

LESSON 6

Watching Out for the Opponents



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GENERAL CONCEPTS

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“While the declarer is trying to take enough tricks to make the contract, the opponents are trying to take enough to defeat the contract. When declarer comes to the fourth step in the plan, *Now put it all together*, it’s necessary to consider what the opponents might do.

“For example, the opponents are trying to win the suit establishment race — they would like to establish their long suit, before declarer’s suits are established. They also will try to capture the declarer’s high cards or take away one of declarer’s entries before declarer is ready to use it.

“The focus of this lesson is on taking into account what the opponents might do to interfere with declarer’s plans. It looks at ways of making the contract, even though the opponents are ready to try to take their tricks or prevent you, as the declarer, from taking yours.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE: Holding Up

Introduction

“If you are playing a notrump contract, the opponents usually try to set up their long suit by driving out your high cards. Then they take their winners in that suit. The opponents have an advantage, because they have the opening lead. In a trump contract, you can stop their suit, because you can use your trump cards. In notrump, there’s also a way to try to prevent the opponents from taking tricks in a long suit. It has to do with timing. Lay out the following arrangement of cards in the heart suit:

| | | |
|------|------------------|------|
| | NORTH (DUMMY) | |
| | ♥ 7 5 | |
| WEST | ■ | EAST |
| | SOUTH (DECLARER) | |
| | ♥ A 6 4 | |

“Declarer has one sure trick, the ace, whether it’s played on the first, second or third trick. *When* declarer decides to play that ace, however, can make all the difference to the contract — it can affect the number of tricks the opponents can take. Give East the eight, three and two of hearts and West the remaining hearts:

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------|
| | NORTH (DUMMY) | |
| | ♥ 7 5 | |
| WEST | ■ | EAST |
| ♥ K Q J 10 9 | | ♥ 8 3 2 |
| | SOUTH | |
| | ♥ A 6 4 | |

“Suppose declarer wins the first trick with the ace. Now it doesn’t matter whether East or West gets the lead. The defenders have set up four winners and have a way to take them — East has two hearts left. On the other hand, suppose declarer lets West win with the king and the queen and takes the third trick with the ace. What a difference!

“The opponents have two good tricks established in West’s hand. If East gets the lead, which could happen, there isn’t a small card left to get to West’s winners — they’re stranded because declarer won the third trick with the ace. This is called a *hold-up play*.

“It’s true that the cards didn’t have to be divided 5–3, but that’s the way you expect them to divide when there are eight outstanding. Another point. If

the cards were originally divided 4–4, you haven't lost anything, because now the defenders can take only three tricks instead of four in the suit. You lose nothing and gain when the cards are divided as you would expect, 5–3."

Instructions

"Your left-hand opponent leads a suit against your notrump contract. If you don't take your ace until you have to in each of the examples in Exercise One, how many cards will your right-hand opponent have left in the suit if it divides as you might expect?"

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--------|----------|------------|----------|---------|
| DUMMY: | 1) 8 6 | 2) 7 4 3 | 3) 7 6 4 2 | 4) 9 7 4 | 5) 10 7 |
| DECLARER: | A 9 2 | A 6 5 | A 3 | A 8 | A 6 |

0 (5–3) 0 (4–3) 1 (4–3) 1 (5–3) 2 (5–4)

Follow-up

"In the first example, the opponents have eight cards, so you expect they will divide 5–3. If you take the ace on the third round, your right-hand opponent will have none left.

"In the second example, the opponents have seven cards outstanding. You still expect that East will have three cards in the suit, since the most likely division is 4–3. This time, however, West will have only four. If you play your ace on the third round, East won't have any left.

"In the third example, you're missing seven and expect they'll be divided 4–3. When you play your ace on the second round, it's likely that East still has a card in the suit. There was nothing you could do. If the missing cards were divided 5–2, however, then East won't have any left, and your hold-up play will have been successful.

"In the fourth example, you expect the missing cards will divide 5–3. East will still have a card after you win your ace.

"In the last example, the opponents have nine cards, and you expect they'll divide 5–4. It's likely that East will have two cards left in the suit after you play your ace. Even if they divide 6–3, East will still have a card left."

