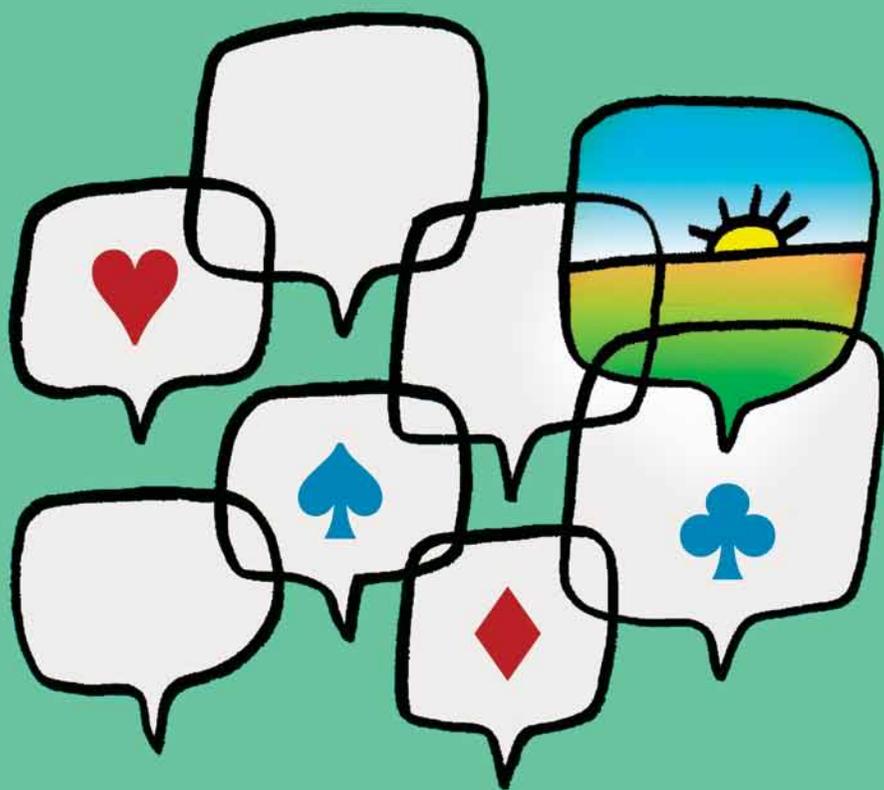


DEFENSIVE PLAY AT BRIDGE

A QUIZBOOK

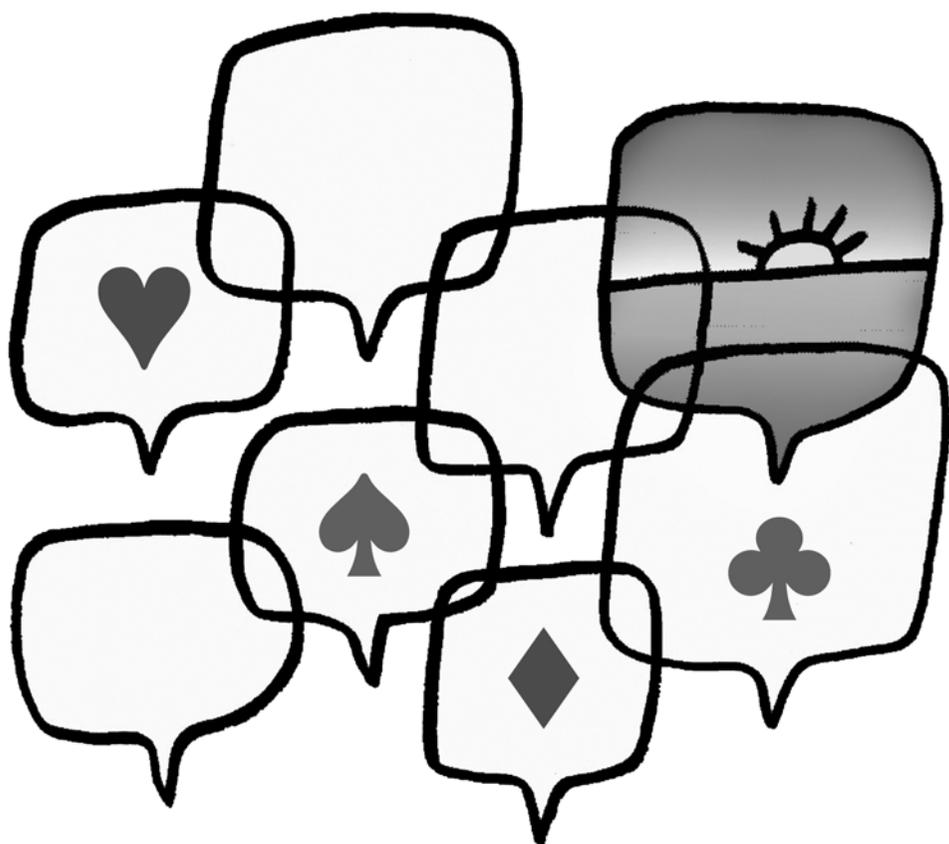


BARBARA SEAGRAM • DAVID BIRD

DEFENSIVE PLAY AT BRIDGE

A QUIZBOOK

BARBARA SEAGRAM • DAVID BIRD



MASTER POINT PRESS • TORONTO, CANADA

Text © 2013 Barbara Seagram and David Bird

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press
331 Douglas Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5M 1H2 (416)781-0351

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Websites: www.masterpointpress.com
www.teachbridge.com
www.bridgeblogging.com
www.ebooksbridge.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Seagram, Barbara, author

Defensive play at bridge : a quizbook / Barbara Seagram and David Bird.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-1-897106-92-1 (pbk.).--ISBN 978-1-55494-245-9 (pdf).--

ISBN 978-1-55494-477-4 (epub).--ISBN 978-1-55494-728-7 (mobi)

1. Contract bridge--Defensive play. I. Bird, David, 1946-, author II. Title.

GV1282.42.S425 2013

795.41'53

C2013-902154-X

C2013-902155-8

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund for our publishing activities.

Editor

Ray Lee

Copy editor/interior format

Sally Sparrow

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Part I <i>The Basics of Defense</i>	
1. Which Card Should I Play?	6
2. Signals and Discards	11
Part II <i>Defending Against Notrump Contracts</i>	
3. Opening Leads Against Notrump	18
4. Defending Notrump in Third Seat	33
5. Defending Notrump in Second Seat	57
6. Killing Declarer's Communications	81
Part III <i>Defending Against Suit Contracts</i>	
7. Opening Leads Against Suit Contracts	92
8. Defending Suit Contracts in Third Seat	107
