

Lesson 18

Defender's card play

Book Pages 84-88 sections 5.7

Objectives for Lesson 18

- *Defence summary*
- *Third hand plays*
- Interpret the *opening lead*
- The *rule of eleven*
- *Second hand plays*
- *Defence strategies*

Good defenders communicate



Recap: Standard opening leads

Lead an honour = I LOVE my suit

Lead a low card = I LIKE my suit

Lead a high card = I HATE my suit

Recap: *Leads* vs NTs

High priority:

Top of a *sequence* - three *consecutive cards* headed by an *honour*: K Q J 8

Top of an *internal sequence* - three *honours*, two are in *sequence*: A Q J 8 5

4th highest - from one or two *honours*: K J 5 3 2

Low priority:

2nd highest - from 4 or more low cards: 9 8 6 4 3

Middle from 3 low cards (*MUD*): 9 8 4

Top of *doubleton*: 5 4

Recap: *Leads vs Trumps*

High priority:

Top of a *sequence* - two or more card *sequence* headed by the Ace and King: A K 3 2

Singleton: 5

Top of a *sequence* - two or more *honours*: K Q 7 4

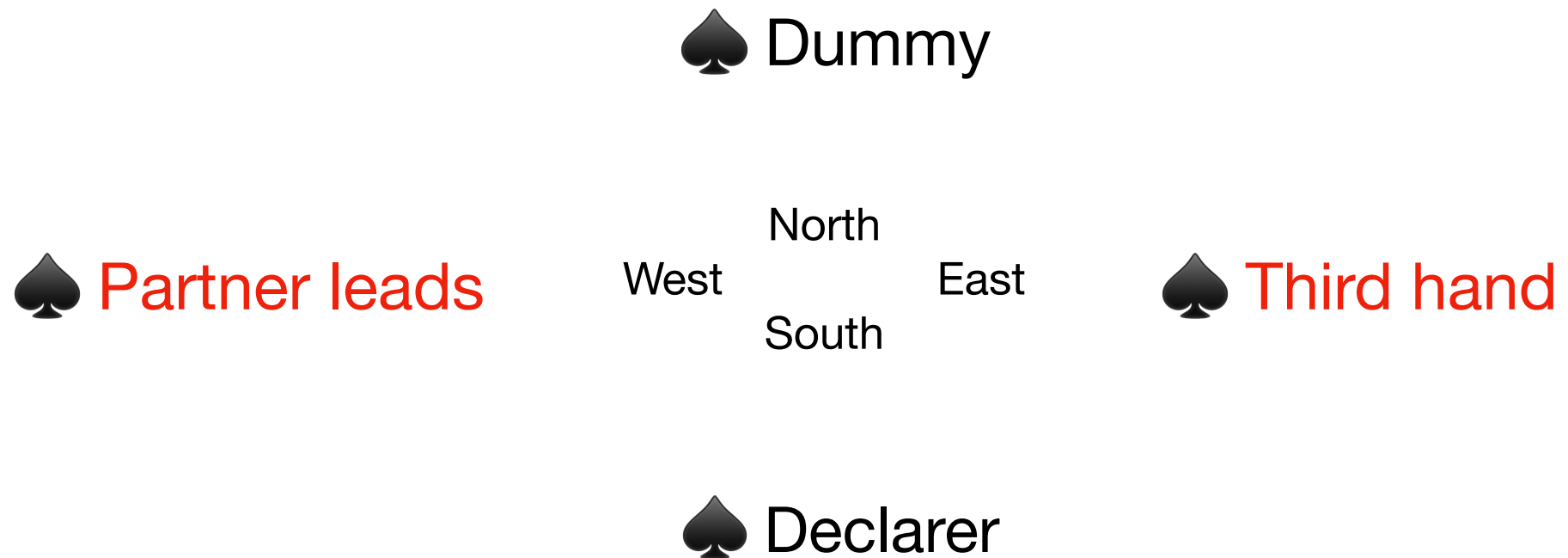
Low priority:

Top of a small *doubleton*: 8 5

Second highest from four cards without an honour or MUD: 8 7 5 2 or 9 8 4

Low from a *suit* with a single *honour* (risky): K 5 2

Terminology: *third hand*



Terminology: *second hand*

♠ Dummy

♠ Second hand

West North East
South

♠ Partner

♠ Declarer leads

Partner *leads an honour*

Partner led an honour - meaning?

