

Lesson 2 Defense & Planning Outline

The week's topics are:

1. Standard Leads and signals against suits and NT
2. What does the term "Dropping the Jack" mean?
3. Types of Discards
4. What level should negative doubles apply?
5. Is an overcall forcing?
6. Should an overcall have an upper point range?
7. What is a cue bid?
8. Conclude with bridge tips

STANDARD LEADS AND SIGNALS

Against suit contracts, the standard lead is:

- a. Singleton
- b. Top of a sequence (J,10,9,8) or (K,Q,J)
- c. Leading a trump to cut down on declarer's ruffing power
- d. Lead a low ranking card showing an honor in it (A,K,Q,J)
- e. Never lead away from an Ace
- f. With 3 small, lead the smallest one if partner bid
- g. With 2 small, lead the highest one if partner bid

Against NT contracts, the standard lead is:

- a. 4th best from an honor card (A,K,Q,J)
- b. If you have a minimal amount of points and your partner has more points on defense than you do, listen to the bidding, and then lead the unbid suit(s).

Defensive Signals

- a. Standard or Negative discards
Play a small card in a suit you don't like and play a high card in a suit that you do like. If you can't win the trick, play up the line to show your partner an odd number of cards, and high/low to show your partner an even number of cards.
- b. Upside down Count and Attitude (Opposite of standard)
Play a small card in a suit you like and a high card in a suit that don't like.
- c. Lavinthal discards. (This applies to the first discard in that suit only.)

The idea behind lavinthol discards is that you play a card in the suit that you DON'T want returned. You also look at the card to see if it is a small card or a large card. If it is a small card, return the lowest ranking suit. If it is a large card, return the highest ranking suit. For example, the opponents are at a 4S contract. On the 3rd round of spades, your partner throws the 9 of clubs. Therefore, the remaining suits of hearts and diamonds means that partner has some point counts in the heart suit. If partner had played the 3 of clubs, this would have meant that he has points in diamonds.

d. Odd/Even discards

The play of an odd card (3,5,7,9) means your partner likes the suit. The play of an even card (2,4,6,8) means your partner does not like the suit.

HINTS

1. If you can't figure out what to lead, eliminate what NOT to lead.
2. Make the lead that "the field will make" meaning everyone in the room.
3. The more reasons you have for leading a card, the better the lead is.

DROPPING THE JACK

On a NT contract, the normal play for the lead is the top of a sequence or 4th best. Ever so often, you are dealt a 5 or 6 card suits such as spades with K,Q,10,X,X or K,Q,10,X,X,X. The opponents reach a partial NT contract or game NT contract. You are on lead.

You lead the Q from K,Q,10 of the spade suit. If partner has the J of that suit, he MUST play the jack. That way, partner can continue the suit by playing the K of that suit. If partner doesn't have the J to play, he MUST give COUNT to partner in that suit.

Example: Partner has J,X of spades and opponents arrive in a 2NT contract. You lead the Q of spades and partner plays the J of that suit. You continues the suit with the K of spades.

Example: Opponents are in 2NT contract. You have overcalled spades and your partner has raised you. You have K,Q,10,X,X and lead the Q. There is a doubleton spade on the board. Partner does not play the J but plays the 8. This means that partner has either 2 or 4 of that suit. (5 of your spades + 4 partner spades + doubleton spade on board means declarer has A,J doubleton of spades.) Therefore, you can confidently continue spades. If partner played a low spade to you Q of spades, he has 3 spades and declarer has A,J,X and you can't continue spades.

NOTE: This play only works on NT contract. The play of the Q on suit contract would be singleton or top of sequence.

WHAT LEVEL SHOULD NEGATIVE DOUBLES APPLY?

The back of your convention card cites negative doubles thru _____. The negative double is an agreement between your partner and yourself. Typical doubles are marked 3S, or 4H, or 4S.

Example: You open 1D and the opponent bids 2S. Your partner doubles; this should show 4 hearts and 10 – 12 points since you are now at the 3 level.

Example: You open 1C and the opponent bids 3S. Your partner doubles; this should show 4 hearts and 13 – 15 points since you are now at the 4 level.

Example: Negative doubles CAN show 5 card suits. You have 7 points and 5 hearts and 5 diamonds. Your partner opens 1C; the opponent overcalls 1S. You double. Your partner now bids 1NT. You then bid 2H. Partner knows you don't have 10 – 12 points since you did not bid 2H immediately after the 1S overcall.

IS AN OVERCALL FORCING?

An overcall is based on the quality of the suit rather than any points. The general rule of thumb is similar to that of a preempt. Have 2 of the top 3 cards in that suit or 3 of the top 5.

