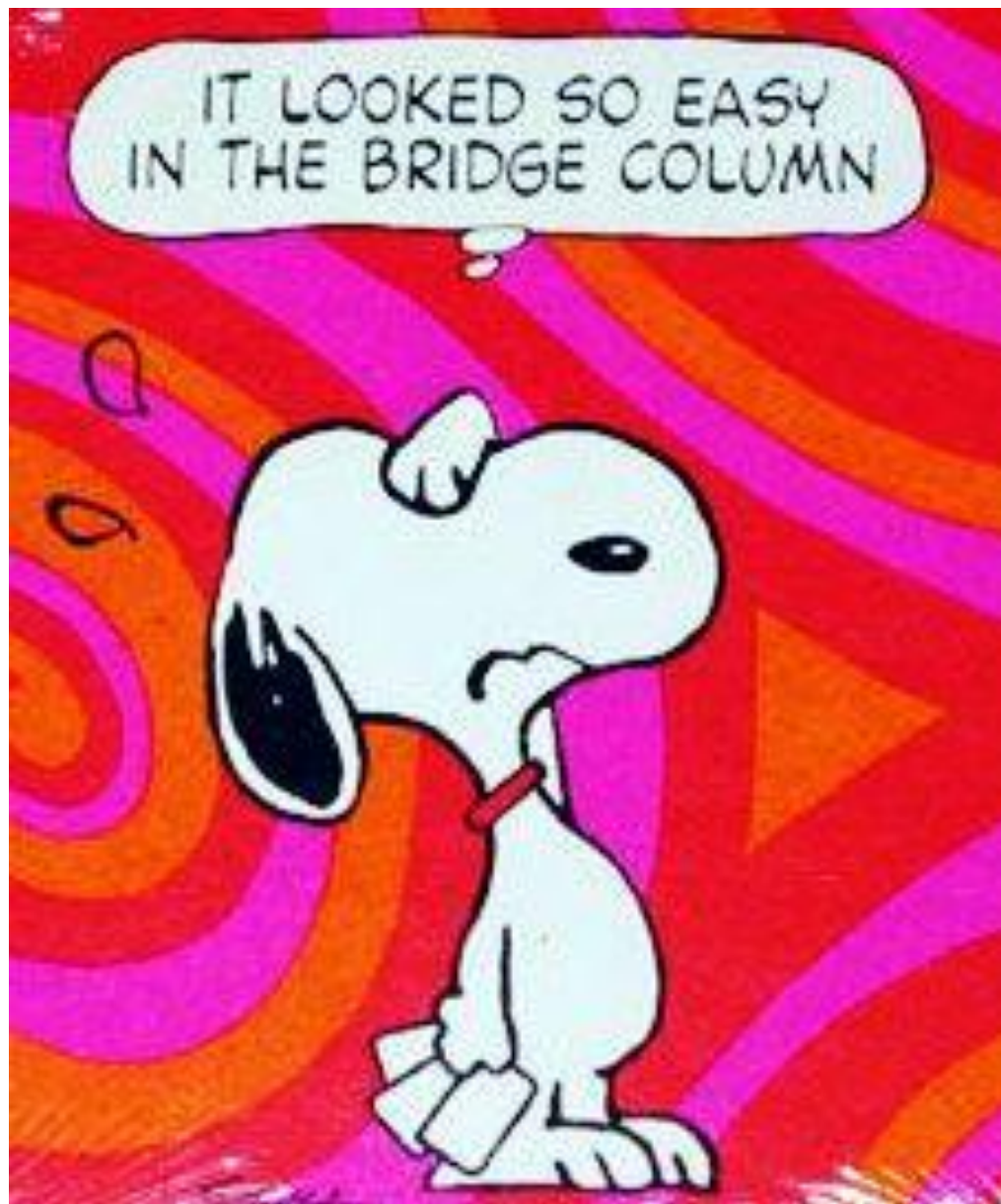


# Declarer and Defensive Play

Patrick, April 2017

IT LOOKED SO EASY  
IN THE BRIDGE COLUMN



# Storyboard

- Planning and when you cannot plan
  - Suit combinations
- <play some hands and discuss> + <break>
- Vacant spaces
  - Concealment
- <any questions>

# PART 1

## Making plans

# What sort of plans?

- Number of tricks to take ?
- Number of losers to avoid ?
  - different declarer / defender perspectives
  - at key points keep re-thinking the plan
- If too early to make a plan ...
  - don't give away tricks , don't burn any bridges

