

LESSON 8

Making A Plan



General Concepts

General Introduction

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Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

Defense

The defenders' PLAN

- Step One — The objective
- Step Two — Counting tricks
- Step Three — The alternatives
- Step Four — Putting it all together

Before the opening lead

- Defending a notrump contract
- Defending a suit contract

After suit preference

- Using the PLAN
- Working together
- Overriding the guidelines

Bidding

Competitive bidding

- When an opponent overcalls
- The penalty double
- When an opponent makes a takeout double
- Competing for partscore

Play of the Hand

Handling the trump suit

- Drawing trumps
- Delaying drawing trumps

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

For those students who have taken the *Bidding in the 21st Century*, *Play of the Hand in the 21st Century* and *Defense in the 21st Century* courses, this will be their twenty-fourth lesson. Up to this time, they have played approximately four deals per lesson. Following this course, they should be practicing what they have learned with the two play courses for advancing players*. This will help the students pick up the speed at which they bid and play. This lesson is a good place to start the transition. In this lesson, there are eight deals for the students to play. Although it might seem that by this time they have played a lot of bridge, it is possible that many of them are still participating very passively. Even if they have attended all of the lessons and played all of the deals, each of the students will have been declarer only a little over twenty times, and with a lot of guidance most of those times.

The emphasis in this lesson is on the defenders' PLAN. It is similar in structure to declarer's PLAN. The aim is to encourage the students to think how they might defeat the contract, rather than to focus on the play of an individual suit, and to follow the guidelines such as second hand low or third hand high.

“In previous lessons, we have looked at various techniques the defenders can use. We saw how they can work with one another to take their tricks and interfere with declarer's PLAN for taking tricks. We have developed a number of guidelines to help handle situations in which you are not sure of the best play. Now we will put everything together and see how the defenders go about making an overall PLAN to defeat declarer. Having a PLAN will help you decide when to apply the guidelines and when to ignore them.

“The defenders ideally want to make their PLAN in the same fashion as declarer. They go through the same four steps:

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

“In the defenders' terms, the first step is to determine how many tricks are required to defeat the contract. For example, if declarer is in a contract of 4♥, what is the defenders' objective? (To take four tricks.)

**Play Course for Advancing Players – I*
Play Course for Advancing Players – II

“The second step is to see how many tricks you have to start with. Since you can’t see your combined holding in every suit, this is usually difficult to determine. You can start by making an estimate and then revise it as you get more information. When you are on lead against a notrump contract, you may be able to see some sure tricks. When you are defending a suit contract, your aces may not take a trick unless they are in the trump suit. However, the auction will usually give you some idea of which cards may take tricks.

“In the third step, *Analyze your alternatives*, you have to bring your imagination into play. You have seen most of the techniques for developing tricks — promotion, finesses and so forth. You will often have to visualize the possible layout of the suit to see the opportunities for tricks. As the play progresses, the alternatives will become clearer. Partner’s signals and declarer’s line of play may give you the clues you need.

“In the last step, you have to *Now put it all together*. For example, you may be able to get a trick from a suit, provided it is led from partner’s side of the table. You will have to plan how to bring that about. You also have to work with your partner, so that you are both headed in the same direction. While your initial plans may differ, they should merge into one as the hand is played out.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE: Before Dummy Comes Down

Introduction

“Although the defenders can’t see each other’s hands, the idea of making a PLAN is important. The defenders, however, have to be more flexible than declarer. Their PLAN will change as the play progresses and they get more information.

“For example, before the opening lead is made, a defender is looking at only 13 cards and has only those cards and the auction as a guide. Pausing to consider the objective is straightforward enough. You know what the contract is and can work out how many tricks you will need to defeat it. Determining the number of tricks you have is much more difficult when you are looking at only one hand. You will have to make your best initial estimate.

“Analyzing where you will get your tricks is a very creative exercise since you have so little to go on, but it helps to make some preliminary assessment. Thinking about where tricks might come from may influence your opening lead, drawing you away from the old standbys. Putting everything together is difficult, but you can at least get the ball rolling before dummy appears.