Conclusion

"When you don't take a sure trick right away because you want to strand the opponents' long suit, it's called a hold-up play. *When* you take your winners can make all the difference. Entries are as important to the defenders as they are to you. By holding up, you have a good chance to take out their entry to a suit."

EXERCISE TWO: How Long to Hold Up**Introduction**

“The hold-up play is very useful and once you know about it, it’s tempting to use it every time you have an opportunity. However, you mustn’t forget the overall picture. If you have enough winners to make the contract, you don’t need to hold up. You also should be careful not to hold up, if there’s another suit the opponents can switch to and do more damage.”

Instructions

“In Exercise Two, West leads the ♥K against your 3NT contract. Should you hold up? State the reason for your answer.”

| | |
|---------------|------------------|
| | NORTH (DUMMY) |
| Contract: 3NT | ♠ 8 6 2 |
| | ♥ 7 4 |
| | ♦ K 9 7 3 |
| | ♣ A Q J 5 |
| WEST | ■ |
| ♥K | |
| | SOUTH (DECLARER) |
| | ♠ Q 3 |
| | ♥ A 6 5 |
| | ♦ A Q J 10 |
| | ♣ K 9 4 2 |

Follow-up

“Consult your PLAN. You need nine tricks and have nine tricks. There’s no need to put the contract at risk by holding up the ace. If you don’t take it, the opponents could switch to spades, and your contract would be defeated. They can take at least four spade tricks (if the suit divides 4–4) and maybe more. Together with the heart trick, they’ll have five tricks.”

Conclusion

“Only use the hold-up play when you have to give up the lead to the opponents later in the contract, in order to take the number of tricks you need. You also can’t afford to hold up if there’s another suit which the opponents could lead to do you even more harm. To decide whether or not to hold up, always consult your PLAN first.”

EXERCISE THREE: The Dangerous Opponent

Introduction

“The opponents can try to take as many tricks as possible by playing their long suit. They also can try to capture your high cards. Lay out the following cards in the diamond suit:

| | | |
|-------------|------------------|----------|
| | NORTH (DUMMY) | |
| | ♦ 7 4 | |
| WEST | ■ | EAST |
| ♦ A Q 9 6 3 | | ♦ J 10 2 |
| | SOUTH (DECLARER) | |
| | ♦ K 8 5 | |

“Suppose East plays the jack — your king is trapped. If you cover the jack with the king, West’s ace will win the trick and the opponents have the rest of the high cards. It’s very interesting to notice that if West leads the suit, your king is safe. If West plays the ace, you’ll play small and get a trick later with the king. If West leads a small card, you’ll be able to win the trick with the king.

“What does this mean? One opponent, East, is more dangerous than the other. When planning the play, often it’s important to be able to identify which of the opponents is dangerous.”

Instructions

“Who is the dangerous opponent in each of the examples in Exercise One?

“Left-hand in all cases.

“If you can’t afford to lose three tricks in either of the examples in Exercise Three, which opponent is the dangerous one?”

| | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| DUMMY: | 1) K 8 4 | 2) 5 4 2 |
| DECLARER: | 7 5 2 | K 7 3 |

Left-hand Right-hand

Follow-up

“In Exercise One, your left-hand opponent is always a dangerous opponent, since that opponent led the suit and presumably has the greatest length. However, in the last two cases, the dangerous opponent is the one who can lead a high card to trap your king.

“In the examples in Exercise Three, your left-hand opponent is the dangerous opponent in the first case, and your right-hand opponent is the dangerous opponent in the second case.”

Conclusion

“Not only can the opponents interfere with your plans by playing their suit before you get your suit established, but they also can try to defeat you by trapping your high cards. In both cases, one opponent is likely to be more dangerous than the other. Identifying the dangerous opponent can be useful when making your PLAN.”

EXERCISE FOUR: Avoiding the Dangerous Opponent**Introduction**

“In the last exercise, we saw that one opponent can be more dangerous than another. The next step is to figure out how to avoid letting this dangerous opponent get the lead. One way is to take a finesse in the less dangerous direction. Lay out the following cards in the club suit:

| | | |
|------|------------------|------|
| | NORTH (DUMMY) | |
| | ♣ K J 10 5 | |
| WEST | ■ | EAST |
| | SOUTH (DECLARER) | |
| | ♣ A 9 8 3 | |

“Since you have all of the high cards except the ♣Q, you have a choice of which opponent to finesse for the missing queen. This is called a two-way finesse. If you think West has the queen, you can start by playing the ace and then leading toward the dummy, finessing the 10 (or jack) if West plays a small card. If you think East has the ♣Q, you could start by playing the ♣K and then lead the ♣J from dummy. If East plays a small card, you can finesse by playing a small card from your hand.

