

## KEYS to WINNING BRIDGE

Nobody ever said that playing defense is easy. Declarer sees his assets, but a defender who can see neither his partner's hand nor declarer's can face unpleasant guesses. Though the defensive plan may go down various paths, the most important concept is "active/passive". A good defender's most vital skill is the ability to separate the deals where he must get busy and establish and cash tricks in a hurry (active) from those in which he can afford to wait for tricks that declarer must eventually lose (passive).

An active defense is indicated when declarer has ample trick-taking power and will make his contract unless the defenders get their tricks first. But if declarer has limited values and no ready source of tricks, the defender will go passive, they will avoid helping declarer by snatching winners, leading from honors and breaking new suits.

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		6			
		AQ5	1 Diamond		
		AJ974	3 Clubs		
		10863			
A10753				K82	Pass
986	Pass			J1072	Pass
52	Pass			K83	Pass
J72				Q94	
		QJ94			
		K43	DEALER – 1 Club		
		Q106	1 NT		
		AK5	3 NT		

West leads the 5 of spades, East takes the King and returns the 8, the higher of his remaining spades. If East's spades were K-8-4-2, he would return the 2, and West would know East started with 2 or 4 spades.

What spade do you play when East returns the 8?

Q1063 1 Spade  
 J6 3 NT  
 KQ4  
 10863

A84 Pass  
 K9852 Pass  
 952  
 J5

972 Pass  
 1073 Pass  
 J1073  
 A42

KJ5  
 AQ4 DEALER – 1 Club  
 A86 2 NT  
 KQ97 Pass

West leads the 5 of hearts, and dummy's J wins. At trick 2, declarer leads the 3 of clubs. This is no time for "second hand low", East must fly with his Ace to return a heart, racing to set up West's long suit. East should be eager to win an early trick to lead a heart, hoping to establish the hearts while West retains an entry. If East ducks the first club, declarer will shift to spades and make his contract.

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KQJ97  
 86 1 Spade  
 KQ6 3 NT  
 765

642 Pass  
 Q1053 Pass  
 852  
 982

A85 Pass  
 42 Pass  
 AJ104  
 A1043

103  
 AKJ97 DEALER – 1 Heart  
 973 1 NT  
 KQJ Pass

West leads the 9 of clubs. A high spot to deny strength in the suit. East takes the Ace. His plan should be to shut out dummy's spades. But the KQ of diamonds will provide a dummy entry, so East should dislodge that entry while he still has the Ace of spades. At trick two, East should shift to the J of diamonds. Declarer can take the queen and start spades. East ducks and West will signal "count" with the deuce. When East wins the second spade, dummy is out of the picture. Even if East's diamond holding were A-J-7-3, he might do well to shift to the J of diamonds.

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