“Let’s see how you go through the planning steps before making an opening lead.”

Instructions

“You (West) are on lead with the hand in Exercise One:

♠ 10 9 8 3
♥ K 5
♦ A Q 3
♣ J 6 4 2

“The auction has gone:

NORTH (DUMMY)	EAST (PARTNER)	SOUTH (DECLARER)	WEST (YOU)
		1 ♥	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

“How do you plan to defeat the contract? What is your opening lead?”

Follow-up

Go through the steps of the PLAN with the group to show how they can be applied.

“Before deciding on your opening lead, go through the steps of the PLAN to see if it can point you in some direction beyond the general guidelines. The first step is *Pause to consider your objective*. You need four tricks to defeat declarer’s 4♥ contract.

“The next step is *Look at your winners and losers*. The ♥K will be a trick if the ♥A is in declarer’s hand, where you might expect it to be. The ♦A is likely to be a trick unless one of the opponents is void. Since declarer bid diamonds, there is no reason to suspect a void or to believe that dummy will be unusually short of diamonds. You can’t determine much more with any degree of certainty.

“The third step is *Analyze your alternatives*. Where can you get the additional tricks you need? The ♦Q has definite potential. Since diamonds were bid, declarer is likely to have the ♦K and it will be best to wait until partner or declarer leads that suit. The club suit is not too promising since your left-hand opponent bid that suit. Spades is the unbid suit. There is some possibility that partner may have a trick in that suit.

“The final step is *Now put it all together*. You are not exactly sure where all of your tricks will come from, but it looks as though the best lead is a spade. You are hoping that partner will have a trick in that suit and will be able to lead a diamond, trapping declarer’s ♦K. Together with the ♥K, prospects are not too bad. You will lead the ♠10, top of touching high cards, and wait to see dummy. After seeing dummy, you may want to revise your plan, but that is the best you can do for now.”

Conclusion

“Although your PLAN will be very rough until you have seen dummy, it is still worthwhile going through the process. You start to form a picture of the missing hands and avoid stepping off in the wrong direction with your opening lead. The details will be clarified as the play progresses, but you are starting from a sound basis.”

EXERCISE TWO: After Dummy Comes Down

Introduction

“After the opening lead has been made, you have more information on which to base your PLAN. You see your hand, the dummy and the cards partner and declarer play to the first trick. This is usually enough to formulate a sound plan. Of course, there will still be some unknowns. You will need to be flexible and willing to modify your PLAN as you go along.

“Both partners are formulating their PLANs. As the play progresses, the two individual plans should start to merge into a single, unified effort. Let’s look at an example.”

Instructions

“You (East) are defending a contract of 4♠ after the bidding has gone:

NORTH (DUMMY)	EAST (YOU)	SOUTH (DECLARER)	WEST (PARTNER)
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

“Partner leads the ♥2 and dummy is put down as in Exercise Two:

	DUMMY	
Contract: 4♠	♠ K 5	
Lead: ♥2	♥ 10 7 5	
	♦ K Q J 7	
	♣ A J 7 3	
LEAD		YOU
♥2		♠ 8 4 2
		♥ A 9 6 4
		♦ A
		♣ 10 8 6 5 2

“How do you plan to defeat the contract?”

Follow-up

Again, lead the students through the planning steps.

“While it is tempting to follow the guidelines and play *third hand high* and then *return partner’s suit*, you should first formulate your PLAN. When you **Pause to consider your objective**, you know that you need four tricks. When you **Look at your winners and losers**, you see two aces. When you **Analyze your alternatives**, there is some potential in the heart suit. If partner has the ♥K, that should be a third trick for the defense. It is possible that partner may be able to take two heart tricks, but that is unlikely. If partner has four hearts, declarer has only two and will be able to ruff the third round. The spade and club suits do not look too promising. If you look further, however, you can see the potential for getting a trump trick through a ruff in the diamond suit. That looks like the most promising plan.

