

Planning the Defense at Suit Contracts

1. Successful defence requires a plan. Anticipating what Declarer needs to do to make the contract is the key to making a good defensive plan.
2. If you listen carefully to the bidding, you can often get a very good idea of what Declarer will try to do. And your job, as defender, is to foil that :)
3. But even if you can't figure it out from the bidding, as soon as you see dummy you will often have a great idea of what's up.
4. There are 2 main ways that declarer will try to get rid of losers:
 - (a) discarding them on dummy's long suit, and
 - (b) ruffing them in the short hand (usually dummy)
5. *For example:* Declarer is in 4S. You are West. Here is your hand and the dummy:

	Dummy	
	S T63	
	H 32	You lead the KC. Dummy wins with the AC.
	D J762	Declarer leads a H from dummy to the JH and
West	C A653	your QH.
S 98		
H Q97		
D QT9		
C KQ982		

Where will Declarer try to get tricks (and get rid of losers)? What should you do to prevent that?

When Dummy has shortness, but no long suits, then Declarer will usually try to trump losers.

You need to lead trump to prevent that!

6. *Another example:* Declarer is in 4S. You are East and partner leads the KH and this is the dummy

Dummy	
S T3	
H 642	
D AQJT8	
C 843	East
	S 85
	H AJ93
	D 7432
	C JT2

Where will Declarer try to get tricks (and get rid of losers?)

Probably by throwing losers on the long D suit.

Is the D suit a real threat?

The D suit definitely looks like a threat. If Declarer doesn't have the KD, then P's KD will be finessable!

What do you need to do in this case?

Probably find your tricks right away! Overtake the KH with the AH and switch to the JC.

What if your hand were: **85 AJ93 KJ94 JT2?** Now the D suit isn't a threat and you don't have to be in such a hurry to find your tricks.

7. *Another example:* Declarer is in 4H and this is the dummy

S K843
H T63
D AT6
C K96

Where are Declarer's tricks going to come from?

If Dummy is balanced, with no long suit and no ruffing potential, think passive defense.

What does that mean?

Don't break new suits. Don't take chances. Lead trumps, or suits where Declarer already has tricks developed.

8. Summary

1. there are 3 basic dummy hand types:

- unbalanced, where Declarer likely plans on ruffing;
- long suit, where Declarer likely plans on throwing losers on the suit, and
- balanced.

2. if you start by thinking: what kind of dummy does Declarer have, *you have a great start for figuring out your defensive plan.*

3. if dummy is unbalanced: *think about cutting down on ruffing by **leading trumps**,*

4. if dummy has a long suit, think about **cashing out**, or trying to prevent Declarer from establishing the suit, and

5. if dummy is balanced, so a poor source of tricks for declarer, *think about **playing passively***, and not helping Declarer by breaking new suits.

(These notes are based on materials from Eddie Kantar's Advanced Bridge Defense)