Examples: After opponents open 1S, you make an overcall with the following hands:

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| K,J,10,8,7 | and 6 – 15 points in your hand |
| Q,J,10,X,X,X | and 6 – 15 points in your hand |
| A,Q,10,8,7 | and 6 – 15 points in your hand |

ALMOST NEVER overcall with a suit headed up by a J,10,9. You are missing the A,K,Q and need 3 entries to your hand to set up the J. The odds are against you; and the field (rest of bridge players your position) will not overcall, so you should not overcall either.

NO; an overcall is NOT forcing. If you make an overcall over the opponents' bidding and your partner bids another suit, it can be passed. What you are saying by bidding a new suit over your partner's overcall is that your hand and suit is better than your partner who overcalled.

On the bridge card, there is a slot for a simple overcall. With no partnership discussion, the point range is usually 6 – 15 points. If you had 16 or more points, you would make a takeout double first and then bid your suit.

Example:

| N | E | S | W | |
|----|----|----|---|------------------------|
| 1D | 2C | 2D | ? | East has 6 – 15 points |

Example:

| N | E | D | W | |
|----|-----|----|---|-------------------------|
| 1D | DBL | 2D | P | |
| P | 3C | P | P | East has 16 – 18 points |

CUE BIDS

A cue bid means bidding the opponents suit. It means that you have at least 10 – 12 points. A cue bid can have more than one meaning.

First Meaning: Support in partner's suit (3 or more of partner's suit and at least 10 – 12 points).

Second Meaning: 10 – 12 points or more and is ASKING if you have a stopper in the opponents suit. A stopper is A, or K,X, or Q,x,x.

Third Meaning: After you bid after your partner bids after you cue bid, you now make a 2nd cue bid. This means that you are TELLING your partner that you have a stopper in that suit.

Example(s)

1.

| N | E | S | W |
|----|----|--|---|
| 1S | 2H | 3H (Cue bid shows 10 – 12 points and spades) 4H (Cue bid shows 13 – 15 points and spades) | |

2.

| | | | |
|----|----|---|--|
| 1C | 1S | 2S (Cue bid shows 10 – 12 points and 5 clubs) | |
|----|----|---|--|

3.

| | | | |
|----|----|--|--|
| 1D | 1S | 2S(Cue bid shows 10 – 12 points and 5 diamonds) | |
| 3C | P | 3S(2 nd cue bid shows 13 – 15 points and Spade stopper) | |

BRIDGE TIPS

- (1) Bridge Pattern: Bid your bridge pattern if you have the points. Your partner opens 1D. You have 15 points. You have 4 spades, 2 hearts, 2D, and 5 clubs. You bid 2C.

| N | E | S | W |
|-----|---|----|---|
| 1D | P | 2C | P |
| 2NT | P | 3S | P |
| 3NT | | | |

NOTE: You can not bid spades first and then bid clubs later, because your partner will think you have 5 spades and 4 or more clubs.

- (2) Responding with 6 – 9 points with 4 card major and 5 card minor. Your partner has 12 – 15 points and opens 1C. You have 6 – 9 points, and have 4 hearts and 5 diamonds. You respond 1H!

| | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|
| 1C | P | 1H | P |
| 1NT | P | P | P |

NOTE: You know your partner does not have 4 spades. You can not bid diamonds first and then bid hearts because partner thinks you have 10 – 12 points or more.

- (3) Responding with 10 – 12 points with 4 card major and 5 card minor. Your partner has 12 – 15 points and opens 1C. You have 10 – 12 points, and respond 1D!

| | | | |
|----------|---|-----|---|
| 1C | P | 1D | P |
| 1NT | P | 2NT | P |
| P or 3NT | | | |

(4) Partner opens a suit. Opponents overcalls 1NT. A double of opponent's 1NT is always penalty when partner opens the bidding.

| | | | |
|----|-----|-----|---|
| 1S | 1NT | DBL | P |
| P | ? | | |

(5) After partner opens 1NT, the opponents bid 2 of a suit. You double. What is the double? Negative or Penalty?

| | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|
| 1NT | 2H | DBL | P |
|-----|----|-----|---|

NOTE: This is a partnership agreement whether to play negative or penalty; however, the experts play this as a negative double with 4 spades and 8 or 9 points.

(6) After partner opens 1NT, the opponents bid 3 of a suit. You double. What is the double? Negative or Penalty?

| | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|
| 1NT | 3S | DBL | P |
|-----|----|-----|---|

NOTE: This is a partnership agreement whether to play negative or penalty; however, the experts play this as a negative double with 4 hearts and 10 – 15 points.

(7) The opponents open a weak 2 preempt of 2D. You overcall 2S? What do you have?

| | | | |
|---|----|----|---|
| P | 2S | 2S | P |
|---|----|----|---|

NOTE: The 2S bid should show 13 – 15 points and 5 or more spades. Under no circumstances should you have a preempt in spades.