“**Now put it all together.** Take the first trick with the ♥A. This is in line with the *third hand high* guideline. But rather than immediately returning partner’s suit, your PLAN calls for leading the ♦A next. Now you return partner’s suit, leading back the ♥4 to partner’s hoped-for ♥K. Even if partner does win the third trick with the ♥K, it is not all over. Partner’s PLAN has to agree with yours. Obviously, partner wasn’t planning to give you a ruff in diamonds originally — otherwise a diamond would have been led. Partner didn’t have the advantage of seeing the dummy, nor your hand. Now that the defense has taken this sudden turn, you will have to hope that partner can visualize what you are up to. If so, your PLAN will merge with partner’s PLAN and a diamond will be led back for you to ruff. A lot of planning, some cooperation and a fortunate lie of the cards can combine to defeat the contract.”

Conclusion

“After dummy appears, you have more information to go on when making your PLAN. Be sure to look at the whole picture before automatically following a guideline such as returning your partner’s lead. Focus on how you can get enough tricks to defeat the contract.”

EXERCISE THREE: Competitive Bidding

Introduction

“Sometimes you and your partner can have an orderly exchange of information with no interference from the opponents. At other times, the opponents’ bidding can get in the way. In many cases, even though the opponents bid, your side still can get to the best contract.

“If both sides are competing, you will sometimes have a difficult decision to make. You can pass and let them play in their contract, hoping you can defeat them. Or you can bid on, perhaps overreaching yourself or perhaps pushing the opponents higher still. Competitive bidding is part of what makes the game so exciting. There are lots of challenges on the way to reaching the appropriate contract.

“If an opponent makes a takeout double, no bidding room is taken up. You can continue to bid as though nothing has happened. In the *More Commonly Used Conventions* course, we will look at the use of the *redouble*, but for now, natural bidding will suffice to keep you out of trouble.

“When an opponent overcalls, this bid may interfere with what you were planning to do. If it does, you will have to do the best that you can. Sometimes a suitable alternative will be available. If not, you may have to pass and await further developments. Remember that your partner will get another chance to bid when an opponent intervenes in the auction.

“An additional possibility is the penalty double. Once partner has made a bid, a double is no longer for takeout. If you are sure the opponents have overreached themselves, you can double for penalty to increase your score when you defeat them. Make sure you have enough to defeat them before doubling. It can be quite expensive if they end up making their contract.

“Let’s look at some examples of how you handle the bidding when an opponent overcalls.”

Instructions

“Your partner opens the bidding 1♥ and the opponent on your right overcalls 2♣. What do you bid on each of the hands in Exercise Three?”

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

Follow-up

Since the focus is on playing, we want to quickly review this aspect of the bidding. Make a statement that can help the students come up with a quick answer. For example, you might say:

“On the first hand, has the opponent’s bid interfered with your normal response? (No. You were planning to raise to 2♥ anyway.)

“On the second hand, what were you planning to respond if there was no interference? (Pass.) What do you do? (Pass.)

“On the third hand, what would you have responded if your right-hand opponent had passed? (2♦.) Is there any reason to change your intended bid? (No.)

“On the fourth hand, what were you planning to bid? (2♦ before raising to game.) After the 2♣ overcall, you can cuebid 3♣ to force partner to bid (planning to raise to 4♥). In many partnerships, the partners agree to play their jump raises as limit (or weaker) bids in competition, so a jump to 4♥ would be preemptive in nature.

“On hand number five, you were planning to bid clubs, but the opponent beat you to it. What can you do? This is a perfect hand for a penalty double — lots of cards in their suit and shortness in partner’s suit. Even if the opponents bid another suit, you can be fairly confident of defeating them. But what if you are vulnerable and the opponents are not? The penalty you collect might not compensate for a vulnerable game. (Bid 3NT.) In Lesson 9, you will be introduced to a convention called the Negative Double. You will be shown how negative doubles and penalty doubles work together.

“On the last hand, what were you planning to respond originally? (1♠.) What can you do now that the opponents have intervened? (Bid 2♠.) With a choice of two five-card suits, bid the higher-ranking.”

