

Defense

Surround Plays

When you are leading up to dummy and dummy has the jack, ten or nine, which you have surrounded (the cards either side of dummy's jack, ten or nine), then if you have two cards higher than dummy's surrounded card, imagine that dummy's surrounded card is in your hand and lead the card you would lead if that were the case. What a mouthful!

Examples:

North	
A95	
West	East (you)
K63	Q1082

South
J74

Lead ten of suit.

North	
1064	
West	East
A32	KJ95

South
Q87

Lead Jack of suit

Put 732 in west hand
and AQ8 in South
hand. What happens?

Playing the Hand

Entries

Virtually every hand you play deals with entries or has the need to take entries into account. When planning your play always try to be wary of how many entries you may need. First, a couple of general rules.

1. Once you decide which suit you are planning to establish, keep as many entries to that hand as possible.
2. As a general rule, try to keep entries to the weaker of the two hands.
3. Ducking tricks in long suits is an entry saving technique.

AK432 To win four tricks play low from both hands.

765

4. At times you must duck a round in a suit before taking a finesse.

AQ432

65 Be sneaky. Lead low from AQ432. If east is the nervous type they may rise and make things easy for you. Finesse the queen on the second round.

5. Unblock an honor when opponent is marked with a certain card and you have no side dummy entry.

	Q109			A1043	
J872		A654	J872		K95
	K3			Q6	

When west leads low and east plays the ace you play the king so you can finesse the ten on the second round of the suit. (west is marked with the jack)

More Entry Magic

Watch out for those blocking cards when you are playing a suit. For example you need four tricks playing the following suit.

	KQ92	
J8764		3
	A105	

Lead ten to the king, then two to the ace, now you can finesse the nine to get all four tricks.

	K1082	
Q976		54
	AJ3	

Lead Jack, covered by queen and king, play to ace, lead low to eight or ten (based on whether you think the distribution is 4-2 or 3-3).

	KJ86	
10752		A3
	Q94	

Lead nine to jack, low to queen, now you can finesse eight. Suppose east ducks Jack, when you lead low towards queen be prepared to unblock queen if you have no other entries to dummy.

Can't get to dummy? A trump loser, natural or created might be the answer.

K765
4
QJ32
8765

QJ109832	4
10976	3
106	98754
Void	AK9432

A
AKQJ852
AK
QJ10

Your contract is 6 hearts. Can you make it? (west bid 3 spades)
Queen of spades lead.

Be optimistic to overcome a shortage of entries

K73
AK762
982
108

1092	64
1096	Q5
A53	KQ74
KQJ9	65432

AQJ85
J43
J106
A7

King of clubs lead – contract is 4 spades.

Useful Conventions

Suppose your partner has opened one no trump and you have five spades and four hearts and a game going hand. What does your partnership do? Using the Smolen convention we can find four four or five three fits where the No trump bidder gets to play the hand.

AK763	AQxx
Q432	Axxxxx
XXX	X
X	XXX

Partner opens 1NT, you bid 2 clubs, partner bids 2 diamonds, he does not have a four card major. Using Smolen a jump to 3 hearts shows four hearts and five spades. With three spades partner will bid 4 spades, otherwise 3NT.

In the second hand the bidding will be the same except that you will respond 3 spades after 2 diamonds showing four spades and five hearts.

Suppose you hold the following hand.

J64

54

AJ102

7653

Partner opens 2NT. What do you do? Most would bid 3NT but since I have ruffing value for declarer in hearts it sure would be nice to play in spades if partner has five spades. Using Puppet Stayman we can find out such wonderful things.

Over an opening bid of 1NT or 2NT the bid of 3 artificial and asks opener to respond whether they might have a five or four card major. With a five card major they would bid it. (3 hearts or 3 spades). With one or two 4 card majors the opener bids 3 diamonds. With no four card major the opener bids 3 NT.

If opener shows a five card major and it is useful to you bid four of that major. If opener bids 3 diamonds and you have one four card major bid the other major at the three level (bid the one you do not have). So if you have four hearts you bid 3 spades. If that is the four card major that the opener has he will bid four spades, otherwise three NT. If opener shows one or both four card majors and you have two four card majors yourself you know that you have a four-four fit. Bid 4 diamonds to show both majors. (some bid 4 clubs to show both majors and 4 bids with stronger hands to signify slam try)