“If you need only three tricks from this suit, you don’t mind losing a trick to the queen if you guess wrong. However, if one of your opponents is dangerous, make sure you try the finesse in the other direction so that, if it loses, the dangerous opponent doesn’t end up on lead.

“Let’s suppose that East is dangerous — because there are winners in that hand which are stranded unless East gets the lead or because East could lead a suit that would trap one of your high cards. How would you play the suit, so that East wouldn’t get the lead even if the finesse didn’t work? (Play the king and then the jack from the dummy. If the finesse fails, West will be on lead.)”

Instructions

“The opponent on your right is the dangerous opponent. How would you play each of the suits in Exercise Four in order to avoid giving up the lead to the dangerous opponent whenever possible?”

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| DUMMY: | 1) A J 10 5 | 2) 10 7 5 3 | 3) J 10 3 | 4) A 9 7 5 2 | 5) A Q J 8 3 |
| DECLARER: | K 9 8 3 | A Q J 8 | A K 8 7 2 | K J 3 | 10 7 6 4 |

A then J finesse 10 finesse J finesse J play A

Follow-up

“In the first example, start by playing the ace and then leading the jack from the dummy. If your right-hand opponent covers with the queen, play the king and the rest of the tricks are yours. If your right-hand opponent plays low, play low from your hand. Even if your left-hand opponent wins the trick, the dangerous opponent on your right doesn’t have the lead.

“In the second example, play the 10 from the dummy. If your right-hand opponent doesn’t cover, play low. You’re in the right hand, the dummy, to repeat the finesse.

“In the next example, play the jack from the dummy. You can trap the queen, if it’s held by the opponent on your right. If the queen is on your left, you’ll lose the trick to the non-dangerous opponent.

“In the fourth example, play low from the dummy toward your hand. If your right-hand opponent produces a small card, finesse the jack. You’ll avoid the dangerous opponent if the finesse loses.

“In the last example, if you try the finesse and it doesn’t work, the dangerous opponent gets the lead. The best idea, then, is to play the ace. You hope if your right-hand opponent does have the king, it’s a singleton. You don’t mind giving up a trick to your left-hand opponent if LHO has the king. If your right-hand opponent has the king and it’s not a singleton, there’s nothing you can do to prevent giving up the lead to the dangerous opponent.

“If one of your opponents is more dangerous than the other because that opponent can lead stranded winners or trap one of your high cards, then try to keep that opponent from getting the lead. If you have a choice of suits in which to take a finesse, or the direction in which to take a finesse, consider what would happen if the finesse doesn’t work. Would your dangerous opponent then have the lead? If so, perhaps you should try something else.”

EXERCISE FIVE: Defensive Hold-Up**Introduction**

“The declarer isn’t the only player who can use the hold-up play to try to prevent the opponents from enjoying established tricks. The defenders also can hold up in an attempt to strand declarer’s suit. Lay out the following cards in the diamond suit:

| | | |
|------|------------------|---------|
| | NORTH (DUMMY) | |
| | ♦ Q J 10 8 7 5 | |
| WEST | ■ | EAST |
| ♦ 2 | | ♦ A 9 3 |
| | SOUTH (DECLARER) | |
| | ♦ K 6 4 | |

“Suppose you’re defending a notrump contract and there are no entries to the dummy other than in the diamond suit. When declarer plays the king to try to establish the suit, which card should you play? (Low.) You hold up your ♦ A. When declarer leads the suit again and your partner discards, you know declarer started with three cards in the suit. Which card do you play? (Low again.) If declarer leads the suit again, you’ll have to take the ace. What has happened to dummy’s winners? (They’re stranded.)”

Instructions

“If dummy doesn’t have any outside entries, when should you win your ace in each of the examples in Exercise Five if your partner has only one card in the suit? What if your partner has two cards in the suit?”