Conclusion

“When both sides are in the bidding, it is important to listen to the bids made by the opponents, but make it your priority to listen to partner’s bid and respond accordingly. Try not to let the opponents’ bidding interfere with your natural exchange of information. Many times a bid by the opponent is a nuisance, but it should not prevent you from getting to the best contract — unless you let it.”

EXERCISE FOUR: Drawing Trumps

Introduction

“Declarer goes through the same planning steps as the defenders. When it comes to putting it all together, one of the critical decisions in a suit contract is whether or not to draw trumps. Declarer usually wants to draw trumps as quickly as possible to prevent the opponents from ruffing any winners. Declarer may have to delay drawing trumps, however, if there are other priorities. Trumps may be needed for ruffing losers or as entries between the two hands. Or declarer might have too many quick losers and be unable to draw trumps without giving up the lead. In that case, declarer will have to take care of some of the losers first.

“Let’s look at an example of how declarer plans to handle the trump suit.”

Instructions

“How do you PLAN to play the hand in Exercise Four in a contract of 6♣ after an opening lead of the ♥K?”

	DUMMY
	♠ K 9
	♥ A 9 6 4
	♦ A Q 7
	♣ 10 9 6 3
LEAD	■
♥K	
	DECLARER
	♠ A Q J 5
	♥ J 7
	♦ 8
	♣ K Q J 8 5 2

Follow-up

Work with the whole group and go over the four steps in declarer's PLAN.

“Your first step is *Pause to consider your objective*. You need 12 tricks and so you can afford only one loser. Next, *Look at your winners and losers*. You have one heart loser and one trump loser, one too many. *Analyze your alternatives*. You can't do anything about the trump loser, so you will have to eliminate the heart loser. Your only option is to discard it on an extra winner in dummy. There are no sure winners available, but you may be able to create one with the help of a successful diamond finesse. That play risks the contract being defeated by two tricks, but it is worth the risk if you can make your slam contract.

“*Now put it all together*. Can you afford to draw trumps first? (No. You will have to let the opponents in with the ♣A and your heart loser is quick — the opponents will take it right away.) You must take the diamond finesse first and discard your loser. After winning the ♥A, you are in the wrong hand to take a finesse. You will have to cross to your hand using the spade suit as an entry. Then lead a diamond — and cross your fingers!”

Conclusion

“Handling the trump suit is declarer's most important task. Declarer's PLAN helps lead declarer in the right direction. On this deal, by consulting the PLAN, declarer can see that it's necessary to delay drawing trumps until a loser has been eliminated.”

SAMPLE DEALS

EXERCISE FIVE: Making A Plan

Introduction

The last eight exercises are pre-dealt deals and the students get to put their PLANS into practice. There are different ways you can handle this. Because the idea of making a PLAN is still relatively new, it may be a good idea to turn up all of the cards and go over the bidding, defense and play outline before actually playing out the deal. If this seems too easy, you might discuss two or more deals together before letting them play the deals out. For most classes, this will still be challenging enough. You may want to guide them through the bidding. Otherwise, some of the defensive ideas may get lost when the students end up in an unusual contract.

“Now we will play some deals. This week, we will play twice as many as before. We will try to get you used to playing more deals at a slightly faster rate. This is in preparation for playing a ‘real’ game of competitive bridge.

“On each deal, try to make an appropriate PLAN, whether you are declarer or a defender. Let’s see who comes out on top.

“The first deal shows the importance of making a defensive PLAN and not merely following your trusty guidelines.”

