**Defensive Play at Bridge**

Barbara Seagram & David Bird

­Introductory Thoughts

1. Defense is a partnership endeavor. It’s two to one against the declarer, but declarer has the advantage of seeing both hands. Defenders need to communicate **in legal ways** to mount their best defense.
2. Developing good habits is important – and difficult.

Stay focused and keep thinking – from the time you take your hand from the slot through the time you return it. Every hand.

1. Assess the bidding. What do you know? What is declarer’s distribution? Has partner bid? Did opponents bid easily to their contract?
2. Before the first lead, use the Rule of 40 to estimate partner’s point count as you develop your initial plan for defense. Revise, as needed, when dummy comes down.
3. With a sequence, always **L**ead from the **T**op and **P**lay from the **B**ottom.

**L**ead from the **P**lay from the

Top **b**ottom

1. Watch for partner’s signals. Sounds easy.

Look at dummy to help clarify whether partner’s card is high or low.

1. Assess the dummy and decide on an overall strategy. LSD?

**LAST**

**L**ong suit?

**A**ttack. Unless you have that suit controlled, get your tricks ASAP.

**S**hort suit?

**T**rump is your target. Pull theirs so they lose ruffing possibilities.

**D**ead Dummy (flat) – Play **D**ead (passive)

1. Don’t get discouraged. Often, when incorporating new strategies, your game results might get worse before they get better.

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**Part I The Basics of Defense**

Chapter 1 Which Card Should I Play?

1. Play **high** in **third seat** (usually).
   1. If partner leads a low card (BOS), play high.
   2. If you have an honor higher than dummy’s, keep your honor to take dummy’s - if you can play a card higher than the 8.
   3. Play the lowest of touching honors.
2. Play **low** in **second seat** (usually).
   1. Make declarer guess where the winning card lies.
   2. Play low smoothly, in tempo.
   3. Split your honors.
3. Rule of 40: Estimate the number of high card points partner may hold.