1) DUMMY
K Q J 10 9



YOU
A 7 5 2

2) DUMMY
K Q J 10 9 8



YOU
A 6 2

3rd; 2nd

3rd; 2nd

Follow-up

“In the first example, you can see nine cards. If partner has only one card (partner will show out on the second round of the suit), then declarer has three, and you should win the third round. If partner has two cards (partner will follow suit on the second round), declarer started with two and you can win the second round.”

The students may ask how you can tell how many cards partner has. Since count signals are beyond the scope of the text, you can just say that this will be covered in the *Defense* course. For now, the students should try to hold up until they think declarer has no cards left in the suit. Usually it won't be a disaster if they hold up too long.

“In the second example, you should hold up twice if partner has one card and win the second trick if partner shows up with two cards.”

Conclusion

“As a defender, you can often make declarer work for tricks by holding up your winners in an attempt to break the communications between declarer's hand and the dummy. This means that declarer has no way to get to established winners. Of course, there'll be times when declarer can still get the tricks, even though you hold up. There'll be other times, however, when you can set the contract.”

EXERCISE SIX: Strong Opening Bids

Introduction

“Every once in a while, you get a hand that’s so strong you would be very disappointed if your partner passed. Since partner will pass with as many as 5 points when you open in a suit at the one level, with an unbalanced hand of 22 or more points, you want to tell your partner to bid — even with a weak hand. You can do this by opening the bidding 2♣. This is called a strong 2♣ bid. It’s a forcing bid.

“Strong hands are designated by two different opening bids:

- A 3NT opening bid promises 25 to 27 HCP and a balanced hand.
- A 2♣ opening bid is used for all other hands with 22 or more total points.

“You know you open 1NT with 15 to 17 HCP and 3NT with 25 to 27 HCP. What does 2NT show? An opening bid of 2NT shows 20 or 21 HCP. What do you do with 22 to 24 HCP? You begin with 2♣ and rebid 2NT. You can look in Chapter 9 (the bonus chapter on Jacoby Transfers) to see the complete listing of balanced notrump openings and responses.”

Instructions

“What is your opening bid with each of the hands in Exercise Six?”

1) ♠ K J 10
♥ A K J
♦ K Q J 9 4
♣ A J

2) ♠ A K
♥ A Q J 8
♦ K Q J
♣ A Q 10 5

3) ♠ A K J 10 9 7
♥ A
♦ K Q J 7
♣ K J

2♣, then 2NT

3NT

2♣, then 2♠

Follow-up

“The first hand is balanced and has 23 HCPs. Open 2♣ and rebid 2NT to show this hand.

“The second hand is even stronger. Here you have 26 HCPs. Open 3NT to show a balanced hand in the range of 25 to 27 points.

“The last hand is unbalanced and is worth 24 points — 22 HCPs plus 2 for the six-card suit. Start the bidding with 2♣. Your rebid will be 2♠.”

Conclusion

“When you have an unbalanced hand so strong that you would be disappointed if partner passed, start by bidding 2♣. This forces your partner to take the contract to at least a game and to consider a slam. If you open 2NT, you are showing a balanced hand of 20 or 21 HCP, and 3NT shows a balanced hand of 25 to 27 HCP.”

EXERCISE SEVEN: Responding to 2NT**Introduction**

“Responding to an opening bid of 2NT follows the patterns developed in responding to 1NT. The captain, responder, is looking for a major suit game, otherwise 3NT. A game in the minor suits is much more infrequent.

“Use these responses to partner’s opening 2NT bid:

- Pass with fewer than 4 points and no five-card major.
- Use Stayman to uncover a four-card major-suit fit with a game-going hand.
- Bid 3♥ or 3♠ with less than a game-going hand and a five-card suit (signoff).
- Bid 3NT with more than 4 points and no four-card major.
- Bid 4♥ or 4♠ with a six-card major.”

Instructions

“Your partner opens the bidding 2NT. What do you respond with each of the hands in Exercise Seven?”