Instructions

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

(E-Z Deal Cards #8, Deal 1)

Dealer: North	♠ 8		
	♥ J 10 9 2		
	♦ A 8 6 2		
	♣ A 10 4 3		
♠ 10 7 6 3			♠ A K Q 9 4 2
♥ 8 5 3			♥ A Q 6
♦ K Q			♦ 4 3
♣ K Q J 7			♣ 8 6
	♠ J 5		
	♥ K 7 4		
	♦ J 10 9 7 5		
	♣ 9 5 2		

The Bidding

“North and South pass throughout the auction. What would East open the bidding? (1♠.) How does West plan to show support for partner’s major with 12 dummy points? (West begins with 2♣, planning to jump to 4♠ after East’s rebid.) How does the auction proceed? (East rebids 3♠, and West rebids 4♠, followed by three passes.) What is the contract? (4♠.) Who is the declarer? (East.)”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (South.) What would the opening lead be? (♦J.) After seeing the dummy, how does North plan to defeat the contract? (The defenders need four tricks. North has two tricks. The other tricks will have to come with partner’s help. Neither diamonds nor clubs looks promising. The heart suit is the best possibility. North plans to lead a heart rather than return partner’s suit.)”

You may need to discuss the variations with the students, depending on whether declarer plays the ♥A or ♥Q when North leads a heart. Whatever declarer does, it should make no difference to the final outcome.

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (Declarer has four losers and can afford only three. Declarer can’t do much about the missing ♣A and ♦A, but there are two possibilities for eliminating losers in the heart suit. One is to discard them on dummy’s extra club winners after the ♣A has been driven out. The other is to take a finesse. If the defenders are cooperative, declarer plans to draw trumps and then establish the club suit.)”

Conclusion

“North needed to formulate a PLAN — otherwise North might miss the necessity to switch to hearts rather than blindly return partner’s suit.”

EXERCISE SIX: Finding a Shift

Introduction

“On the next deal, it is the opening leader who must be careful to make a PLAN and revise it later. The opening lead is easy enough, but this defender must make use of the new information available as the play progresses.”

Instructions

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

(E-Z Deal Cards #8, Deal 2)

Dealer: East	♠ 10 6										
	♥ A K Q 10										
	♦ 10 7 3										
	♣ 9 7 4 3										
♠ A Q J 9 5 3	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td></td> <td>E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>S</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J 8		♥ 9 6 5 4									
♦ K 6		♦ A Q J 5									
♣ J 10 6		♣ K 8 2									
	♠ 7 4 2										
	♥ 7 3 2										
	♦ 9 8 4 2										
	♣ A Q 5										

The Bidding

“What would East open the bidding? (1♦.) North and South pass throughout. What does West respond? (1♠.) What does East rebid? (1NT.) What level does West know the partnership belongs in? (Game.) Is there a Golden Fit? (Yes, in spades.) What does West rebid? (4♠.)”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (North.) What would the opening lead be? (♥A.) What is North’s original PLAN? (The defenders need four tricks. North plans to start by taking as many heart tricks as possible and probably finding partner with some help in another suit. North may be able to see what to do more clearly after seeing the dummy.) What further information does North have after the second trick? (Declarer’s ♥J and partner’s low-high signal seem to confirm that declarer started with two hearts and partner with three.) Which cards might partner hold to defeat the contract? (Partner might have a trump trick and a club trick, or two club tricks.)”

It may be difficult for North to find the club switch, but all of the clues point in that direction.

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (Declarer has two heart losers and two potential club losers. When declarer gets the lead, the plan is to draw trumps and then discard two clubs on dummy’s extra diamond winners. If the opponents lead a club early on, declarer has the possibility of a successful club finesse, by guessing whether North has the ♣A or the ♣Q.)”

Conclusion

“This deal again shows the importance of making a defensive PLAN. On seeing the dummy and partner’s first card, the situation becomes a lot clearer, and the PLAN should be modified accordingly. It may not provide all of the answers, but it can point you in the appropriate direction.”

EXERCISE SEVEN: Making Use of Signals

Introduction

“It is natural to encourage when you like a suit and discourage when you do not like the suit. The overall PLAN takes priority over an individual suit, however, and you must be careful to use your signals wisely, as the next deal illustrates.”

