Learning Points - Two Heads are Better than One …On Defense

1) Analysis & Planning
2) Opening Leads / Simple
3) Communication
4) Inferences and Tactics

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Evening Lecture Series
Cincinnati Flying Pig Regional
Steve Moese / Learning Points
http://www.cincybridge.com/
online_lesson_files.htm

LEADS (circle card led, if not in bold)

versus Suits		versus Notrump	
x x	x x ⊗ x	x x	x ⊗ x x
x x x	x x x x ⊗	x ⊗ x	x x x x x
⊗ K x	T 9 x	A K J x	A Q J x
K Q x	K J T x	A J T 9	A T 9 x
Q J x	K T 9 x	K Q J x	K Q T 9
J T x	Q T 9 x	Q J T x	Q T 9 x
K Q T 9		J T 9 x	T 9 x x

LENGTH LEADS:

4th Best	vs SUITS □	vs NT ■
3rd/5th Best	vs SUITS ■	vs NT □
	Attitude vs NT □	

Primary signal to partner's leads
Attitude ■ Count □ Suit Preference □

SPECIAL CARDING □ **PLEASE ASK**

DEFENSIVE CARDING

	vs SUITS	vs NT
Standard:	■	■
Except __		
Upside-Down:		
count	□	□
attitude	⊔	⊔

FIRST DISCARD

Lavinthal	□	□
Odd/Even	□	□

OTHER CARDING

Smith Echo	□	□
Trump Suit Pref.	□	□
Foster Echo	□	□

Our goal is to maximize **our score**. Many experts believe declarer has an inherent advantage (0.5 tricks) because 1 person controls 2 hands and acts 1st with partial information. Good analysis, planning, creativity, communication, & judgment can create an edge. Let's do all we can to exert our advantage!

Defense Starts with Bidding – Ours and Theirs Are you on the same wavelength with your partner? What does an overcall promise? What does a preemptive overcall promise? What does the double of an artificial bid mean? What does the absence of any bids or doubles mean? Be sure to ask about opponents tendencies (HCP, Shape inferences). It's not only what was said, it's often what wasn't said that matters. **Be sure to tune competitive bidding and overcalls to enable good defense!** If partner could have made a low level overcall and didn't, then leading that suit might not be useful. If partner could have doubled a conventional call and didn't then we might want to look elsewhere (Stayman, Jacoby, Splinter and RKC).

Checklist for Planning your Attack:

[ ] *What did the auction tell us? What did partner say/not say? What does our hand tell us?*

Power – Who has how many HCP and in which suits? How much can partner have?
Distribution – Who likely has what shape? Partner's shape? Declarer's shape? 3-1 Odd/Even Law
Tricks – Where are Declarer's tricks? Our tricks? Trump promotion?

> All bridge hands have either 3 odd 1 even or 3 even 1 odd suits. All 4 hands are either 3-1 odd or 3-1 even!

[ ] *Should we attack or should declarer work for their tricks?*

Passive – Opponents have bid tentatively and are weak for their level.
Declarer is in a slam that will make if we give away tempo or free finesses
End played at the opening lead?
Declarer need ruffs from short trumps to make this contract.

Active – We are in a race and must attack now. Develop ruffs.
Force declarer to lose trump control. Trump Promotion?
Our suit/values are known and we can develop them before declarer can stop us.
We need to provoke an early choice that gives us a chance.
Stop declarer from developing a side suit. Make the hand hard to manage.
False carding/ Misleading play?

[ ] *What's our goal (IMPs or Match Points?)*

Risks - What risks are there for each suit? What suit to lead, and what card is best?
Plan – How do we get all our tricks? Read/Send Signals. Switch or not?
Where should declarer be? Always consider trump promotion/uppercut.

Opening Leads (4 Step Plan)

1) **Conventional Wisdom**: Maxims → rote behavior → analysis → insight → mastery.