- *NTs: it is top of a sequence holding three honours. It could be QJ10x, QJ10, or AQJ10*
- *Trumps: it will be QJx(x), partner might also have the 10*

 Q led

 6 5 4

West North
South

Declarer's holding?

- *NTs: Declarer has Ax, Axx or xx*
- *Trumps: Declarer definitely has the ace, as we do not *lead* away from aces without the king against trumps*

 K 9 8 7



We play *ATTITUDE* on partner's lead when *partner* is winning the *trick*. Play the *highest card* you can without costing a *trick* - the 

Partner *leads an honour - hearts are trumps*

♠ 6 5 4

♠ K led

West North
 South East

♠ 8 3



Opener is winning the trick; dummy has low cards - do we like the suit?

Yes, because we can ruff the 3rd spade, so play a high card: ♠8

Signal on the opening lead

HELD

Third hands plays: #1

- Partner has *led an honour* and is *winning the trick*
- Signal *ATTITUDE* to the *opening lead*
- *High encourages, low discourages*
- *HELD*

Partner *leads*, dummy wins

Partner led a low card - meaning?

Dummy plays the ♥A - winning the trick

- NTs: Low = *LIKE* - has one or two honours, e.g QJxx, or Q10xx, Qxxx, J10xx, Jxxx
- Trumps: Low = *LIKE* - could be Qxx(x), Jxx(x) 10xx(x) or a 2 singleton - we still *like* their lead

♥ A 5 4

♥ 2 led

West North
 South East

♥ K 8 6 3



We play *ATTITUDE* on partner's lead when dummy is winning the trick. Play the *highest* card you can without costing a trick - the ♥8

Third hands plays: #2

- Partner has *led*, *dummy* plays a high card and *third hand* cannot beat *dummy's* card
- *Signal ATTITUDE* to the *opening lead*
- *High encourages, low discourages*
- *HELD*

Partner *leads*, low cards in *dummy*

1. *Partner led a low card* - meaning?

- *NTs: Low = LIKE* - has one or two *honours*, e.g QJxx, or Q10xx, Qxxx, J10xx, Jxxx
- *Trumps: Low = LIKE* - could be Qxx(x), Jxx(x) 10xx(x) or a 2 *singleton* - we still *like* their *lead*

♦ 2 led

4. *Playing the high* ♦ J forces *declarer* to *play higher to win the trick* - which *promotes opener's honours to winners!*

5. *Opener* knows that *declarer* has the ♦ 10, and that *partner* has the ♦ Q

2. *Dummy* plays the ♥ 4 - from *low cards*

♦ 9 5 4

6. Finally *partner* knows *opener* has the remaining *honour* - the ♦ K

North

West

South

East

♦ Q J 6 3

3. When *opener* is not *winning the trick*, *play the highest card you can to try and win the trick* - but the bottom of a *sequence*: the ♦ J - *denying* the ♦ 10

♦ A 10

- *Leaders* **lead** from the **top**
- *Followers* **follow** from the **bottom**

Partner *leads*, low cards in *dummy*

1. *Partner* led a low card - meaning?

- *NTs: Low = LIKE* - has one or two honours, e.g QJxx, or Q10xx, Qxxx, J10xx, Jxxx
- *Trumps: Low = LIKE* - could be Qxx(x), Jxx(x) 10xx(x) or a 2 singleton - we still *like* their *lead*

 2 led

West

North

South

 9 5 4

East

 A J 3

3. When *opener* is not winning the *trick*, play the *highest card* you can to try and win the *trick* - the 

4. Usually *play* the J back to *opener*



Third hands plays: #3

- Partner has *led*, *dummy* has low cards
- *Third hand plays HIGH* to try to *win the trick*, or
- *Force out an honour from declarer*
- BUT play the lower of equal cards

Partner *leads*, dummy plays low from high

1. *Partner* led a low card - meaning?

