

## Defensive play - the middle game - getting involved

After the initial lead has been made it is tempting to sit back and await developments. This however is not always the most productive way to defend.

Look at this hand -the opponents arrive in 4Sp and your partner leads a high diamond.

{dummy }	
KQ10	
xxx	
QJxx	{ you }
Kxx	Ax
	AQxx
	xx
	Jxxxx
Jxxxx	
xxx	
AK	
AQx	
{declarer }	

*Trick 1) declarer wins with the A diamonds*

*Trick 2) declarer plays a small spade and you win with the Ace*

*Trick 3) ?*

What should you lead now ?

i) a trump ? ii) a diamond ? iii) open a new suit ?

Well on this particular hand leading anything but a heart allows the declarer to make 10 tricks and their contract. Switching to a Heart beats the contract one off.

Was this just lucky or can we draw some general rules from this example ?

The heart suit in the dummy was a very weak suit { it was xxx } and we know that defenders can gain by leading *up* to weakness. Strangely though the strong holding that we held in Hrts , the AQx seems offputting. Perhaps this is because we all learnt at teacher's knee not to lead suits with split honours { like AQx or KJx or AJx etc}. Well teacher's lesson was correct when we are making an initial lead BUT as the hand develops we should try to *get involved* and find ways to make tricks.

*Because* there is a very weak suit in the dummy { the xxx hrts } and *because* there is no other obvious suit to lead that will make tricks we should lead a Hrt.

Which Hrt ? Say we held AQ 3. Leading the Ace is probably best { and partner may signal with an encouraging card } , then follow with the Q .

If our Hrts had been KJ3 then again we definitely should lead the suit if there was a weak Hrt holding in the dummy; probably the 3 would be the right card to lead.

NB there is no card that is definitely right ( or wrong ! ) to lead in such situations but the ones I have suggested so far are likely to work quite well.