Lead top from a power sequence.	Signal Attitude
Lead Length *4th best - Rule of 11 (3rd & 5th – 10&12)*	Signal Count (COPA)
Lead Hi-low from doubleton (to get a ruff)	Signal Suit Preference
Lead the unbid suit	

> *"There is no such thing as a blind opening lead, just deaf opening leaders."*
> *- Terence Reese*

2) Bridge World Standard 2001 (Expert Poll Results) – *See Appendix I*

3) Keep It Simple

Opening Leads	Carding
Lead Partner's Suit *(2 exceptions)*	Upside down count and attitude
Lead a singleton *(2 exceptions)*	Attitude to partner's lead
A, Q, ask Attitude; K ask Count[1]	Current count on 2nd card
Attitude Spot Card Leads *from length (4th best)*	Suit Preference when obvious and following:
Low → A, K, or Q	- to dummy's/declarer's/partner's singleton
High → 2nd highest or top of sequence	- to 2nd trick of partner's doubleton
If not strength then length	- with known length (5+); instead of 1st card count!
If not length then passive 3 card suit / trump	Top then Bottom of 3+ Honor sequence.
Find partner's length/strength	<u>Discards:</u>
Avoid giving trick to declarer	Top of equals honor discards (and following suit)
Avoid under leading an Ace	1st Attitude; 2nd Count, except when
Avoid leads from 2 cards in their / unbid suit(s).	Suit Preference
Must have AQx in trumps to lead doubleton!!!	Odd Even
Partner must have an entry (How do you know??)	Lavinthal
Avoid leading a singleton trump	Alarm Bell Discards

[1]*When leading from a high honor sequence lead the* **bottom** *card of the sequence next so partner will know whether to overtake or not.*

4) Obvious Switch (Granovetters) - Attitude on opening lead. Requires strong card reading and analysis. Discourage → tolerance for obvious switch. Encourage → accepts obvious switch. Suit Preference everywhere else. COUNT in 4 situations ONLY:
1. With a doubleton after partner's lead of the AK – *when we want to obtain a ruff*.
2. After the opening lead of a King.
3. When helping partner to hold up an Ace or King
4. When cashing out and the high cards are known.

<u>Communication</u> – Dummy gives us new information. Time to (re)visit key questions:
1) Where are our combined assets? What inferences are there from Dummy and the play of the hand?
2) What's partner's shape / declarer's shape? Reassess Power, Distribution, and Tricks assumptions.
3) What transportation issues might exist? Can we create access problems for Declarer?
4) What sequence of plays will maximize our chances of achieving our goal?
5) Have we been active enough or should we become passive so we give nothing away?

Our goal by trick 2 is to communicate with partner so we have the best chance of stopping declarer. We must avoid telling declarer how to make their contract.

<u>Pay Attention:</u> *Inferences are free - they start out worth what you paid for them, then they start working.*

♣If partner doesn't lead my suit, s/he is void, holds the Ace of my suit with declarer known to hold a major stopper, wants an early ruff elsewhere, is a genius, … *or is looking for a new partner.*

♦If partner under leads a side Ace on opening lead, s/he is looking for a 2nd round ruff, *or a new partner.*

♥If partner overcalls and I hold two honors (A, K, Q) in that suit, partner has an opening hand with outside honor strength in 1 or more suits.

♠Why lead a singleton trump? Better to hope partner has trump length & start the forcing defense.

♣If the rule of 11 is wrong, partner led from 3…..or 1

♦If partner leads x, s/he doesn't have the Ace in that suit (except in trumps).

♥If partner leads their suit and must be short, assume a singleton. If xx, then know partner has AQx of trump or better. If xxx then assume partner has assets in the remaining 2 suits. If partner leads a high x partner has either 1 or 3+, almost never 2.

♠ If partner leads a singleton, assume trumps are poor or not longer than 3 (they might be Jxxx). Better trump means forcing declarer.

Have you shared defensive inferences with your partner today?

♣ If partner leads a trump x, partner doesn't have a singleton trump (and partner expects opponent's hand opposite the trump length to be short in a side suit).

♦ If partner is known to have a singleton and doesn't lead it, then partner has natural trump tricks or wants a forcing defense.

♥ If partner has strength & makes a passive opening lead, the other suits are defensive targets from my side.

♠ Leading after Stayman, why lead a club if partner didn't double that suit?

♣ Leading after Jacoby Transfer – why lead the transfer suit if partner didn't double?

♦ After their minor suit opening & low level response, if partner could have bid a 1 level major and didn't, why lead one?

♥ If you have length, 1 honor and no outside entries, why lead that suit? What might partner have?

♠ If opponents are short in a suit, why lead it?

♣ If partner leads back a trump in the face of dummy's semi-solid side suit, assume s/he controls that suit!