1) ♠ J 7 3
♥ Q 9 8 6 4 3
♦ 5
♣ Q 9 3

4♥

2) ♠ J 10 8 6 2
♥ 7 3
♦ J 6 5
♣ 9 7 6

3♠

3) ♠ 10 5
♥ K J 8 3
♦ Q 8 4 2
♣ 10 7 3

3♣

4) ♠ J 9 5
♥ 8 4 2
♦ 10 7 6
♣ K J 8 5

3NT

5) ♠ 10 4 2
♥ 10 7 3
♦ 9 8 5
♣ 10 6 5 2

Pass

6) ♠ J 5
♥ 6 4
♦ 10 5 3
♣ Q J 8 6 4 2

3NT

Follow-up

“In the first hand, with 5 HCPs plus 2 for the six-card suit, responder wants to be in a game since opener has at least 20 HCP. Opener’s hand is balanced, so opener must have at least two hearts. There’s a Golden Fit. The captain makes the decision and bids game, 4♥.

“In the next hand, there are not enough combined points for a game. Bid 3♠, since your hand offers some help to partner only when spades are trump.

“In the third hand, responder is interested in a game in either hearts or notrump. The Stayman convention can be used after an opening bid of 2NT. Responder bids 3♣ to ask opener for a four-card or longer major suit. If opener rebids 3♥, responder can raise to 4♥. On the other hand, if opener rebids 3♠ or 3♦ (to show no major), responder can put the contract in 3NT.

“Even though there’re only 5 points in the fourth hand, there should be enough points for game. Opener has shown at least 20 HCP. Responder should bid 3NT.

“On hand number five, responder should decide to pass even though opener has a strong hand. The upper limit of opener’s hand is 21 HCP. That’s not quite enough for game when responder has zero.

“On the last hand, don’t get carried away with the club suit. Remember that the partnership rarely plays game in a minor suit. Bid 3NT. Be careful not to bid 3♣. Why? (It’s the Stayman convention.)”

Conclusion

“The responses, after an opening 2NT bid, are somewhat similar to those made after a 1NT opening bid. Responder is the captain, and most of the time, responder can place the contract with no further help from opener.”

EXERCISE EIGHT: Responding to a Strong Two-Bid**Introduction**

“When your partner opens the bidding 2♣, you are being forced to bid even if you have nothing. Think how disappointed partner will be if you decide to pass when partner has this monstrously good hand. Partner might even have 25 or more points all alone. Saying, ‘... but I didn’t have any points,’ will probably not make partner feel any better. So, if partner forces you to bid, bid even with no points.

“Even though you have to bid when you have a really weak hand, you’d like to send a message to partner to say that you bid only because you were forced. There’s a bid that gives this message. It is 2♦, an artificial (conventional), negative response. The nice thing about the negative 2♦ response is that it sends the opener an immediate warning to proceed with caution.

“With 8 or more points, you can raise opener’s suit with three-card support or longer (partner is showing an unbalanced hand and will almost always have at least a five-card suit). Otherwise, you can bid a suit of your own or jump to 2NT with a balanced hand.

“The 2♥, 2♠, 3♣ and 3♦ responses are positive bids showing a good five-card suit with two of the top three honors.”

Instructions

“Your partner opens 2♣. What do you respond with each of the hands in Exercise Eight?”

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1) | ♠ 7 3 ♥ J 9 7 6 3 ♦ 10 8 4 ♣ 7 5 2 | 2) | ♠ K Q 6 3 2 ♥ 10 9 7 ♦ 8 5 ♣ K 9 3 | 3) | ♠ 6 4 ♥ 3 2 ♦ K Q 10 6 4 ♣ K 9 8 4 |
| | <u>2♦</u> | | <u>2♠</u> | | <u>3♦</u> |

Follow-up

“In the first hand, you want to tell your partner about your weakness. A response of 2♦ will give this information.

“On the second hand, with 8 HCP and a good five-card spade suit, you can bid 2♠.

“On the last hand, you do have enough points to give a positive response. Bid your own suit, 3♦.”

Conclusion

“When partner starts the bidding at the two level in a suit, you are forced to bid. You want to have some way of telling partner you have a weak hand of 0 to 8 points. The response of 2♦ is used for this purpose. If you have eight or more points, make a positive response. These responses are one of the options available to you when partner opens 2♣. You can check The Finer Points in Chapter 6 for more information.”

