

# ACTIVE DEFENCE

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- Rule of 11
- Counting Cards
- Looking and remembering the Bidding
- Counting Declarer's Points
- Working out Partner's Points
- Possible Layout of the Cards
- Thinking about your Lead

When defending it is a race with declarer to make as many tricks as possible; declarer to make their contract and you in defence to take as many as possible.

You need to take into account the bidding (or lack of it). How did the opposition reach their contract? Was it a confident auction or have they stumbled into a "best of a bad job" contract in NT or a misfit?

Sometimes you will need quick tricks (this does not occur very often).

Another time you will lead trying to set up tricks in your hand (top of a run).

Also another common lead is when you just do not want to give away any cheap tricks (leading away from unsupported Aces or Kings).

Try and give each player a rough point count and card holding based on the bidding that has happened at the table. Once dummy goes down on the table you can re-evaluate your partner's point count and hopefully work out their holding.

## Rule of 11

The rule of 11 is only used against NT contracts and only works if the 4<sup>th</sup> highest card is led.

The rule of 11 works by taking the number of the lead card ( 4<sup>th</sup> highest ) away from 11.

The answer you get is the number of cards higher than the lead card in the other 3 hands.

	AJ8 <b>6</b> 2						K7 <b>5</b> 3
43		Q97		QT94			J62
	KT5					A8	
Lead card <b>6</b>		11- <b>6</b> =5		Lead card <b>3</b>			11- <b>3</b> =8

## EXP 1

West	North	East	South
1NT	P	3NT	P

North leads ♣6  
 East plays the ♣8  
 What does South play ?

East dummy  
 ♠ A73  
 ♥ 742  
 ♦ AT95  
 ♣ AJ8

South ♠ J92  
 ♥ Q8653  
 ♦ 72  
 ♣ K94

North's ♣6 is fourth highest, in which case he must have started with ♣QT76 and perhaps even a lower ♣. South can deduce this by using the **Rule of 11**: we subtract **6** from **11** to give us a total of **5**.

South looks at their own hand and can see **2** cards higher than a **6**.

Now South looks at East (dummy) and can see **3** cards higher than a **6**. Meaning that South can see all **5** cards higher than their partner's lead.

Conclusion is that West declarer can have no cards above the ♣6 that has been led.

With all this information South can confidently play the ♣9 over East ♣8 knowing this will win the trick.

South now needs to think about their partner's ♣ holding and play the ♣K to unblock the suit and in doing so the contract of 3NT should go 1 off.

	♠ QT54	
	♥ A	
	♦ 643	
	♣ QT763	
♠ K86		♠ A73
♥ KJT9		♥ 742
♦ KQJ8		♦ AT95
♣ 52		♣ AJ8
	♠ J92	
	♥ Q8653	
	♦ 72	
	♣ K94	

## EXP 2

South	West	North	East
1♦	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

East leads ♥3  
 South dummy plays ♥10  
 You, West play ♥A  
 What card do you play next ?

West ♠ 8743  
 ♥ A5  
 ♦ 984  
 ♣ KJ92

South ♠ A9  
 dummy ♥ KJT  
 ♦ AKQT3  
 ♣ QT3

East leads the ♥3. South (dummy) plays the ♥10 which loses to West's ♥A.  
 It is now that West needs to stop and look closely at the South (dummy) hand and count tricks.

South's tricks are : ♠ = 1 ♥ = 2 ♦ = 5 ♣ = 0

If North has the ♣A the contract is unbeatable.

So West needs to assume that East has the ♣A and switches to the ♣2 on trick two.  
 East wins with the ♣A and returns a ♣ to defeat the contract.

	♠ KQJ	
	♥ 864	
	♦ J72	
	♣ 8754	
♠ 8743		♠ T652
♥ A5		♥ Q9732
♦ 984		♦ 65
♣ KJ92		♣ A6
	♠ A9	
	♥ KJT	
	♦ AKQT3	
	♣ QT3	

### EXP 3

West	North	East	South
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P	P	P

North leads the ♣3  
 Declarer plays ♣7 and South's ♣Q wins.  
 South returns the ♣9 followed by ♣J West  
 and ♣2 from partner North.  
 Declarer now leads the ♥J.  
 What does South play ?

East ♠ 84  
 dummy ♥ 62  
 ♦ AKQT53  
 ♣ KT7

South ♠ K653  
 ♥ A7543  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ Q95

North leads the ♣3. Declarer plays the ♣7 and South wins with the ♣Q.  
 South returns the ♣9 followed by declarer West's ♣J. This is where North needs to play a  
 low ♣2 to keep communications open in the ♣ suit with partner. By playing the ♣2 it also  
 shows their partner that they started with a 5 card suit.

Declarer West now leads the ♥J round to South, what card should South play ?