♦ If partner leads back the 4th suit in the face of dummy's semi-solid side suit, assume partner can't stop it.

♥ If partner discards an obvious winner eliminating a switch option (ALARM BELL) partner wants something no signal can ask for (continuation for an uppercut, switch to length for a ruff).

♠ If partner discards an honor in a suit they are known to hold, s/he denies a higher honor – partner has other ways of showing suit preference.

♣ With trump length and control, choose a forcing attack. Cause declarer to ruff in the LONG hand. Refuse to shorten your trumps prematurely.

♦ With outside shortness in dummy why not attack trumps (Declarer has trump length)? Cut short those short hand ruffs.

♥ Why lead declarer's known long suit unless you can trump trick 2.

♠ Why lead dummy's known long suit unless partner has an entry elsewhere? Or partner can ruff? Or you can ruff the 2nd round and have enough trump controls to find partner's entry?

Defensive Tactics - Passive leads appeal when partner cannot contribute, opponents are stretching, or opponents are in slam. Defending two balanced hands, a passive approach can be best: Trump lead, 3-small in an unbid suit, small from 5+ to an honor, leading to declarer's dead suit. 6NT and 7 bids might merit passive leads unless you hold a surprise for declarer. **Attacking leads** appeal when we must develop our tricks before declarer can develop theirs.

Declarer will set up the most tricks they can ASAP. Use your knowledge of good declarer play to divine what declarer's doing. If declarer doesn't touch a semi-solid suit, assume they hold the missing honor!

Switch to trump to cut ruffs by the short trump hand, to prevent a cross ruff, or to prevent declarer from developing a long suit. Switch to the 4th suit when you cannot control dummy's long suit and declarer will have enough tricks elsewhere. (Trumps are 1st, dummy's long suit is the 2nd, the suit we led is the 3rd, and…). If no other suit is right consider switching to the 4th suit. Switch to declarer's strength if opening a new suit would risk an undeserved trick to declarer. Switch to dummy's long running suit before trumps are drawn if you suspect declarer has a singleton needs a squeeze and cannot reach the long suit otherwise (taking out the entry before declarer can use it - Merrimac Coup)! Switch to endplay declarer. Keeping partner on lead when you could have overtaken should ask for an obvious card.

Create **transportation** hurdles: *Block/Unblock Suits, Hold-Up Winners, Eliminate Entries*.
Create **illusions**: learn the necessary false cards and when to apply them.

Jim Becker	Bobby Goldman	**Marshall Miles**	**Frank Stewart**	have written reams about bridge defense. This borrows from many.
David Bird	**Pam/Matt Granovetter**	**Julian Pottage**	Barbara Starzec	
Easley Blackwood	Jan Janitschke	**Jim Priebe**	Caroline Sydnor	
August Boehm	**Eddie Kantar**	**Terence Reese**	Frank Thomas	
Sally Brock	**Hugh W. Kelsey**	**William Root**	**Karen Walker**	**Read the MASTERS**…
Robert Ewen	**Mike Lawrence**	George Rosenkranz	**Anders Wirgren**	
Jerry Fink & Joe Lutz	Allan Mazer	Marc Smith	**Kit Woolsey**	
Jeremy Flint	Ian McCance	Norma Sands	*And many more…*	

Bridge World Master Solvers Club
Fold this page in ½ lengthwise
Choose your lead and compare with partner

Problem H Opening Lead Problems
Discuss these with partner. Study the inferences & the decision path experts use.

IMPs / None Vul	S	W	N	E		Lead	Score	Votes	Comments
South _(Jan 08 p59)_			P	1N		♥4	100	8	Catch partner w/5♥
♠ 9854	P	3N				♥J ♦3	90	4,8	Lead issues; 4FLS
♥ J64						♠4895	60	2,2,1,0	Our suit
♦ 105432						♦52	30	0,0	Variants on 4FLS
♣ 4						♣4	20	1	Safety (??)