Instructions

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

(E-Z Deal Cards #8, Deal 3)

Dealer: South	♠ A K ♥ K J 10 6 5 ♦ Q 10 3 ♣ K Q J				
♠ J 10 9 6 3 ♥ A 9 3 ♦ 7 4 ♣ 9 5 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ Q 8 2 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ A K J 9 ♣ 7 6 4
N					
W E					
S					
	♠ 7 5 4 ♥ Q 8 ♦ 8 6 5 2 ♣ A 10 8 3				

The Bidding

“South and West pass. Why can’t North open 1NT? (The hand is too strong.) What does North bid? (1♥.) East passes. Without support for opener’s suit and no suit to bid at the one level, what does South respond? (1NT.) West passes. How does North show maximum strength and balanced distribution? (Rebids 3NT.) How does the bidding proceed from there? (Pass, pass, pass.) Who is the declarer? (South.)”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (West.) What would the opening lead be? (♠J, top of a sequence in the longest suit.) Does East like the suit partner led? (Yes.) How does East plan to defeat the contract? (If West can get the lead and lead a diamond through dummy’s ♦Q, the defenders will have four diamond tricks and the ♥A for down one. This looks like a better alternative than trying to establish the spade suit.) What signal does East give on the first trick? (♠2, discouraging. East wants partner to switch to a diamond when gaining the lead.)”

West may not find the diamond switch when in the lead with the ♥A, but all of the signals are there — if West is paying attention.

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (With two sure tricks in spades and four in clubs, declarer plans to promote tricks in the heart suit to make the contract. In putting the PLAN together, declarer plans to start by leading a heart to the ♥Q, high card from the short side first.)”

Conclusion

“This deal shows the importance of defensive signals in the overall PLAN. You make an encouraging or discouraging signal based on the message you want to send partner, not necessarily your particular holding in the suit.”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (East.) What is East’s PLAN? (The defenders need four tricks. East has potential tricks in spades, hearts and clubs. One more trick needs to be found. It is not clear where it will come from, but it does not look as though there is any need for panic. East plans to make a normal opening lead. After seeing the dummy, East will have a better idea of how to proceed. What would the opening lead be? (♦ 10, top of a sequence.) Does West like the suit partner has led? (Not particularly. It’s clear that the defenders have no tricks in that suit.) Does West prefer another suit? (No.) Which card would West play on the first trick? (♦ 7.) Why? (West does not want to discourage partner and influence partner to try another suit.) When East regains the lead, how does East plan to defend? (To lead another diamond.) Why? (Partner has made an encouraging signal in diamonds. It doesn’t appear that West wants East to shift to another suit.)”

This is a difficult deal for the defenders. The basic idea is to defend passively, waiting for their tricks. If East leads a spade or club early on, declarer can make the contract. It may be difficult for West to see why East should be encouraged to continue leading diamonds. You may have to explain it as the “lesser of evils.”

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (Declarer has one spade loser, one heart loser and two club losers. Declarer hopes the heart finesse will eliminate the loser in that suit. Otherwise, declarer may have to find an opponent with a doubleton ♣A and lead toward one of the high cards, ducking on the way back. If the defenders can be induced to lead either the ♠A or the ♣A, however, declarer will end up with only one club loser. If the ♠A is led, declarer will be able to discard a club loser on dummy’s ♠Q.)”

Conclusion

“A defender must be careful to look at the overall picture of the hand before making a signal. There may be times when you have to encourage partner to keep leading a worthless suit to avoid having something worse happen.”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (South.) How might South plan to get a second trick from the trump suit? (South might be able to get a second trump trick by ruffing a diamond.) What would the opening lead be? (♦9.) How does North know that partner is unlikely to have a singleton diamond? (Declarer has shown a balanced hand with a four-card spade suit and is unlikely to have a five-card diamond suit as well.) How does North plan to defeat the contract? (North has a diamond trick and a likely club trick. North can hope that South can win a trump trick before trumps are drawn. North may then be able to give South a diamond ruff.) Which card would North play on the first trick? (♦8.) Why? (North wants to encourage South to lead another diamond if South gets in with a trump early in the play. North can then give South a ruff.)”

The defense is very difficult and requires careful cooperation between the partners. South may have to be directed to lead a diamond to get the defenders off on the right foot. Persuading North to duck the first diamond also will be a challenge.