SAMPLE DEALS

EXERCISE NINE: The Hold-up Play

Introduction

“When you start to play a hand, there may be conflicting pieces of advice that go through your head. You may have heard that aces are made to take kings, and yet we just looked at the hold-up play where declarer didn’t play the ace right away on an opponent’s king. How do you know which advice to follow? The answer lies in your PLAN. In the first deal, we are going to play, you can easily develop the extra tricks you need. The only danger seems to be that the opponents have started with a good lead and threaten to beat you to the race for tricks.”

Instructions

“Turn up all of the cards on the first pre-dealt hand. Put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #6, Deal 1)

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|------------|-----|---|------------|--|
| Dealer: North | ♠ 8 5 3 | | | | | |
| | ♥ 7 4 | | | | | |
| | ♦ K 9 6 2 | | | | | |
| | ♣ Q 7 5 2 | | | | | |
| ♠ 7 4 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table> | N | W E | S | ♠ A 10 9 6 | |
| N | | | | | | |
| W E | | | | | | |
| S | | | | | | |
| ♥ K Q J 10 8 | | ♥ 6 5 2 | | | | |
| ♦ Q 7 4 | | ♦ J 10 5 3 | | | | |
| ♣ 6 4 3 | | ♣ 10 9 | | | | |
| | ♠ K Q J 2 | | | | | |
| | ♥ A 9 3 | | | | | |
| | ♦ A 8 | | | | | |
| | ♣ A K J 8 | | | | | |

The Bidding

“North and East pass. With a balanced hand and 22 points, what does South open the bidding? (2♣.)

“West passes. North has 5 points. Does the partnership belong in game or partscore? (Game. $22 + 5 = 27$.) Is North interested in a Golden Fit in a major suit? (No.) What does North respond? (2♦, an artificial negative.)

“How would the auction proceed? (South would rebid 2NT. Since North isn’t interested in a major-suit fit, North would bid 3NT.) What would be the contract? (3NT.) Who would be the declarer? (South.)”

The Play

“Which player makes the opening lead? (West.) What would the opening lead be? (♥K.)”

Follow-up

This is the first deal of the night, so you can go over the four steps of the PLAN:

1. *Pause to consider your objective*
2. *Look at your winners and losers*
3. *Analyze your alternatives*
4. *Now put it all together*

“How many tricks does declarer need? (Nine.) How many winners does declarer have? (Seven.) How can declarer develop the extra winners needed to make the contract? (Promote two tricks in spades.) Is there any danger? (When the opponents get in, they may be able to take enough heart tricks to defeat the contract.) What can the declarer do to minimize the danger? (Hold up the ♥A until the third round, hoping East has the ♠A and no more hearts.)”

Have the students bid and play the deal.

Conclusion

“Hold up playing your ace when you don’t have the number of tricks you need to make the contract, and you have to let the opponents in while developing extra tricks. You hope that the opponent who gets the lead doesn’t have any cards left in partner’s suit and that the winners in the opponents’ long suit are stranded.”

“North passes. What would the contract be? (3NT.) Who would be the declarer? (West.)”

The Play

In the first exercise, the four steps of the PLAN were reviewed more formally. This time questions can be asked that lead the students to a decision about how to play.

“Which player makes the opening lead? (North.) What would be the opening lead? (♥4.) Which card will the opening leader’s partner play to the first trick? (♥A, third hand high.) To the second trick? (♥8, return partner’s lead.)

“Declarer starts by make a PLAN. Which suit offers the best potential for developing extra tricks? (Diamonds.) How does declarer plan to play the suit? (Finesse. With limited entries, declarer should plan to lead the ♦10.) Is there any danger? (The opponents may win the ♦K and be able to take enough heart tricks to defeat the contract.) What can declarer do to minimize the danger? (Hold up the ♥K for one round.)”

Follow-up

Have the students bid and play the deal.

Conclusion

“The hold-up play is as good as a trump card. It prevents the opponents from running their long suit.”

EXERCISE ELEVEN: Defensive Hold-up**Introduction**

“The defenders can use the hold-up play to try to strand the declarer’s winners. In this deal, declarer has a long diamond suit in the dummy with no way to get to it. Declarer can try to drive out the ace. If the ace isn’t played, declarer can see that continuing the suit won’t develop any extra tricks. It’s time to try something else.”