MP / EW Vul	S	W	N	E		Lead	Score	Votes	Comments
South _(Dec 08 p60)_		P	P	IN		♥9	100	17	Pure Passive
♠ KQ86						♠6 K	70	4,4	♠K avoid free ♥ finesse
♥ 98						♣4	30	0	♠6 only 2♠H in sequence
♦ KQ5						♣K	20	0	
♣ KQ54						♦ K	10	0	

IMPs / NS Vul	S	W	N	E		Lead	Score	Votes	Comments
South _(Aug 08 p59)_	1♦	2♦[1]	3♦[2]	3♠		♣K	100	14	Safe. West has min void
♠ 86	P	6♠				♣Q	90	1	..also misdirecting
♥ 3						♦A	80	6	Cash long suit 1st
♦ AK8654	1 = Majors, Weak or Strong					♥3	60	3	Partner's Major Ace
♣ KQJ2	2 = Weak Raise					♠	50	2	Reduce ♥ ruffs in dummy.

IMPs / None Vul	S	W	N	E		Lead	Score	Votes	Comments
South _(May 08 p60)_		1♣	2♠	3♦		♣Q	100	7	Passive Attack
♠ A3	P	3♠	P	3N		♣3 ♠A	90	6,10	♣3: hit partner's K or 9
♥ K874						♦9	60	2	♠A: Simple/field/Partner suit
♦ 983						♥7	50	1	♦9: Pure passive
♣ QJ103						♥84♣J10	30	0	

MP / None Vul	S	W	N	E		Lead	Score	Votes	Comments
South _(Mar 09 p60)_				2N		♦3	100	7	Attack before opp. ♥ tricks
♠ Q87		3♦[1]		3♥		♦4,♥10	90	1,6	Passive
♥ 1076		4N[2]		6N		♥6, ♣J	80	2,6	Passive
♦ K943	1 = Transfer					♥7,♣2	70	1,1	
♣ J32	2 = Invitation					♣3	60	2	Safest

IMPs / None Vul	S	W	N	E		Lead	Score	Votes	Comments
South _(Feb 09 p60)_	3♠	Dbl	P	3N		♥J	100	14	Partner's Suit / E's ♠ Stop
♠ AQJ108762						♠Q	90	11	Std / Why change?
♥ J4						♠J	80	1	Defines where ♠A is
♦ 2						♣J	70	1	
♣ J65						♠A	60	0	
These are only snapshots to promote learning. Be sure to read the Master Solvers Series in its entirety, where you will see expert's creativity, inferences and decisions in tough situations.						♠x	50	0	
						♣x	30	0	
						♦2	20	0	

Learning Points Defense

S Deals	♠ 105	
None Vul	♥ 963	
	♦ 10654	
Mike	♣ QJ42	Steve

♠ --	N	♠ AK98632
♥ Q854		♥ J10
♦ AKQ72	W 27 E	♦ J
♣ K1085	S	♣ A63

	♠ QJ74	
	♥ AK72	**Duplimate**:
	♦ 983	EW: 4N, 4♣,
	♣ 97	4♦, 3♠, 3♥

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	4♠

South leads ♣ 9 (???)

A Question of Opening Lead

Here a forcing defense is indicated by South's trump holding and the bidding. Better to forego the temptation to lead a small club in a vain attempt to earn a 3rd trump trick. Leading a small doubleton often gives declarer just enough time to 1) set up the suit led or 2) to shed losers on one of the remaining suits, as was the case here.

As it was declarer shed both heart losers. (Yes, East was a little frisky…)

4♠ making 5 was +450 and worth 9 of 11 matchpoints.

For the full Learning Point go to:
http://www.cincybridge.com/Lessons/20080129%20Learning%20Points%20A%20Question%20of%20Opening%20Lead.pdf

Hold Up for the Setting Trick

Both defenders had to be alert to hold-up plays in different suits to force declarer into a set. Any positive score by E/W on this deal will score well.

East's opening lead is not 4th best. We play attitude leads. The lead of a small spot card promises an A, K or Q in the suit led. When from length, this lead will be 4th best. The ♠7 here is a high spot denying a top honor, but implying length (3 or more spades). No use leading hearts. North has 5 and we're not in the business of developing opponent's suits for them.

North chose to play the ♠Q and West ducked, creating an ♠AJ tenace over the board's ♠K4. Declarer then led the ♥K, showing out in hand. East ducked the 2nd ♥ as well. Declarer appears to have entries to the ♥ so the only way to shut down the suit as a source of tricks is to make a 3rd lead too costly. Declarer switched to ♣, and West ducked the 1st trick. This duck is necessary to cut communication to Declarer's hand.