# Defender's plan

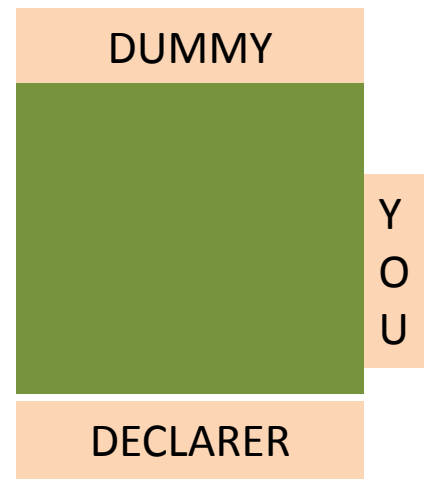
DEALER  
SOUTH

♠ 9876

♥ KQJT

♦ A97

♣ A5



♠ A3

♥ A98743

♦ T543

♣ 2

S	N
1♠	3N
4♠	P
lead is ♥2	

# Declarer's plan

♠ A43

♠ K76

♥ KQ

♥ J75

♦ QJT

♦ A9543

♣ 8765

♣ AK

DEALER  
WEST

---

W

E

1N

3N

lead is ♠Q

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# Defender's plan

DEALER  
EAST  
BOTH VUL

♠ 642

♥ AK7

♦ 854

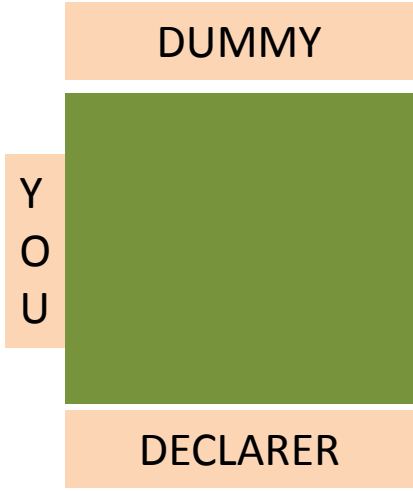
♣ T942

♠ AKJ97

♥ 9

♦ A2

♣ QJ865



E	S	W	N
P	1♦	1♠	2♦
3♠	4♦	4♠	P
P	5♦	X	end

lead is ??



# Declarer's first actions

- Count winners
- Count losers
  - both, or whichever is more practical or worrying
- Does opening lead tell you anything ?
  - like LHO doesn't have any AKQ to lead?
  - look carefully for 2<sup>nd</sup> highest leads
- How might points be distributed, LHO – RHO ?
  - look for initial passes particularly

# Declarer as the play progresses

- Trust opposition not to be giving away tricks
  - declarer has : **A654** opposite dummy has : **Q32**
  - declarer has : **K5** opposite dummy has : **J32**
- Don't play for mistakes unless desperate
- Don't play for mis-bidding unless desperate

# Defender's first actions

- Postulate point count of hidden hands
  - often declarer is “number +/- 1”
- Was opening lead expected?
  - small says partner didn't have an AKQ combo to lead
  - unexpected suit likely to be a singleton
- Defender can learn too from declarer's play
  - small lead and dummy rises with Axx ?

# When planning is difficult ...

Example from Camrose

Playing in 6♥ and full hand

# PART 2

## Suit Combinations

# Suit Combinations

- Why does knowing these matter ?
  - familiarity lets you avoid waste of energy & time
- But you need to know when not to follow the standard
- You also need to recognise what declarer is up to ...