- *NTs: Low = LIKE* - has one or two honours, e.g QJxx, or Q10xx, Qxxx, J10xx, Jxxx
- *Trumps: Low = LIKE* - could be Qxx(x), Jxx(x) 10xx(x) or a 2 singleton - we still *like* their lead

♠ 2 led

West

North

South

East

♠ K 5 4

2. *Dummy* plays the ♠4 - from a high card

♠ A J 3

3. We must keep the ♠A to stop the ♠K from making a *trick* later

4. *Partner* must have the ♠Q or ♠10



Third hands plays: #4

- Partner has *led*, *dummy* plays low
- *Dummy* has an *honour*
- Keep a high card to beat *dummy's honour*

Third hands plays: summary

- *Third hand plays high, except:*
- If partner or *dummy* is winning: *signal attitude*
- Play the lower of *touching cards*
- Keep a high card to deal with an *honour* in *dummy*

Defence strategies and card play

- *Third hand plays*
- Interpret the *opening lead*
- ***The rule of eleven***
- *Second hand plays*
- *Defence strategies*

What is your *lead* against 3NT?

♠ K J 7 6 4

♥ 10 9

♦ K 7 5

♣ J 3 2

4th highest:

- (from one or two *honours*)
- we make *tricks* from *length winners*, so our little cards will take *tricks*!

What does the *lead* mean?

At your table *deal* the spades as per the following layout...

... where do you *deal* out the remaining spades to match the *opening lead*?

♠ 10 5 3

♠ 6 led

	North	
West		East
	South	

♠ Q 8 2

♠ A

Is it a *2nd from nothing*, e.g. ♠76xx?

Is it a *MUD*, e.g. ♠764?

Is it the *fourth* highest, e.g. ♠KJ76

The *rule of eleven*

1. Take the number of *pips* on the card *led* (here the ♠6)
2. Add the number of cards higher than ♠6 you can see in *dummy* and your hand (here ♠10, ♠8 and ♠Q)
3. Deduct the result from *eleven*
4. The answer is the number of cards higher than the ♠6 in *declarer's hand*

♠6

+

three (♠10, ♠8, ♠Q)

$$6 + 3 = 9$$

$$\text{eleven} - 9 = 2 \text{ cards}$$

Here is the full layout

♠ K J 7 6 4

West North East
South

♠ 10 5 3

♠ Q 8 2

♠ A 9

What does the *lead* mean?

1. This is the *play* to the first *trick*. What is *partner's lead* from? Is it *4th highest*?

Use the *rule of 11* to work it out before deciding which *card* to play from your *hand*

♥ 7 led

West North
 South East

♥ K 10 4 2

2. Seven pips plus four *cards*, across your *hand* and *dummy*, higher than the ♥7 = 11 minus 11 = zero

If *partner's lead* is *4th highest*, then *declarer* has nothing higher than ♥7

Partner's lead must be from ♥AQ97

Play *low* and *partner's* ♥7 will win

♥ J 8 5

3. Note: *Partner could* be *leading* from:

- *MUD* e.g. ♥976, or
- *Second* from nothing e.g. ♥9763, or
- *Top of doubleton*, e.g. ♥73

If so, *declarer* has ♥AQ and it doesn't matter which *card* you *play*



4. But if it is the 4th highest then...

The ♥7 cannot be beaten by *declarer* and you can simply *discard* the ♥5

Here is the full layout

Dummy's ♥K will always *win a trick* as it is sitting after the ♥A

But if you automatically *play* the ♥J (*third hand high*), the ♥10 will also become a *winner* for dummy

♥ K 10 4 2

♥ A Q 9 7

West North East
South

♥ J 8 5

♥ 6 3

What does the *lead* mean to *declarer*?

Play low from dummy...

♦ K 10 4 2

♦ 6 led

West North East
South

♦ 3

Six *pips* plus five *cards*, across your *hand* and *dummy*, higher than the ♦6 = 11
minus 11 = zero

If *opener's lead* is 4th highest, then their *partner* has nothing higher than the ♦6

♦ A 9 7

... and the ♦7 will win

Here is the full layout

Win trick 1 with the ♦7

Then *play* ♦A

Then *play* ♦9 which loses to the ♦Q

Your *tricks* are ♦7, ♦A, ♦J and ♦K

Four *tricks*

♦ K J 4 2

♦ Q 10 8 6

North
West South East

♦ 5 3

♦ A 9 7

What does the *lead* mean?

