

Looking after yourself - discarding

The two aspects we are going to look at are :

- i) discarding so suits are not unnecessarily weakened {to protect suits }
- ii) discarding to inform partner where your strength lies { to send messages to partner}

We will see in due course to what extent these aspirations can be combined .
Firstly though let us make sure we know what (i) and (ii) are all about.

i) discarding to protect yourself

	{dummy}
	9875
(you)	AKJ
6	Q98
Q876	A92
A542	
K543	

In 4Sp the declarer will be playing a number of trumps and you will have to decide your order of discards.

The general plan is to make sure honours are never left unsupported.

- Hrts Q876 -we can afford only 1 discard from the Hrts ie must keep Q87
- Diamonds A542 -in a sense we *can* afford to spare as many as 3 cards and come down to the lone Ace but this would restrict our options and is to be avoided if possible. { Just as is coming down to a doubleton Ax }
- Clubs K543 -here again we *could* come down to just the K5 but this would not be ideal and it is preferable to keep K54 for as long as possible.

Now of course in practise you may have to make more discards than you are comfortable with. Here in NTs we lead the K diamonds.

	{dummy}
	AKQJ
(you)	KJ3
6	982
Q876	J92
KQJ10	
Q543	

The declarer wins with theAce and plays spades. Well you can afford 1 Hrt and 1 club but what do you throw on a 4th spade ?

The answer is that you should throw diamonds { albeit that they are *winning* diamonds}. It is tempting to think that surely partner will get the lead soon and lead a diamond but what usually happens is that the declarer just makes more and more trcks in the suits that you unguard . You have to look after yourself in these situations and rather than go for the best possible result { partner winning and leading a diamond and our side taking 3 diamond tricks } you should settle for making sure your vulnerable holdings { Q54 and the like } have some chance of making tricks.