# Suit Combinations

♠ A2

♠ KQ4

*K or Q first  
blocks the  
suit*

♥ 76

♥ AQJ

*Need two  
entries to  
finesse twice*

♦ AJ5

♦ KQ4

*A first gives  
you least  
flexibility*

♣ AJ432

♣ K9876

*King then  
finesse if  
needed*

work out normal play, and what the constraints are

# Suit Combinations

♠ AJ4

♠ KT5

*don't, let  
oppo lead it*

♥ 76

♥ KT432

*small to K*

♦ 765

♦ KT432

*small to T  
then to K*

♣ 765

♣ KT932

*small to T  
small to 9*

work out normal play, and what the constraints are



# Suit Combinations

♠ 54

♠ KQ32

*lead up twice*

♥ 54

♥ KQJ2

*lead up twice*

♦ 654

♦ KQJ2

*lead up 3  
times*

♣ J5

♣ KT432

*small to T  
gains when  
AQ both right*

work out normal play, and what the constraints are

# Suit Combinations

♠ J54

♠ AT92

*small to 9  
small to T*

♥ J54

♥ AT98

*small to 8  
then run J*

♦ J54

♦ AT32

*if oppo won't  
play it, small  
to T*

♣ J54

♣ AT82

*small to 8*

work out normal play, and what the constraints are

# Suit Combinations

♠ AQ543

♠ KT92

*A or Q first*

♥ AQ832

♥ K954

*K first*

♦ AQ983

♦ KT2

*A dropping T  
then up to K  
is best*

♣ AQT3

♣ K942

*A first but  
then even  
choice*

work out normal play, and what the constraints are

# Suit Combinations

♠ A3

♠ KQJ2

*always 2 first*

♥ AJ932

♥ Q7654

*always Q first*

♦ AJ32

♦ K954

*for 4 tricks,  
small to J first*

*for 3 tricks, A  
and small to 9*

♣ AQ74

♣ JT52

*J and watch  
for 8/9 falling*

work out normal play, and what the constraints are

# Learning Suit Combinations

- Books have lists
- Magazine have quizzes
  - found online, just search, lots of options
- Online software
  - SUITPLAY
- Some more difficult cases go as “safety plays”

# Back to the plan ...

- Combination of play in 4 suits
  - might be favoured option or might be constrained
  - odds might be affected by bidding etc
  - Example of combining options ...
    - and the full hand was ...

# Re-assessing the Plan

- Factors of influence
  - (the bidding)
  - what suits people play and how
  - what HCP have shown up
  - what distribution has shown up
  - what discards they choose to make
  - what lead or play was not made ...

# LET'S PLAY SOME HANDS NOW (BOARDS 1-4)

Tea break before / during / after but  
not all at once ... all done by 45  
minutes from now



# BOARDS PLAYED

- Board 1 hand : counting their points
- Board 2 hand : counting their shape
- Board 3 hand : counting their cards
- Board 4 hand : managing the key suit

# PART 4

## Concealment

# Defender's position

- Can rarely afford to mislead
  - only if sure partner has no decisions to make
- Key rules for a defender
  - up the line if trying to win the trick
  - top of sequence at other times

# Defender's view

DEALER  
EAST  
BOTH VUL

♠ T4

♥ AK7

♦ 8543

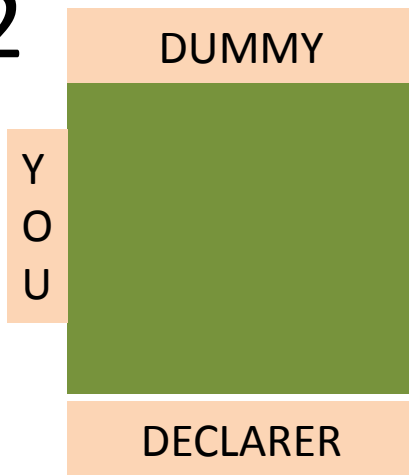
♣ KQJT

♠ Q8732

♥ 943

♦ K94

♣ A8



E	S	W	N
P	1N	P	3N

lead is ♠3

# Declarer's plan

NORTH

♠ A95

♥ T862

♦ AKQ

♣ 765

SOUTH

♠ T4

♥ AK7

♦ 8543

♣ KQJT

---

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

P	1N	P	3N
---	----	---	----

lead is ♠3

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# Key Points to Concealment

[Not calling it deception]

- Opposition have more guessing to do
- Sometimes they'll get it right, sometimes not

# Where concealment isn't possible ...some examples of card reading

Assume dummy has three small and contract is 1N-3N.

Partner leads the 3

YOU HOLD	DECLARER ...
J654	wins queen
J654	wins ace
J654	wins king

# Some examples of card reading

Assume you have only small cards; contract is 1N-3N.

Partner leads the 3

DUMMY HAS	DECLARER ...
K43	wins king
A43	wins ace
AQT	wins ace wins queen



# Reading hidden hands

- Key pointer
  - put yourself in the place of the hidden hand ...
  - what would you do ?