E Deals	♠ 1052	
E/W Vul	♥	
	♦ KJ86	
Mike	♣ KQJ764	Steve

♠ AJ8	N	♠ 9763
♥ 872		♥ A10654
♦ 9543	W 6 E	♦ A7
♣ A93	S	♣ 85

	♠ KQ4	
	♥ KQJ93	**Deep Finesse**:
	♦ Q102	NS 1♠, 2♦
	♣ 102	2♣, 1N
		S 2N

East	South	West	North
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Passed Out	

East leads ♠7

Declarer switches to diamonds. East can take the ♦Ace on the 1st or 2nd trick, it doesn't matter. East must continue spades, and West must return a heart after cashing spades. North can't have the ♠A and East is marked with the ♥A. After cashing spades, and a heart back, East can cash the 4th spade.

Down 2 for + 100 and 20 out of 25 match points.

For the full Learning Point go to:
http://www.cincybridge.com/Lessons/Hold%20Up%20for%20the%20Setting%20Trick.pdf

Appendix I – Bridge World Standard Defensive Carding
VII. Bridge World Standard Defense

1. Opening Leads
(A) Against suit contracts
    (1) Honor leads: ace from ace-king; top from a sequence; highest equal from an interior sequence
    (2) Spot-card leads: third highest from even length; lowest from odd length
    (3) Alarm-clock leads (to suggest an unusual situation, such as a ruff possibility): fourth highest from five or six cards; fifth highest from seven cards
(B) Against notrump contracts
    (1) Honor leads: ace requests unblock or count signal; queen requests jack; highest equal from non-ace sequences and interior sequences
    (2) Spot-card leads: fourth highest; second highest from weak suits

2. Later Leads
(A) Against suit contracts
    (1) Honor leads: king from ace-king; otherwise, highest equal from sequences and interior sequences
    (2) Spot-card leads in opening leader's suit: high from remaining doubleton; low from remaining tripleton
    (3) Spot-card leads in a new suit: third highest from even length; lowest from odd length
(B) Against notrump contracts
    (1) Honor leads: highest equal from sequences and interior sequences
    (2) Spot-card leads in opening leader's suit: original fourth highest
    (3) Spot-card leads in a new suit: attitude

3. Signaling Techniques (How to Send Messages)
(A) Attitude signals: low discourages; high encourages
(B) Count signals: high even; low odd [Exception: in the trump suit, upside-down count]
(C) What a count signal shows: present count
(D) Suit-preference signals: high prefers higher suit; low prefers lower suit

4. Signal Meanings (When to Send Which Message)
(A) When following to partner's lead: attitude (discouraging signal suggests the ability to support the obvious shift), but
    (1) suit-preference when a high honor is led and dummy has a singleton and can trump, and
    (2) count at trick one when not beating dummy's card or finessing and dummy's highest is the jack or lower or the equivalent
(B) When following to declarer's or dummy's lead: count
(C) When playing trumps: count, but suit-preference when there is a clear issue for the defense
(D) When discarding:
    (1) from sequences and interior sequences with significant trick-taking ability: highest equal
    (2) first discard in a particular suit: attitude
    (3) second discard in a particular suit: count
    (4) discard relating to a different suit: suit-preference
(E) When splitting honors as second hand: king from ace-king; otherwise highest equal
(F) Throughout the defense:
    (1) Special situations where count takes precedence: at trick one against a suit slam, after a king-lead
    (2) In general: unusual play shows unusual holding or requests unusual play

BWS 2001 Amendments and Clarifications (% Expert Agree):
101. Lead ace from ace-king against suit contracts. (55)

102A. Give suit-preference signals in trumps. (15)
102B. Give suit-preference signals in trumps when there is a clear issue for the defenders. (54)

103. Use J, 10 or 9 shows zero or two higher after trick one. (42)

104. When leading a spot card after trick one, use third from even or lowest from odd only when encouraging continuation; otherwise lead high. (46)

105. A discouraging signal suggests the ability to support the obvious shift. (53)

106. Use suit-preference when a high honor is led and dummy has a singleton. (59)

107. Smith echo (attitude signal in the suit declarer first leads relates to the suit of the opening lead) against notrump. (48)

108A. Count by third hand at trick one when not beating dummy's card or finessing. (28)
108B. Count by third hand at trick one when not beating dummy card or finessing and dummy's highest card in the suit is jack or lower or the equivalent. (37)

Excerpted from www.bridgeworld.com Bridge World Standard 2001 and Bridge World Standard 2001 Poll Results.