



## Declarer Play

No Trump and Suit Declarer Play  
Defensive Signals

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To See all of the entire Documents:

<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDeclarerPlay/DeclarerPlayWorkshop.pdf>  
<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDefense/Signaling.pdf>  
<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaBidding/ControlCuebidding.pdf>  
<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDeclarerPlay/SqueezePlay.pdf>

# **Bridge Resources**

**You can send questions any day any time to**  
Warren.T.Watson@gmail.com

**You can peruse my website**  
<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/kjbc.htm>

## **My Bridge Books**

ABC's of Bridge  
Standard Canadian, eh!  
Two Over One  
Slam Bidding  
Strong Club Systems (being written)

## **My Bridge Books to be published by Master Point Press**

Preemptive Bidding (a few examples used here)  
Moysian Play  
Partner's Covenant

My Bidding Software, still in development

## **BBO Online Lessons**

please ask

## **Bridge Master 2000 by Fred Gitelman**

The best declarer play software available  
I have BM2000 for sale 55USD 75CAD  
Levels 1 to 5  
Level 1 should be easy and Level 5 impossible without the help button

# No Trump Declarer Play

## Boards 1, 11 & 21: A Lousy 15

North Dealer East West Vulnerable

♠KJ32    ♥AQ53    ♦632    ♣52  
♠Q6    ♥J10987    ♦K987    ♣Q6  
N    E    S    W  
P    P    1♦    P  
1♥    P    1NT    All Pass

♠A74    ♥42    ♦AQ54    ♣AJ43

South needs 11 points from North to make game, hence the 1♦ opening and One No Trump rebid (12-14).

### What Declarer Does:

#### 1. Count tricks:

- Sure tricks = 6: 2 ♠'s, 2 ♥'s because of the lead, 1 ♦ and 1 ♣.
- Possible tricks = 3 or unlikely 4 or very unlikely 5:
  - ♠'s: J♠ and possible 3-3 break in spades
  - ♥'s: nothing more in hearts
  - ♦'s: Q♦ and possibly the fourth diamond after losing the lead, and
  - ♣'s: possibly the J♣ which is unlikely.

#### 2. Make a Plan

- Timing
- Transportation

#### 3. Recognise a Danger Hand:

- Possibly West with long hearts.
- Possibly East because of clubs or diamonds. Which suit he switches to if he gets in the lead will drive your future choices.

#### 4. Check out Fits

- Any suit with a seven-card fit or better has more cards than the defenders and should be investigated.
- Any suit with a six-card fit or fewer belongs to the defenders and should be broken with caution.

#### 5. Recognise Good Suits: None

- No eight or longer total fits
- Poor Intermediates (Did you not see these cards during the bidding?)

#### 6. Recognise Risky suits: hearts and clubs

moderate risk because they are six cards.

Leave suits alone that opponents are likely to attack for you.

Clubs could only have one stopper

Hearts always has two stoppers-Do you see how?

Diamonds could come down to only one stopper.

#### 7. Suits to Develop:

♠'s: Timing: Take ♠ finesse when West is out of ♥'s or to protect ♥Qx.

♦'s: Plan A: I would finesse the ♦ Queen then duck a ♦. Cash the ace to see if they are 3-3. The ace must be played on the third round so the opponent with 4 cannot cash out.

Plan B: Lose a diamond- completely duck then take diamond finesse.

Plan C: Perhaps you can do a safety play in diamonds by cashing the ace first and leading up to the queen. Then duck.

Plan D: Cash the ace first and then duck and then lead up to the queen. This works if the ♦ King is doubleton.

#### The Play:

Duck the opening lead once and then take the ♥ Ace. Take the spade finesse into West to protect the Qx of hearts. With the King of hearts located, attack diamonds before spades. Use Plan A. Avoid clubs and if they are attacked duck completely. Hopefully giving a player with Qx or Kx blocking problems.

### Defense:

Only switch the defensive suit when you are out of partner's led suit. Concentrate on hearts until out. A poor defender does not continue partner's suit without a really good and rare reason.