9. Defending Suit Contracts in Second Seat	131
Glossary of Bridge Terms	155

FOREWORD

None of the answers in this quiz book involve anything in the least bit difficult. You may have to hold up an ace to keep declarer out of the dummy. When you lead from ♥A9762 against 3NT and partner wins with the ♥K from ♥K103, you may have to hold up your ♥A on the second round to allow partner to reach your hand later. These are basic techniques, used by all good defenders, and are easy to master.

Sometimes you will say to yourself ‘I don’t think we can beat this contract unless partner holds the ♣A.’ In that case you must assume that partner does hold the ♣A. Go ahead and play a club! It is better to grasp even a small chance than to sit back and allow the contract to make.

Some defensive problems are tough enough to tax the hardest of experts. You will not find any such problems in this book. All those here can be solved by thinking clearly and applying basic techniques such as ‘second hand plays low’ and ‘third hand plays high’. We will also show you how to decide whether to cover an honor with an honor.

We address all the important basic techniques of defense against suit and notrump contracts, including signaling and discarding. Once you have mastered these, you can be sure that your defense will be better than that of most of the players you face.

Perhaps there will be problems that you do not get right first time. Excellent! After reading our explanation of the correct defense, you will get the problems right the second time you try them. You will also beat the contract whenever you encounter such situations at the table. Improving your game is the aim of a book like this.

