

Defensive Strategy

On defense, the best approach is usually to go “passive.” Don’t start suits in which you have honors (unless you have a safe sequence to lead from). Leading away from (or leading) honors is dangerous and often costs a trick. The underlined card is dangerous.

| A | B | C |
|--|---|---|
| NORTH ♠ 975 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♥ K64 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♦ A86 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WEST ♠ KJ <u>3</u> <input type="checkbox"/> | WEST ♥ <u>A</u> 107 <input type="checkbox"/> | WEST ♦ Q <u>7</u> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |

| D | E | F |
|--|---|---|
| NORTH ♠ Q75 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♥ Q75 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♦ J72 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| EAST ♠ KJ <u>3</u> <input type="checkbox"/> | EAST ♥ <u>A</u> 103 <input type="checkbox"/> | EAST ♦ K <u>8</u> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

It is safe to lead from small cards or through strength (the underlined card is safe):

| G | H | I |
|--|---|--|
| NORTH ♠ 975 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♥ AK7 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♦ KQ2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| WEST ♠ 10 <u>8</u> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | WEST ♥ J <u>8</u> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | WEST ♦ <u>8</u> 75 <input type="checkbox"/> |

| J | K | L |
|--|---|--|
| NORTH ♠ 875 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♥ A765 <input type="checkbox"/> | NORTH ♦ 54 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| EAST ♠ <u>6</u> 42 <input type="checkbox"/> | EAST ♥ <u>10</u> 98 <input type="checkbox"/> | EAST ♦ Q7 <u>6</u> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |

Defensive Strategy (continued)

The “default” approach is passive/safe. Go aggressive only when dummy has winners. Switch to a trump if declarer might be trumping in dummy.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Dir South Vul Both LEAD: ♥Q | NORTH ♠ A97 ♥ 543 ♦ Q96 ♣ AQJ8 | M <hr style="width: 100%;"/> | EAST ♠ 632 ♥ 876 ♦ KJ32 ♣ K96 | SOUTH ♠ KQJ1084 ♥ AK ♦ 1054 ♣ 103 |
| WEST ♠ 5 ♥ QJ1092 ♦ A87 ♣ 7542 | W N E S -- -- -- 1♠ P 2♣ P 2♠ P 4♠ All Pass | | | |

Declarer wins the heart lead and when the ♣10 goes to East's ♣K, he sees the need to switch aggressively to diamonds.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Dir South Vul Both LEAD: ♥K | NORTH ♠ A97 ♥ 543 ♦ Q96 ♣ AQ86 | N <hr style="width: 100%;"/> | EAST ♠ 632 ♥ 987 ♦ KJ5 ♣ KJ97 | SOUTH ♠ KQJ1094 ♥ A6 ♦ A4 ♣ 732 |
| WEST ♠ 5 ♥ KQJ102 ♦ 108732 ♣ 105 | W N E S -- -- -- 1♠ P 2♣ P 2♠ P 4♠ All Pass | | | |

Declarer wins the heart lead and when the ♣2 goes to dummy's ♣Q and East's ♣K, East goes passively/safely (hearts).

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dir South Vul None LEAD: ♥K | NORTH ♠ 1083 ♥ 5 ♦ AQ10753 ♣ 653 | O <hr style="width: 100%;"/> | EAST ♠ 65 ♥ A74 ♦ KJ94 ♣ 10874 | SOUTH ♠ KQJ94 ♥ 9862 ♦ 6 ♣ AKQ |
| WEST ♠ A72 ♥ KQJ103 ♦ 82 ♣ J92 | W N E S -- -- -- 1♠ 2♥ 2♠ 3♥ 4♠ P P P | | | |

East should win the ♥A and switch to a trump. West wins and continues with a second trump to set the contract.

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Dir South Vul None LEAD: ♦Q | NORTH ♠ KQ4 ♥ AJ96 ♦ 75 ♣ KQJ10 | P <hr style="width: 100%;"/> | EAST ♠ 63 ♥ K102 ♦ A832 ♣ 9632 | SOUTH ♠ AJ10952 ♥ 753 ♦ K6 ♣ 84 |
| WEST ♠ 87 ♥ Q84 ♦ QJ1094 ♣ A75 | W N E S -- -- -- 2♠ P 4♠ All Pass | | | |