West could play the  $\heartsuit$  King on the first trick to unblock. Blocking partner's suit is a cardinal sin. However, here it is best to wait for the queen.

A defender keeps tracks of entries and exit cards.

### The Result:

Three  $\spadesuit$ 's, two  $\heartsuit$ 's, one  $\diamond$  and one  $\clubsuit$  for +90.

## Boards 2, 12 & 22: Danger Hand-Avoidances

East Dealer      North South Vulnerable

$\spadesuit$ 8765    $\heartsuit$ K432    $\diamond$ Q76    $\clubsuit$ Q2  
 $\spadesuit$ 432    $\heartsuit$ A5    $\diamond$ A854    $\clubsuit$ KJ83       $\spadesuit$ K10    $\heartsuit$ QJ10    $\diamond$ KJ1093    $\clubsuit$ A109  
 $\spadesuit$ AQJ9    $\heartsuit$ 9876    $\diamond$ 2    $\clubsuit$ 7654

E      S      W      N  
1NT    P      3NT   All Pass

1NT 3NT means stretch to lead a major.

How would you play  $\spadesuit$ 's if you were declarer?

What do Top of Nothing Leads say?

"Switch unless I have hit your suit, preferably in to the dead suit in your RHO's hand, partner."

### Declarer Avoidance Plays

All Finesse go into South and NO finesse go into North.

### The Steps

- Win  $\heartsuit$  Ace

- ♦4 to ♦Jack
- cash ♦King
- ♦9 to ♦Ace
- ♣3 to ♣10
- Cash ♣A
- Overtake ♣9
- Cash ♣'s then ♦ back to hand

## Boards 3, 13 & 23: Do Not Duck-It is a Throw-in Card

South Dealer    East West Vulnerable

♠97    ♥A65    ♦KQJ    ♣K8765  
 ♠K8    ♥QJ82    ♦A97    ♣Q432      
 ♠J106532    ♥1043    ♦10432    ♣---  
 ♠AQ4    ♥K97    ♦865    ♣AJ109

| S            | W  | N  | E                                |
|--------------|----|----|----------------------------------|
| 1♣           | P! | 2♣ | P    10+, no 4-card suit skipped |
| 2♥           | P  | 3♦ | P                                |
| 3NT All Pass |    |    |                                  |

### Inverted Minor Stopper System

- Bid a side suit, you have it stopped, skipping any suit not stopped
- Bid No Trump shows all suit skipped stopped and all suits partner skipped also stopped.
- The minor can be bid when showing stoppers. It shows a minimum and all suits skipped not stopped.
- 2NT can be bid. It shows a minimum and all skipped suits stopped
- Any bid above 3m (3♣ here) is GF.

If the 4<sup>th</sup> best is the 2 (or the smaller cards can be seen), it is a four-card suit

The only time one does not lead a five-card suit is when the four-card suit is really strong and the five-card suit is really weak.

If West did not lead a five-card suit, except for the above case, he does not have one. Therefore, he has no void.

Do not duck a  $\heartsuit$ , a small  $\heartsuit$  is a throw-in card that gets West to lead a  $\spadesuit$ . Say Please and Thanks.

## Boards 4, 14 & 24: Do Not Lose a Slow Loser

West Dealer Both Vulnerable

$\spadesuit 9$     $\heartsuit 987$     $\diamond KQJ1098$     $\clubsuit KJ3$   
 $\spadesuit K63$     $\heartsuit AJ542$     $\diamond 65$     $\clubsuit Q72$      $\spadesuit J10875$     $\heartsuit Q106$     $\diamond 43$     $\clubsuit 654$   
 $\spadesuit AQ42$     $\heartsuit K3$     $\diamond A72$     $\clubsuit A1098$

|   |     |          |     |
|---|-----|----------|-----|
| W | N   | E        | S   |
| P | P   | P        | 1NT |
| P | 3NT | All Pass |     |

No Signalling. East must guard  $\clubsuit$ 's and keep a  $\heartsuit$ . Do you see why? Declarer will finesse the partner of the player who discards  $\clubsuit$ 's for the  $\clubsuit$  Queen. Declarer cannot take a finesse. He can think of a  $\heartsuit$  end play if nobody discards  $\clubsuit$ 's. Declarer should never make less than +630.

