

# NO TRUMPS PARTNER?

## Chapter 09: Some Defensive Problems

Now that you are armed with so much wonderful information about how to defend against a No Trump contract, let me give you some lead problems, and the answers that I received from members of the 'Bridgefun Magazine' panelists.

Firstly, you should have a good think about the problems that I will set in this chapter, decide what YOU would lead, and then go on to the next chapter, which will have a more in depth analysis of the panelists' comments, and some of my own as well.

### Lead problem 1

Dealer West NIL VUL

After three passes, South opens 1NT (12-14) and all pass. Your lead from

♠ Q 6 5

♥ K J 6 2

♦ Q 8

♣ Q 10 6 3

Brief assessment of the situation:

The points appear to be fairly evenly split, with South being the only one with an opening bid. It seems probable that partner has about 9 HCP. Your hand has such smattering of values that you can not expect to take too many tricks at once, and you will have to work pretty hard to take your fair share, in cooperation with partner.

Giving a trick or two away because of an unfortunate lead could be costly. The PLAY, as far as you can judge, will involve BOTH sides trying to create extra tricks and as a result giving up tricks where necessary.

So, looking at your hand and envisaging partner to have about 9 HCP and dummy about the same, where would YOU start on the basis of that assessment?

## Lead problem 2

Dealer East ALL VUL

The Bidding:

W	N	E	S
		NB	1C*
1H	DBL**	NB	2C
NB	2S	NB	3C
NB	3D	NB	3NT
NB	NB	NB	

\*Precision, 16+ HCP

\*\*8+ HCP All other bids are natural.

Your lead from

♠ 8 5 2

♥ A J 9 5 4 2

♦ K 4

♣ 8 4

Brief assessment:

Declarer has 16+ HCP and dummy will have 8+. You know that from opponents' bidding. Dummy has bid spades and then diamonds, the diamond bid suggesting that he is looking for three card spade support from opener. Opener has shown a club suit, almost certainly SIX of them. As well as that, opener has at least one certain HEART stop, and PROBABLY both the king and queen. You can just about pick opener to have 2-3-2-6 distribution, can't you?

With opponents having told you they have a MINIMUM of 24 HCP between them, and more than likely a few more than that, partner can be relied on for 8 HCP at MOST. You expect that partner will have those points in spades, and HOPE that partner will have two or three in clubs, otherwise there seems to be little hope. So, your analysis is that partner may get the lead once only before declarer establishes sufficient tricks for the contract, either in spades or clubs. YOU may get the lead once, with the king of diamonds if declarer needs to develop that suit. That, however, is unlikely, as diamonds is declarer's shortest combined suit.

You, the defenders, have one long suit, hearts, and POSSIBLY another, diamonds. But to hope for the diamond suit to produce four tricks immediately, the strong hand (declarer) would need to produce NO points in it, and partner would need specifically a minimum of AJ10x sitting over dummy's queen. Possible, yes, but how probable?

That analysis should give you a very good indication of what your best lead might be, should it not?

## Lead Problem 3

Dealer North NIL VUL

The Bidding:

W	N	E	S
	NB	NB	1NT
NB	NB	NB	

Your lead from

♠ A Q 10

♥ J 7 6 4

♦ A 9 2

♣ 8 7 4

Another lead problem against a 1NT contract. And again, apart from slightly different bidding, the same balanced 'rubbish' to lead from, and the same hopes and expectations as in problem 1.

Once more you can take an educated guess at partner's point count, but this time partner may not be as sure about YOUR point count since, not being a passed hand, you could have up to 14 HCP and not have had a suitable bid over the 1NT opening. That is something worth keeping in mind, but in this case, is of little relevance.

Here are some facts to base your decision on.

South has opened 1NT and North has chosen to play there.

Partner passed in the first place and has not chosen to compete (you will see later that, even as a passed hand, there is good reason to compete in such situations on SUITABLE hands).

You have 11 HCP, opener 12-14 and dummy fewer than 11. Partner therefore has between 5 and 11.

What would YOU lead against the 1NT contract? What cards would you hope partner might have that would help your cause best? What cards might partner have that would get damaged if you make an 'unfortunate' lead?

Well, based on those thoughts, what would YOU begin your defence with?