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (Declarer has one spade loser, one diamond loser and one club loser and plans to draw trumps as quickly as possible, since the only danger is that the defenders will be able to ruff one of the winners.)”

Conclusion

“This deal requires close cooperation between the defenders. They must both visualize the possibility of a diamond ruff and merge their plans to bring about the desired result.”

EXERCISE TEN: Working Together

Introduction

“Working together on the same PLAN has to become a habit for the defenders. The next deal is another case where both defenders must be on the same wavelength.”

Instructions

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

(E-Z Deal Cards #8, Deal 6)

Dealer: East	♠ Q J 10										
	♥ K 3 2										
	♦ Q 10 7 5										
	♣ K 9 4										
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The Bidding

“East and West pass throughout. What does South open the bidding? (1NT.) What does North respond? (3NT.) How does the auction proceed from there? (Pass, pass, pass.) What is the contract? (3NT.) Who is the declarer? (South.)”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (West.) How does West plan to defeat the contract? (West wants to establish enough winners in the spade suit to defeat the contract.) What would the opening lead be? (♠5, fourth highest.) Which card does East play to the first trick? (♠A, third hand high.) How does East plan to defeat the contract? (By helping partner establish winners in the spade suit, the defenders hope to get four spade tricks to go with the ♦A.) Which card does East return? (♠9, top of the remaining doubleton.) Which card does West play? (♠2 or another low spade.) Why? (West needs to keep the ♠K as an entry to the spade winners once they are established.) Does East plan to hold up if declarer leads diamonds? (No. This is not a hold-up situation. There are plenty of entries to dummy. East wants to use this entry as soon as possible to lead another spade.)”

The defenders must again cooperate closely. If there is any deviation in the PLAN, declarer can make the contract. For example, if East holds up once in the diamond suit, declarer can take nine tricks.

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (Declarer starts with four heart tricks and three club tricks and will get a spade trick if the defenders continue to lead the suit. Declarer needs to develop one more trick, and this can come from the diamond suit, through promotion.)”

Conclusion

“To establish a long suit and then take the winners, both defenders will have to be working on the same PLAN. The initial lead will often dictate what the general PLAN is. From that point on, the defenders should be working together.”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (East.) What would the opening lead be? (♥J.) How many defensive tricks can West see? (Three, provided declarer does not have a singleton heart — two heart tricks and the ♣A.) What possibilities are there for defeating the contract? (East may have a second club trick or, remotely, a diamond trick. Or West may be able to get a trick with the ♠J if West can force dummy to ruff.) What is West’s plan? (After taking three sure tricks, West plans to lead another heart, unless East gives an encouraging signal on the ♣A. West hopes that North started with three hearts and will have to ruff in dummy.)”

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (Declarer has one potential spade loser, two heart losers and one club loser. A heart loser may disappear if the ♥A is in the East hand. There will be no spade loser if the ♠J appears under one of declarer’s high trumps.)”

Conclusion

“The defenders had to be quite ingenious to find the winning defense on this deal. Making a PLAN, however, helps focus the defenders’ attention on what to be looking for.”

The Defense

“Who makes the opening lead? (North.) What would the opening lead be? (♥Q, top of a sequence.) How does South plan to defeat the contract? (From North’s opening lead, South hopes the defense can establish enough heart tricks to defeat the contract and get in to take them.) What does South plan to do when in the lead? (Lead another heart.) If declarer leads a club, which card should South play? (♣A.) Why? (South wants to get in as quickly as possible to establish North’s heart tricks before any entry North has is driven out.)”

The Play

“Review the steps in declarer’s PLAN. How does declarer plan to make the contract? (Declarer has three sure tricks in spades, two in hearts and two in diamonds. The two extra tricks required can come from promotion in the club suit, once the ♣A and ♣K are driven out.)”

Conclusion

“Guidelines such as *second hand low* are useful only when you are in doubt as to what is the best play. When you make a PLAN, your doubts may disappear. You make the best play to defeat the contract, ignoring the guideline if necessary.”