## Boards 5, 15 & 25: Can You Count to 13?

North Dealer   North South Vulnerable

♠QJ76   ♥AK3   ♦AK4   ♣985  
♠85432   ♥QJ109   ♦QJ109   ♣---  
N   W   E   S  
---   ---   ---   ---  
♠ ---   ♦ ---   ♥ ---   ♣ ---

♠AK109   ♥2   ♦2   ♣AKQJ1076

| N   | E | S   | W        |
|-----|---|-----|----------|
| 1NT | P | 2♣  | P        |
| 2♠  | P | 4NT | P        |
| 5♠  | P | 5NT | P        |
| 6♦  | P | 7NT | All Pass |

This is a simple grand. You can count the tricks. Three ♠'s (missing the Jack?), one ♥, two ♦'s and seven ♣'s for 13 tricks. Play 7NT since it would be a shame for an opening lead ruff or a bad ♠ split.

# Suit Declarer Play

## A. The Steps:

### 1. Look at the Board

- Who is vulnerable?

### 2. Look at the Bidding

- Who opened, overcalled, pre-empted, doubled etc.
- It should be noted that doubles and Notrump openings or overcalls are very descriptive bids. Are they descriptive when you bid them?
- First and second seat pre-empts pretty much describe one's hand very well as well. Does a partner's pre-empt in your shortness encourage you to stay out of the bidding or to get in to a high-level misfit?

### 3. Look at the Opening Lead

- Shortness-singleton or doubleton
- BOSTON (bottom of something, top of nothing)
  - Top of Nothing (I prefer 2nd highest from nothing)
  - Little from an Honour (something)

### 4. Look at what RHO leads at his first chance to lead

### 5. Plan before playing first card from dummy

- Dummy Comes down
  - Is dummy what was expected?
  - Transportation (Communication)
  - Timing
- Are you in the correct contract?
  - Can you beat the contract most will be in?
  - Risks become quite acceptable to equal or better the field when in the wrong contract.
  - Moysians in a major are good, game in a minor is often bad.

### 6. Before Drawing Trump

- Take all short-hand ruffs.
- Set up resting places for losers before defenders get in with a trump stopper.
- Leave trump and ruff protection when setting up suits.

## 7. Draw Trump

- Get the kids off of the street
- If there is the highest outstanding trump still out, let them ruff-in with it and don't waste two of your trumps for one. One may want to use the outstanding trump as a throw-in card (elimination and end-play).
- If there is a bad trump split:
  - As soon as you discover or suspect a bad trump split, stop drawing trump and assess the situation.
  - Set up a cross ruff
    - Set up all ruffs before opponent takes two of your trump for one of his.
  - Lose quick losers while maintaining control of the hand.
    - Use Sluff and Ruff Protection when losing the lead to stop them, from tapping you, the declarer.
  - Do not let the defender with the short trump get a ruff
  - Letting the defender with the long trump ruff is usually good especially if he gives up a natural trick by doing so. Make sure communication between defenders is cut before doing this.

## 8. Draw Trump Quickly

- When the opponents look like they will get a ruff, draw trump as fast as you can. Do not develop side suits and do not take trump finesse.
- When an opponent will over-ruff you:
  - ruff with a high trump
  - sluff a loser

## 9. Set up side suits

This is the big reason, when leading an ace, one should have the king which:

- allows one to switch when looking at the queen or length in dummy or a discouraging signal from partner.
- does not set up a side suit immediately for declarer which leading from Ace empty can do.
- tells partner if you switch that you want him to lead the first suit through declarer.

10. **Claim** when trump are drawn and side suits are set up.  
State line of play even when obvious.