Apply the *Rule of 11*: ♣8 led plus 4 = 12, cannot be 4th highest

West is not *leading* from a long suit

No point in *playing* your ♣10, ff *partner* is leading *MUD*, they have the ♣9

♣ K J 4 2

♣ 8 led

West North
 South East

♣ Q 10 5 3



Here is the full layout

East should not continue with clubs but look to another *suit* for *defensive tricks*

West can *continue* clubs - as the ♣8 forced the ♣A, East must have ♣Q and ♣10

Lead through opposition's strength, do not *lead* around to *opposition's strength*

♣ K J 4 2

♣ 9 8 6

	North	
West		East
	South	

♣ Q 10 5 3

♣ A 7

Using the *rule of eleven*: summary

- Use the *rule of eleven* on partner's lead of a *spot card*
- Work it out before you *play* to the *trick*
- It can tell you if partner is *leading* 4th highest
- Use it to work out if you should *return* partner's *suit*
- *Declarer* can use the same *rule*

Defence strategies and card play

- *Third hand plays*
- Interpret the *opening lead*
- The *rule of eleven*
- ***Second hand plays***
- *Defence strategies*

Terminology: *second hand*

In this example, *declarer* (South) has *led*, West is the *second hand* to *play a card*

It applies the other way round too, when *dummy leads*, now East is the *second hand* to *play*

♠ Dummy

♠ Second hand

West North
 East
 South

♠ Partner

♠ Declarer leads

Guide - *second hand* plays low

Declarer obviously has a reason for *playing* that *suit*; *declarer* is trying to *win* or *set up winners*

Attitude signals are not going to be relevant here

Defenders aim is not to let *declarer* win too many *tricks* in the *suit*

♠ Dummy

♠ Second hand

West North East
South

♠ Partner

♠ Declarer leads

Second hand plays low

Playing ♥A means *declarer* plays ♥4 from *dummy* and two things happen:

- i) your ace does not take any other *high cards* out with it and
- ii) *declarer's tricks* in hearts are *established*

♥ K 7 4

♥ A 6 3

North
West East
South



♥ 2 led

Second hand plays low - the full layout

Declarer is entitled to only one heart *trick*, either the ♥K or the ♥Q but not both

Jumping up with the ♥A establishes both the ♥K and ♥Q as *winners* for *declarer*

If instead, you *play low*, then *declarer* wins the K♥, but later, *declarer* must play the *suit* again

♥ K 7 4

♥ A 6 3

	North	
West		East
	South	

♥ J 10 9 5

♥ Q 8 2

Second hand plays low

Declarer leads the ♥4 from dummy, partner plays ♥9, declarer ♥Q and your ♥A captures the ♥Q

Now partner has two winners in the suit ♥J and ♥10

Remember you are a team and need to cooperate to maximise your side's *tricks* in each *suit*