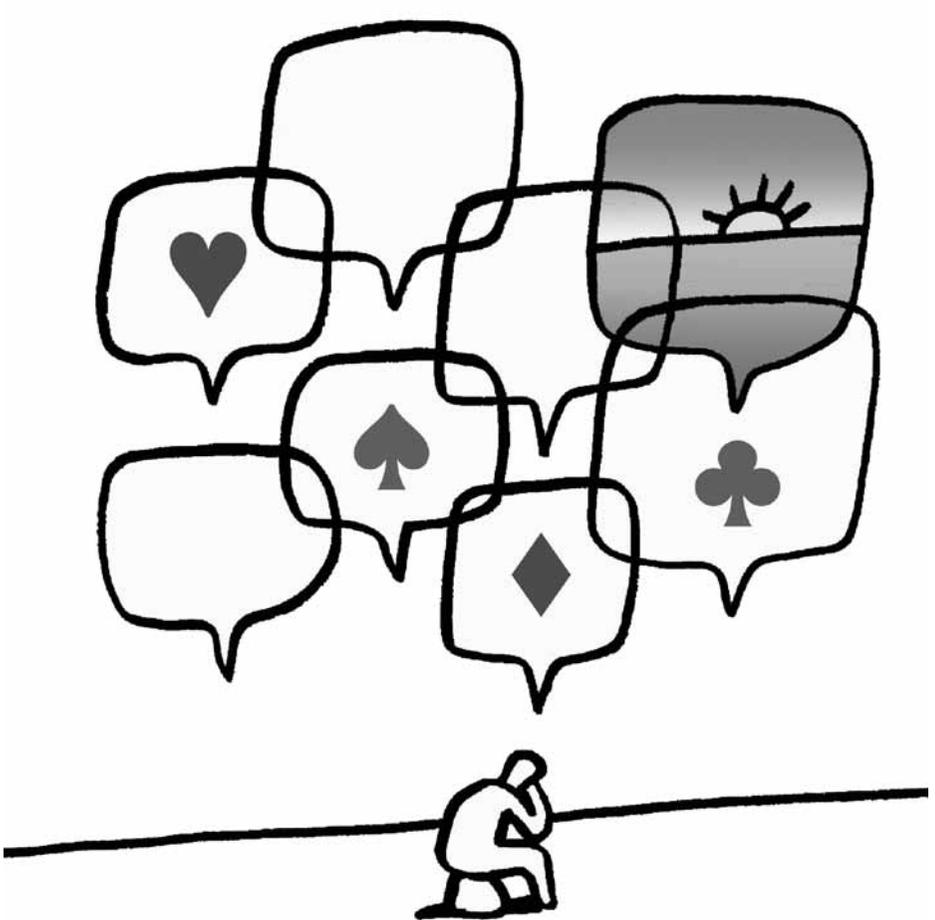
When we introduce technical bridge terms for the first time, they appear in bold type, like **this**. The Glossary at the end of the book has a list of these terms for easy reference. An asterisk (*) in the bidding diagram denotes a conventional bid in common usage that requires no further explanation, such as Stayman.

The time has come for you to read the introductory material and then attempt the first problem. Good luck, remember to think carefully about how the contract might be defeated and (more important, really)... enjoy yourself!

Barbara Seagram and David Bird

PART I

THE BASICS OF DEFENSE



1

WHICH CARD SHOULD I PLAY?

If playing good bridge were just a matter of remembering a set of rules, such as ‘play low in the **second seat**’, it would be a dull old game. To defend well, you need to be a good detective! You must observe everything that happens: the bidding, partner’s opening lead, the fall of the cards and partner’s signals. You then have to think clearly to determine the best chance of defeating the contract.

Fortunately, there are some useful guidelines to help you make the best play on each trick. In this introductory chapter, we will look at a few of them.

Play high in third seat

When your partner **leads** a low card to a trick, it is usually right to play high in the **third seat**. Suppose declarer is playing in 4♠ and your partner (West) leads the ♦2 in this position:

♦ Q 10 8 2	♦ 7 4 3		♦ K 9 6 5
			
	♦ A J		

Partner is very unlikely to hold the ♦A, it’s true, but it is still vital that you play the ♦K in third seat. Declarer (South) will win with the ♦A but your partner’s ♦Q will take a trick subsequently.

Suppose you made the mistake of not playing your king. Declarer would thank his lucky stars and win with the jack, scoring an undeserved second trick in the suit.

What should you do when your suit is headed by two (or more) touching **honors**?

♣ K 9 8 2	♣ 7 4 3		♣ Q J 5
			
	♣ A 10 6		

West leads the ♣2 and you should play the lower (or lowest) of touching honors in the third seat. Here you will play the ♣J and declarer will win with the ♣A.

Look at the position from your partner's seat now. He knows that you hold the ♣Q! If you didn't, declarer would hold the ♣AQ and would have won the first trick with the queen instead of the ace. When your partner is next on lead, he will know that it is safe to **continue** playing clubs.

Suppose the cards lie differently:



Again West leads the ♣2 but this time you play the ♣Q, won by declarer's ace. Since you would have played the lower of touching honors, West knows that you do not hold the ♣J. If he subsequently wins a trick in some other suit, he will realize that it is unsafe to continue clubs. (Whether West played the ♣K next or a lower club, he would allow declarer to score an undeserved trick with the ♣J.) He should therefore **switch** to a different suit.