**South needs to count points.**

Declarer West opened the bidding with 1NT 12 to 14 points

Dummy East on the table started with 12 points.

That gives a range of 24 to 26 points

In South's own hand they have 9 points.

South has counted the ♣ and has already seen West play 2 clubs so this puts partner  
 North with the ♣A.

North can not also hold the ♠A as this would mean West opened on 11 points.

For these reasons South must win the ♥J with the ♥A and return their last ♣ to defeat the  
 contract.

♠ Q972  
 ♥ T98  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ A8632

♠ AJT  
 ♥ KQJ  
 ♦ J9842  
 ♣ J4

♠ 84  
 ♥ 62  
 ♦ AKQT53  
 ♣ KT7

♠ K653  
 ♥ A7543  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ Q95

## EXP 4

West	North	East	South
P	2NT	P	3NT
P	P	P	

East leads 4<sup>th</sup> highest ♦5  
 Declarer North wins with ♦Q after your partner West had played the ♦7.  
 Declarer North then leads the ♥8  
 What card does East play ?

East	♠ 653
	♥ A76
	♦ AJ654
	♣ 83
South	♠ QT9
dummy	♥ KJ2
	♦ T32
	♣ AJT7

East leads the ♦5 to dummy's ♦2 and partner West plays the ♦7. The trick is taken by declarer North with the ♦Q.  
 East now needs to stop and do two things.

- Count Points**

North opened 2NT	20 to 22 points
South, dummy has	11 points
East's own hand has	9 points
Total	40 to 42 points
Conclusion, North opened with exactly	20 points

- Ask themselves **WHY** North did not win trick one with either the ♦8 or ♦9

When North leads the ♥8 East knows their partner can not have the ♥Q because we have calculated that West does not have a single point in their hand.  
 East must win with the ♥A immediately and then play their ♦A which drops the marked bare ♦K. Contract one down.

	♠ AKJ	
	♥ QT98	
	♦ KQ	
	♣ KQ62	
♠ 8742		♠ 653
♥ 543		♥ A76
♦ 987		♦ AJ654
♣ 954		♣ 83
	♠ QT9	
	♥ KJ2	
	♦ T32	
	♣ AJT7	

## EXP 5

North	East	South	West
P	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

What do you lead sitting East ?

East ♠ A9  
♥ JT92  
♦ Q65  
♣ 7543

### Lets recall the bidding.

Our standard lead of a ♥ does not look promising as that was the suit opened by South. Also due to lack of entries the likelihood of establishing a ♥ trick is slight. Lets now look at the other 3 suits. ♣s with no honour card does not look like a good lead. Three ♦s to the ♦Q might be OK but lets look and think about the ♠ suit.

Did either North or South bid ♠s ? NO

For this reason North and South are at best likely to be holding three cards each in ♠s. If you give North / South a combined total of six ♠s with East's two this means West is holding a minimum of five ♠s.

Conclusion lets lead a ♠.

We also need to think about unblocking the suit so the card to lead is the ♠A

Partner West plays high to encourage (♠7).

East plays ♠9 and contracted is defeated.

	♠ 432	
	♥ 753	
	♦ A93	
	♣ KJ92	
♠ KJ765		♠ A9
♥ 84		♥ JT92
♦ J742		♦ Q65
♣ Q8		♣ 7543
	♠ QT8	
	♥ AKQ6	
	♦ KT8	
	♣ AT6	

## EXP 6

North	East	South	West
1♠	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	4♠	P
P	P		

East has a easy lead. ♦A  
 After seeing dummy what does  
 East lead at trick 2 ?

East ♠ J63  
 ♥ A8542  
 ♦ AK7  
 ♣ 65

South ♠ K94  
 dummy ♥ 976  
 ♦ 8  
 ♣ AKQT84

With AKx in the unbid suit, ♦, East does not have a problem with his opening lead.  
 But which card to lead on trick 2 ?  
 This is the crucial trick. Dummy's powerful ♣ suit means that East cannot afford to pay  
 passively.

East needs to **Recall the Bidding**.

North's rebid of 2♥ shows a 4 card or longer suit.  
 Dummy has 3 ♥s, East themselves has 5 ♥s and with declarer North's 4 ♥s makes a total  
 of 12 ♥s leaving partner West with one at most.

East therefore switches to the ♥A then another ♥ that West now trumps.  
 East as long as they are careful will come to a ♠ trick later on to defeat the contract.

	♠ AT876	
	♥ KQJT	
	♦ QJ9	
	♣ J	
♠ Q2		♠ J63
♥ 3		♥ A8542
♦ T65432		♦ AK7
♣ 9732		♣ 65
	♠ K94	
	♥ 976	
	♦ 8	
	♣ AKQT84	