There are four *tricks* available in hearts - declarer is only entitled to one

♥ K 7 4 led

♥ A 6 3

North
West East
South

♥ J 10 9 5

♥ Q 8 2

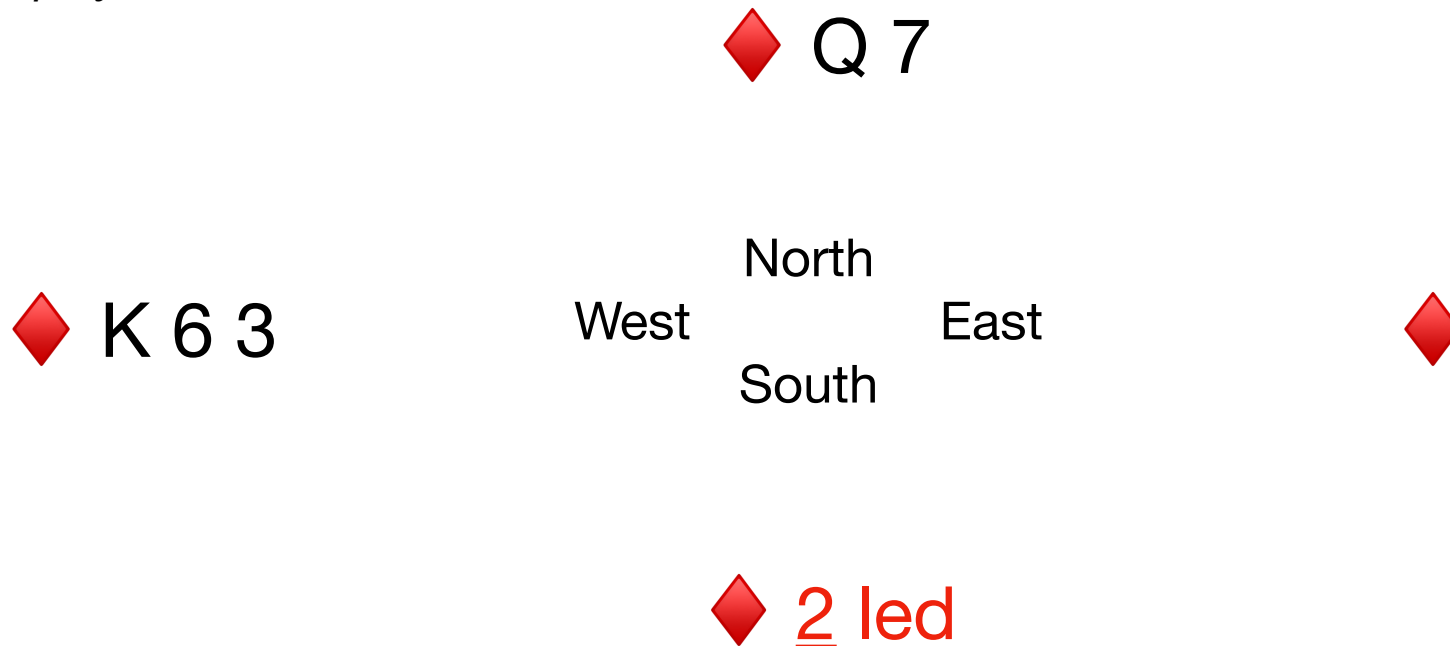
But now suppose it is a *suit contract* (spades are *trumps*)

Declarer plays low towards dummy in a side suit, diamonds

There are still *trumps* in *dummy*...

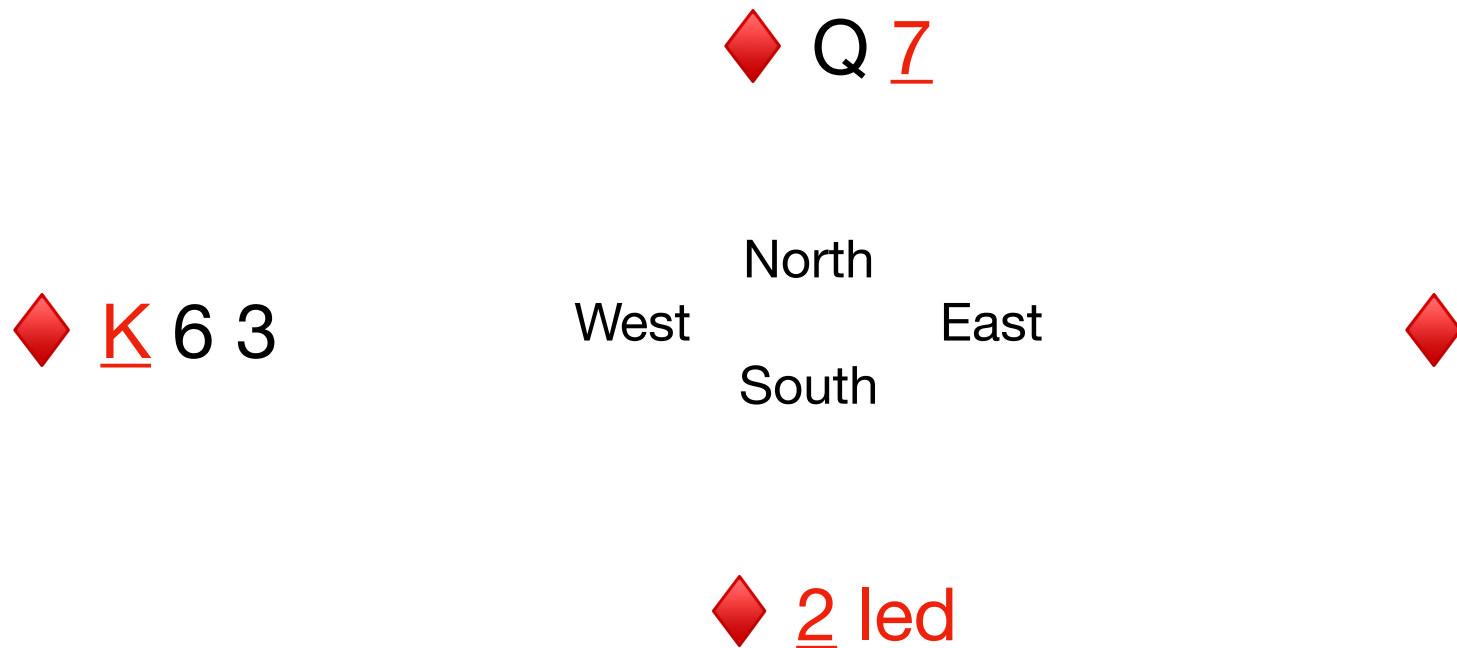
What is *declarer's* purpose?