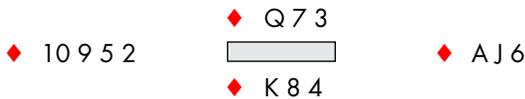
The situation is not so straightforward when dummy holds an honor in the suit that has been led:



Suppose West leads the ♦2 and a low card is played from the dummy. Which card should you play from the East hand?

If you play the ♦A, dummy's ♦Q will score a trick later in the play. Even though you cannot be sure who holds the ♦K, you should keep your ace to deal with dummy's queen. You should play the ♦J on the first round. When the cards lie as in the diagram, the jack will win and the defenders can then score further tricks with the ace and king.

Suppose that South holds the ♦K instead of West:



West leads the ♦2, as before, and it is still right to play the ♦J on the first round. South will make a trick with the king, but that will be all. If instead you play the ♦A, declarer will score two diamond tricks, with the king and the queen.

Let's look at two more positions where you are sitting over the dummy.

♣ 10 8 7 4	♣ A Q 6 □ ♣ 9 5 2	♣ K J 3
------------	-------------------------	---------

Your partner, West, leads the ♣4. If declarer plays the ♣6 from dummy, you should of course win with the ♣J rather than the ♣K. You win with the cheapest card available. By doing so, you will retain the ♣K over dummy's ♣AQ, preventing declarer from scoring a second club trick.

This is a bit more complicated:

♣ J 8 7 4	♣ A Q 6 □ ♣ 9 5 2	♣ K 10 3
-----------	-------------------------	----------

Again your partner leads the ♣4 and the ♣6 is played from dummy. Which card should you play in the East seat?

We will see in a later chapter that partner's lead of a low **spot card** suggests that he holds an honor in the suit. (A high spot-card lead would be 'top of nothing', denying an honor.) Since partner's honor can only be the ♣J, you should play the ♣10 on the first round. This card wins the trick, as you expected, and you still have your ♣K sitting over dummy's **tenace**.

Now we will see some typical situations when you are in the third seat (for a particular trick) sitting over the declarer.

♠ Q 8 4	♠ A J 6 □ ♠ 9 5 2	♠ K 10 7 3
---------	-------------------------	------------

You are in the West seat now. Early in the play, your partner (East) has cleverly worked out that the defenders will need some spade tricks to beat the contract. Despite the fact that he can see the ♠AJ6, he switches to the ♠3 (a low card to let you know that he holds at least one honor in the suit). If you incorrectly play the ♠8, declarer will win with the ♠J and score two tricks in the suit. Instead you should play 'third hand high', rising with the ♠Q. Dummy's ♠A wins the trick but your partner's ♠K10 will then be worth two tricks, positioned over the ♠J6 in dummy.

♦ A J 4	♦ K 6 3 □ ♦ Q 7 5	♦ 10 9 8 2
---------	-------------------------	------------

East leads the ♦10 and South plays the ♦5. Which card will you play from the West hand? If you mistakenly play the ♦A, declarer will score two diamond tricks. Follow with the ♦4 instead and he can score only one trick, with dummy's ♦K.

Master Point Press on the Internet

www.masterpointpress.com

Our main site, with information about our books and software, reviews and more.

www.teachbridge.com

Our site for bridge teachers and students — free downloadable support material for our books, helpful articles and more.

www.bridgeblogging.com

Read and comment on regular articles from MPP authors and other bridge notables.

www.ebooksbridge.com

Purchase downloadable electronic versions of MPP books and software.

THE FUN WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR DEFENSE!

Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand, by the same author team, was named the 2010 Book of the Year by the American Bridge Teachers' Association. In this companion book, you get a chance to practice the principles on which sound defensive play is based, from the opening lead on.

This is not just a series of problem hands, however. Each section contains a brief introduction of its topic, and the ideas are reinforced with carefully explained solutions and helpful tips throughout.



BARBARA SEAGRAM (Toronto, Canada) is one of North America's leading bridge teachers. Her *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know* (with Marc Smith) is the bestselling bridge book of the last fifty years.



DAVID BIRD (Southampton, UK) may be the most prolific bridge author of all time, with more than 100 books published. His most recent book for MPP was *Declarer Play at Bridge: a Quizbook* (with Barbara Seagram).