### **The Number One Rule:**

Ruff in the short trump hand and avoid ruffing in the long trump hand as control of the hand may be lost. The exceptions, as listed in my advanced declarer play chalk talk, are:

1. **A Huge** trump fit
2. **Safe Transportation** is desperately needed or contract goes down.
3. **Cross Ruff**
4. **Dummy Reversal**
5. **Trump Coup**
6. **Trump Squeeze**
7. **Trump End Play**
8. **Smother Play**

Typically, the defense will try to force or tap the declarer by making him ruff in the long trump hand so he loses control of the hand.

A good way to look at it:              ♠AKQJ10              ♠432

If West cashes five rounds of spades, he will get five tricks. Furthermore, if West makes spades trump and ruffs with the J and 10, he will also get five tricks, but only if spades do not split 4-1 or worse. However, if he avoids ruffing in the long trump hand with the J and 10 and instead ruffs in the short trump hand with the 4, 3 and 2, he will get eight tricks even if trump split 5-0. Therefore, one should ruff in the short trump hand whenever possible.

## Boards 6, 16 & 26: Short-Hand Ruffs

East Dealer      East West Vulnerable

♠7632    ♥6    ♦A987    ♣6542  
 ♠J98    ♥K932    ♦K3    ♣9873        ♠---    ♥J1054    ♦QJ10652    ♣QJ10

♠AKQ1054    ♥AQ87    ♦4    ♣AK

| E   | S  | W        | N  |
|-----|----|----------|----|
| P!! | 2♣ | P        | 2♦ |
| P   | 2♠ | P        | 3♠ |
| P   | 4♣ | P        | 4♦ |
| P   | 4♥ | P        | 5♥ |
| P   | 7♠ | All Pass |    |

North bids 3♠ because 4♠ would be weak with no first or second round control. North is not done bidding until he shows his support then his controls.

7♠ is cold. Declarer must get three short hand ♥ ruffs to make all 13 tricks.

This is an alternate bidding sequence with a splinter showing shortness and four ♠'s.

| E    | S  | W        | N       |
|------|----|----------|---------|
| P!!  | 2♣ | P        | 2♦      |
| P    | 2♠ | P        | 4♥      |
| 1430 |    | 4NT      | P    5♣ |
| P    | 7♠ | All Pass |         |

It is amazing how the bidding is simplified with a splinter.

## Boards 7, 17 & 27: Declarer Cannot Tap Himself

South Dealer Both Vulnerable

|         |          |        |                                |
|---------|----------|--------|--------------------------------|
| ♠AJ7    | ♥Q53     | ♦A8652 | ♣87                            |
| ♠6      | ♥AKJ1042 | ♦KQ7   | ♣K52                           |
|         |          |        |                                |
|         |          |        | ♠5432    ♥9876    ♦J104    ♣63 |
| ♠KQ1098 | ♥---     | ♦93    | ♣AQJ1094                       |
| S       | W        | N      | E                              |
| 1♠      | 2♥       | 3♥     | P                              |
| 4♥      | P        | 4♠     | All Pass                       |

**Opening Lead:** ♥Ace then ♦King

On the opening ♥ lead, declarer makes a loser-on-loser play and pitches a ♦. The defenders almost always switch to the suit declarer discards (remember this). Of course, West switches to the ♦ King. Declarer cashes the ♠ Ace and then plays a small ♣ to the ♣ Ten. West wins and exits a ♦ which declarer ruffs. Now declarer can draw the remaining trump and claim.

Note that if declarer ruffs twice in the long trump hand, East will get the ♠5 as a winner. Therefore, declarer will get fewer tricks than the declarers making the loser-on-loser play.

**The Friends Rule:**

The defense does not do what the declarer wants to do, and the declarer does not help the defense. They may later have beers together, but at the table they are enemies.

**Get the Kids off the Street**

This means draw trump as soon as possible to prevent the opponents from getting any ruffs once you have taken care of business with the short trump hand.