What do you *play*?



Second hand plays low - exception

If *declarer* has the  A, your side is only entitled to one *trick*, the  K, so you had better take it now before it is too late and there are no more diamonds in *dummy* and your *winner* is *ruffed*
If *partner* has the  A, you will *win* two *tricks*



Second hand plays low: an honour is led

In no trumps, South must have at least ♣AJ10 and is *finessing*

If South had only ♣AJx, he would *play low* from *dummy* to the J♣

If South had ♣Axx, he would *play low* from *hand* towards the ♣Q

♣ Q 6 3



West

North

East

South



♣ K 8

Your ♣K will not win a *trick*, but you can perhaps *promote a trick* in *partner's hand* by *covering the honour with your honour*, which *forces declarer* to use **two** of his *honours* on the same *trick*

Second hand plays low: an honour is led

Your ♣K forces declarer to use the ♣A, declarer wins ♣J and ♣10 but partner's ♣9 is a winner
If you do not cover the honour with your honour, declarer will win all four tricks in the suit ♣JAQ10
Guideline: cover an honour with an honour ONLY if there is a chance of promoting a trick for your side in either your hand or partner's hand

♣ Q 6 3

♣ 9 7 4 2

North
West East
South

♣ K 8

♣ A J 10 5

Second hand plays low: an honour is led

Look at the *length* of the suit in *dummy* and the *length* of your suit

This time you have four clubs, if you *cover*, *declarer* will win four *tricks* ♣AJ105

If you do not *cover*, *declarer* cannot keep on *finessing* and eventually your *king* becomes a *winner*

♣ Q 6 3

♣ 9 8 7

West North
 South East

♣ K 4 3 2

♣ A J 10 5

***Second hand* plays: summary**

- *Second hand* plays low
- But cover an *honour* with an *honour* - if it will *promote* a *trick* for *defence*
- Exception: if playing high will defeat the *contract*

Defence strategies and card play

- *Third hand plays*
- Interpret the *opening lead*
- The *rule of eleven*
- *Second hand plays*
- ***Defence strategies***

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

W	N	E	S
			1NT
P	2NT	P	3NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♠4 - Declarer has 8 tricks and needs a diamond winner for 9 tricks

- Rule of 11: $4+4=8$ $11-8=3$
- Third hand plays high ♠J, denies the ♠10, so West knows South has ♠A K 10
- Declarer wins with ♠A and plays a diamond - West plays low allowing partner to win and play ♠7 back
- WARNING: If West plays ♦K and then continues with spades, declarer will win with the 10♠ which is the 9th trick

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

W	N	E	S
			1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠7

- Rule of 11: $7+5=12$ $11-12= -1$
- As the *lead* is from a *suit* with no *honours*, East wins ♠A but does not *return* spades. Instead *switch* to what?
- Hearts looks promising - *weakness in dummy*
- Lead Q♥ - *top of a sequence of three honours*
- The *defence* take first 6 *tricks*!

Defence strategies

- Read partner's *lead*
- Usually return partner's *lead*
- Work out what the *third hand* play tells you
- *Second hand* plays low
- When *switching*, *lead* through *strength* towards *weakness*

Playing *hands*...

Quiz

Review and Questions

- You will end up *defending* 50% of the time
- The *defence* need to cooperate to work out where their side can *win* or *build tricks*
- Playing the right *card* at every opportunity (*lead*, *3rd hand*, *2nd hand*) communicates your *holding* to partner
- Good *defenders* are *winning bridge players*!

Homework

Read book pages:

- 84-88, including summary in Section 5.7, page 88

Book page 89 - answers on page 90

- *Exercise on opening leads*

Next Time

The competitive auction - yay!