Instructions

“Turn up all of the cards on the third pre-dealt hand. Put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #6, Deal 3)

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Dealer: South | ♠ A K Q | |
| | ♥ A K 8 3 | |
| | ♦ K J 5 | |
| | ♣ K Q J | |
| ♠ 5 2 | N W E S | ♠ J 10 9 7 4 |
| ♥ J 10 9 5 | | ♥ Q 6 2 |
| ♦ A 8 6 2 | | ♦ 9 |
| ♣ 10 9 4 | | ♣ A 7 6 2 |
| | ♠ 8 6 3 | |
| | ♥ 7 4 | |
| | ♦ Q 10 7 4 3 | |
| | ♣ 8 5 3 | |

The Bidding

“South and West pass. With a balanced 26 HCP, what is North’s opening bid? (3NT.)

“East passes. What does South do? (Pass.) What would be the contract? (3NT.) Who would be the declarer? (North.)”

The Play

“Which player makes the opening lead? (East.) What would the opening lead be? (♠J.)

“Declarer starts by making a PLAN. Which suit could provide all of the extra tricks declarer needs to make the contract? (Diamonds.) How does declarer plan to play the suit? (Play the ♦K and ♦J first, high cards from the short side.)

“What can West do to make things difficult for declarer? (Hold up the ♦A until the third round of the suit.) What can declarer do to counter West’s efforts? (Switch to the club suit, promoting two winners by driving out the ♣A.)”

Follow-up

Have the students bid and play the deal.

Conclusion

“When the defenders try to strand declarer’s suit by using the hold-up play, the declarer may have to abandon a plan that is doomed to failure and try another tactic.”

EXERCISE TWELVE: Avoiding the Dangerous Opponent**Introduction**

“The opponents can take extra tricks by playing their long suit. They can also try to defeat the contract by trapping one of the declarer’s high cards. In this deal, declarer is short a trick and has to look for a way to get rid of a loser. There are several choices, one of which is taking a finesse on the opening lead. This might seem like a good idea, but before making the decision, declarer has to consult the PLAN and think about which opponent could be dangerous.”

Instructions

“Turn up all of the cards on the fourth pre-dealt hand. Put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #6, Deal 4)

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----|----------------|
| Dealer: West | ♠ K 8 4 | | |
| | ♥ 9 | | |
| | ♦ J 10 9 7 5 | | |
| | ♣ Q J 10 2 | | |
| ♠ A Q 5 | | N | ♠ 7 2 |
| ♥ A K 7 | | W E | ♥ Q 10 8 6 4 2 |
| ♦ A K Q 6 | | S | ♦ 8 4 |
| ♣ 9 8 4 | | | ♣ K 7 3 |
| | ♠ J 10 9 6 3 | | |
| | ♥ J 5 3 | | |
| | ♦ 3 2 | | |
| | ♣ A 6 5 | | |

The Bidding

“With a balanced hand and 22 HCP, what bid does West make to open the bidding? (2♣.)

“North passes. Does East have enough for game? (Yes.) What does East respond? (East bids 2♦, an artificial negative.)

“How does the auction proceed? (West continues with a 2NT rebid showing 22–24 HCP.) What would be the contract? (East rebids 4♥ since East knows now that there is a Golden Fit in hearts.) Who would be the declarer? (East.)”

The Play

“Which player makes the opening lead? (South.) What would the opening lead be? (♠J.)

“Declarer starts by make a PLAN. How many losers can declarer afford? (Three.) How many losers does declarer have? (Four.) What are the various alternatives declarer has for eliminating a loser? (Taking a spade finesse. Discarding a loser on the extra diamond winner in dummy. Taking a club finesse.)

“Is there a dangerous opponent? (Yes. North could lead a club and trap declarer’s ♣K.) Should declarer take the spade finesse? (No.) If not, why not? (After drawing trumps, declarer can safely discard a loser on the diamonds, avoiding the risk of letting the dangerous opponent get the lead.)”

Follow-up

Have the students bid and play the deal.

Conclusion

“Declarer can safely make the contract by throwing a loser on the good diamonds in the dummy. There’s no need to risk the contract by taking a finesse which, if it fails, puts the dangerous opponent on lead.”