## Boards 8, 18 & 28: Get Going on a Pitch

West Dealer None Vulnerable

♠9876    ♥432    ♦J    ♣AK874  
 ♠A2    ♥QJ109    ♦9432    ♣1096        ♠43    ♥865    ♦A8765    ♣QJ5  
 ♠KQJ105    ♥AK7    ♦KQ10    ♣32

|           | W        | N  | E | S   |                 |
|-----------|----------|----|---|-----|-----------------|
| Drury=LR  | P        | P  | P | 1♠  |                 |
| 2♥=3 2♠=4 | P        | 2♣ | P | 2♦  | Support Length? |
| Stiff ♦   | P        | 2♠ | P | 2NT | Like Jacoby 2NT |
|           | P        | 3♦ | P | 4♠  | Rats            |
|           | All Pass |    |   |     |                 |

Before attacking trump, declarer must play a ♦ to set up a discard for a losing ♥. If he attacks trump first, the defenders will get a ♥ trick.

## Boards 9, 19 & 29: Transportation

North Dealer East West Vulnerable

♠876    ♥32    ♦AK87    ♣KJ98  
 ♠54    ♥K1087    ♦654    ♣10652        ♠A32    ♥J954    ♦Q32    ♣A43  
 ♠KQJ109    ♥AQ6    ♦J109    ♣Q7

|          | N  | E | S  | W        |
|----------|----|---|----|----------|
| Drury=LR | P  | P | 1♠ | P        |
|          | 2♣ | P | 4♠ | All Pass |

Trump is never led enough. West leads trump and East cooperates seeing no reason not to. Declarer wins trick two in his hand and plays the  $\heartsuit$  Queen. Playing the  $\heartsuit$  6 allows either defender to win.

West wins the  $\heartsuit$  King, and plays a  $\diamond 4$ . This is a unidirectional suit from West to East. Declarer wins the  $\diamond$  Ace and ruffs a  $\heartsuit$  and then plays a  $\clubsuit$  to the  $\clubsuit$  Queen. A  $\diamond$  loser goes away on the third  $\clubsuit$ .

The contract makes if the player with the  $\heartsuit$  King has two trump. If West exits a  $\clubsuit$ , East will rise with the  $\clubsuit$  Ace and declarer will get two pitches on the  $\clubsuit$ 's. Defenders should shy away from suits that could cover losers.

## Boards 10, 20 & 30: Ending the Workshop on a Slam

East Dealer      Both Vulnerable

♠9876    ♥432    ♦J    ♣AK874  
 ♠52    ♥J1098    ♦KQ10    ♣10962     ♠43    ♥765    ♦A8765    ♣QJ5  
 ♠AKQJ10    ♥AKQ    ♦9432    ♣3

|                    | E   | S  | W        | N  |                               |
|--------------------|-----|----|----------|----|-------------------------------|
|                    | P   | 1♠ | P        | 3♦ | Minisplinter, shrt, 10-12 pts |
| Sacrifice Not Lead | Dbl | 3♥ | P        | 4♣ | Cuebids                       |
|                    | P   | 4♥ | P        | 5♣ |                               |
|                    | P   | 6♠ | All Pass |    |                               |

Since the defenders lead trump, only two  $\diamond$ 's can get ruffed but one gets pitched on the  $\clubsuit$  King. The fifth  $\clubsuit$  can be set up for another pitch, but is not necessary.

This is the preferred bidding without minisplinters.

|          | E | S  | W | N  |              |
|----------|---|----|---|----|--------------|
| P        |   | 1♠ | P | 3♠ | four-card LR |
| P        |   | 4♥ | P | 5♣ |              |
| P        |   | 5♠ | P | 6♠ |              |
| All Pass |   |    |   |    |              |

Yes North probably could bid 2♣ then he would just bid 6♠ when partner cuebids 4♥.

Alternatively:

|   | E  | S        | W | N  |  |
|---|----|----------|---|----|--|
| P |    | 1♠       | P | 2♣ |  |
| P |    | 2♦       | P | 3♠ |  |
| P |    | 4♥       | P | 5♣ |  |
| P |    | 5♠       | P | 6♦ |  |
|   | 6♠ | All Pass |   |    |  |

South was pretty worried until the ♦ cuebid.