

Linda's Defense Advice

1. Don't lead away from an A in a suit contract.
2. Remember the auction throughout the play of the hand, and try to figure out how many points your partner has and where those points might be.
3. When declarer leads toward a K or KQ on the board, do not pop up with the ace.
4. Don't lead the A if you are sitting behind the dummy, and the dummy has the K.
5. Don't lead a suit that you know both the declarer and the dummy are out of if there are still trumps in both dummy and declarer. (sluff-ruff)
6. Watch your partner's signals. A low card means no interest in that suit.
7. Signal your partner if you have something you would like your partner to lead if he gets in. Don't signal if you know your partner is never getting in.
8. Third hand high means the highest card you must play, not necessarily the highest card. (With KQJ, you would play the J.)
9. Second hand low unless covering an honor with an honor.
10. Cover an honor with an honor unless led honor is touching another and you have enough cards to hold up.
11. Don't lead singleton K or Q (unless partner bid the suit).
12. Don't switch suits without a good reason.
13. Lead through strength (not length).
14. When sitting in front of declarer, lead the weak suit on the board.
15. If you are long in trumps with an honor, lead your longest suit, not your singleton.
16. Try to lead something that will cause declarer to ruff where his trumps are longest.
17. Try not to give the opponents a trick that they would not get without your help.

Eddie Kantar's Defensive Tips

- 1 Don't lead a trump when the opponents are misfitted.
- 2 If partner is marked with a singleton trump, there is no point in leading a trump from Kxx because neither of you will be able to continue the suit. Try another lead and hope partner will find the trump switch, if necessary.
- 3 Deceptive leads in the trump suit include the 9 from 109x and the jack from QJ doubleton.
- 4 When dummy has shown a long side suit plus trump support, a trump lead is desirable if you have dummy's long suit bottled up; otherwise it is the worst lead in the world!
- 5 Do not lead a singleton vs. a voluntarily bid small slam if you have an ace. Partner can't have the ace and you will probably be helping declarer out no end by placing the missing honors in partner's hand.
- 6 On the other hand, a singleton lead against a small slam when you don't have an ace has a much better chance of succeeding. With a little luck partner will have the ace of your singleton suit or the ace of trump.
- 7 You do not lead the same against 3NT as against 6NT. For example, say you have: S. K10764 H. Q84 D. Q76 C. 83
If the bidding goes 1NT- pass- 3NT- all pass, you have an automatic spade lead. However if the bidding goes 1NT-pass-6NT- all pass, a spade lead is horrible. Why? The opponents presumably have about 33 HCP to contract for 6NT which means your partner is busted. There is no point in leading away from an honor. Lead a club and hope to make two tricks if declarer finesses into you.
- 8 When leading partner's suit against suit or notrump with three or four small, lead high if you have supported the suit; lead low if you haven't.
- 9 After leading high from three small in partner's suit, (862) play the middle one next. Lead the eight and then play the six. This assumes you have not supported the suit. If you have, lead the eight.

- 10 After leading low from four small in partner's suit, (8632) play your lowest one next. Lead the deuce and then play the three. This assumes you have not supported the suit. If you have led the eight.
- 11 If you have led high from four small, play your lowest one next. With 8632, lead the eight and then play the deuce.
- 12 When partner doubles a slam contract after having bid, the double forbids the lead of partner's suit (or a trump). Partner usually has a void (or an outside AK), it's your job to figure out which and make the killing lead!
- 13 Be on qui vive (alert) to double artificial bids (Stayman, Jacoby Transfers) cuebids and Blackwood responses, if you want the lead in that suit. These doubles are called Lead Directing Doubles.
- 14 To make a Lead Directing Double at a low level, particularly the two level, you need five or six cards in the suit headed by at least three honor cards. To double an artificial bid made at the four level or higher, all you need is strength in the suit, not length (KQx).
- 15 When leading an unbid suit at notrump with four cards not headed by an honor, it is too misleading to lead low which shows strength, You are better placed to lead your highest or next highest if the highest is a nine. Lead the 8 from 8543; lead the 6 from 9642. Even the 7 from 10732 is possible if you want another suit returned.
- 16 Make sure you discuss with your partner what you are going to lead from AKx(x) against a suit contract. Whichever you decide upon, lead the other other from AK doubleton.
- 17 Be advised that if you lead the A from AKx(x) vs. a suit contract, that is a trick one convention only. During the rest of the hand, the king is led from the AKx(x). The reason is that after trick one either defender is more likely to want to lead an ace and does not want partner to think he has the king as well.
- 18 If you and your partner have decided to lead ace from ace-king, be advised that the king is still led at trick one if:
 - (1) The suit has been supported by EITHER player.
 - (2) The contract is at the five level or higher.
 - (3) You have AK doubleton.
- 19 You and partner might try leading the queen from the AKQ vs. a suit contract. Assuming partner can read the lead (usually can), third hand gives count. There are two advantages to this lead:
 - (1) The opening lead can tell how many tricks can be cashed.
 - (2) If you play ace from ace-king, you know your partner doesn't have the queen when the ace is led.
- 20 Lead inferences

If partner doesn't lead your suit, assume partner:

 - (1) Is void
 - (2) Is leading a singleton instead
 - (3) Is leading a sequence instead
 - (4) Has the ace and fears declarer has the king (particularly true if partner has supported the suit.)
 - (5) Has forgotten the bidding

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