*(This loses when hidden hand plays illogically 😞)*

# One More Hand to declare ...

- Board 5 hand
- Board 5 full hand : from the European

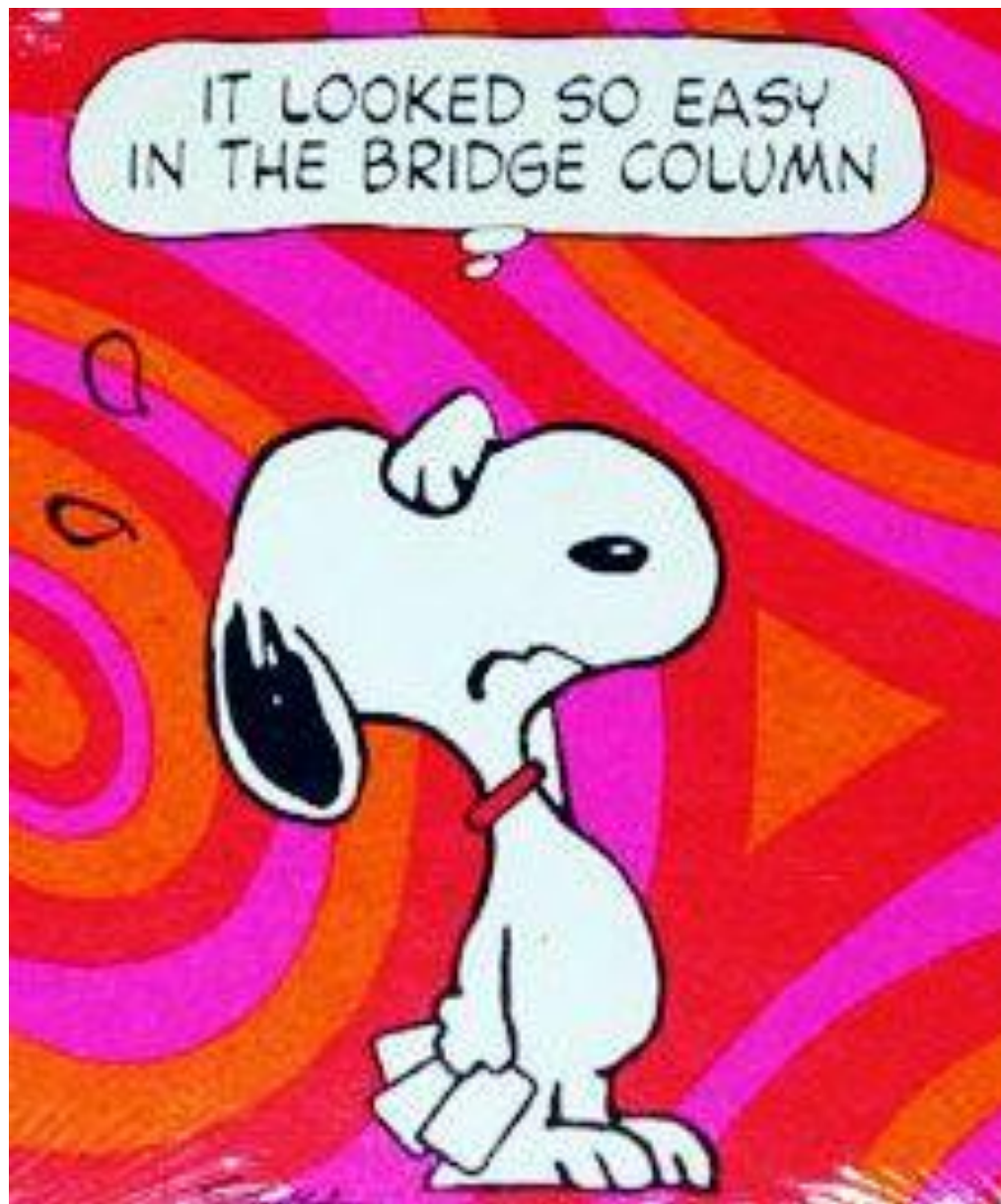
# KEY POINTS SO FAR

- You need to have a plan
  - combine the best way to play suits
  - watch for vacant spaces affecting that
- Listen to the bidding
- Logic over-rules instincts
- Minimise the information you give away

# KEY POINT IN ALL PLAY HANDS

- COUNT
- COUNT
- COUNT

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# HAPPY TO TAKE QUESTIONS

On what we have done, or what we  
have not done ....