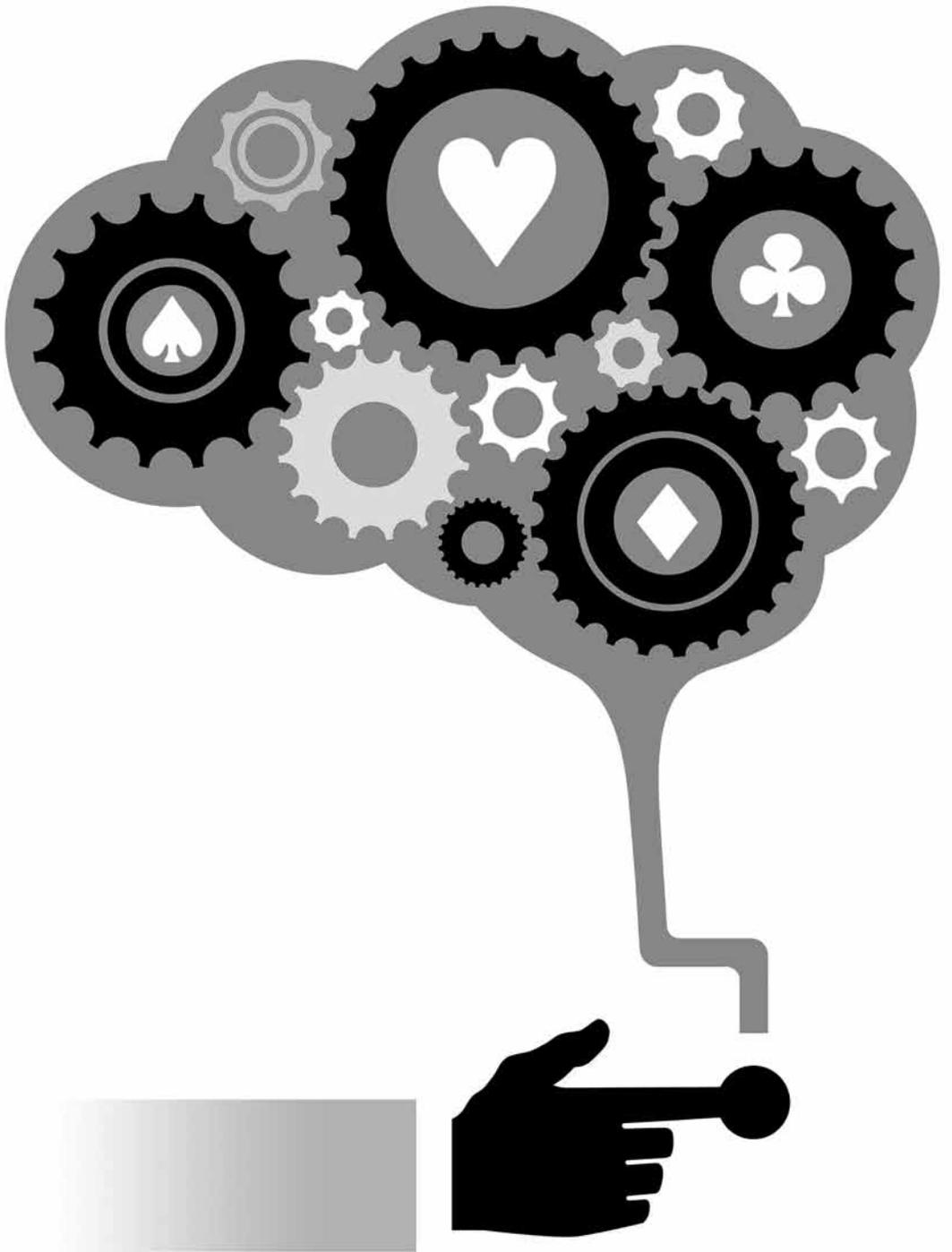


PLANNING THE DEFENSE

THE NEXT LEVEL

BARBARA SEAGRAM & DAVID BIRD





**PLANNING
THE DEFENSE
THE NEXT LEVEL**



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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------|
| Introduction | 7 |
| PART I MANAGING DEFENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS | 9 |
| 1. Planning Defensive Hold-up Plays. | 11 |
| 2. Planning to Disrupt Declarer's Entries. | 25 |
| 3. Planning the Defensive Entries | 43 |
| | |
| PART II MAKING LIFE AWKWARD FOR DECLARER | 59 |
| 4. Planning to Give Declarer a Guess | 61 |
| 5. Planning Defensive Deception. | 75 |
| | |
| PART III FURTHER DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES | 91 |
| 6. Planning after an Ace-King or King-Queen Lead. | 93 |
| 7. Planning Trump Promotions | 109 |
| 8. Planning to Win Trump Control. | 125 |
| | |
| PART IV DEFENSE IN THE ENDGAME | 139 |
| 9. Planning to Keep the Right Cards. | 141 |
| 10. Planning to Avoid an Endplay. | 157 |

INTRODUCTION

Our previous book, *Planning the Defense*, covered the basics of how to defend a bridge contract. It described the three different types of signal: attitude, count and suit preference, and when you should use each of them. It explained also the important technique of counting. The rewards for counting points, distribution, defensive tricks and declarer's tricks are substantial. Some players go through life without counting anything. 'I like to enjoy my bridge!' they say. You will rarely find their names at the top of any result sheet.

This book follows hot on the heels of its predecessor. It moves to the next level of bridge defense. You may find some of the plays and techniques are new to you, even a little bit difficult at first glance. Persevere! Most worthwhile accomplishments in life involve a bit of effort and application. Some of the most satisfying moments in your bridge career will come when you and your partner combine to find the only way to defeat a contract.

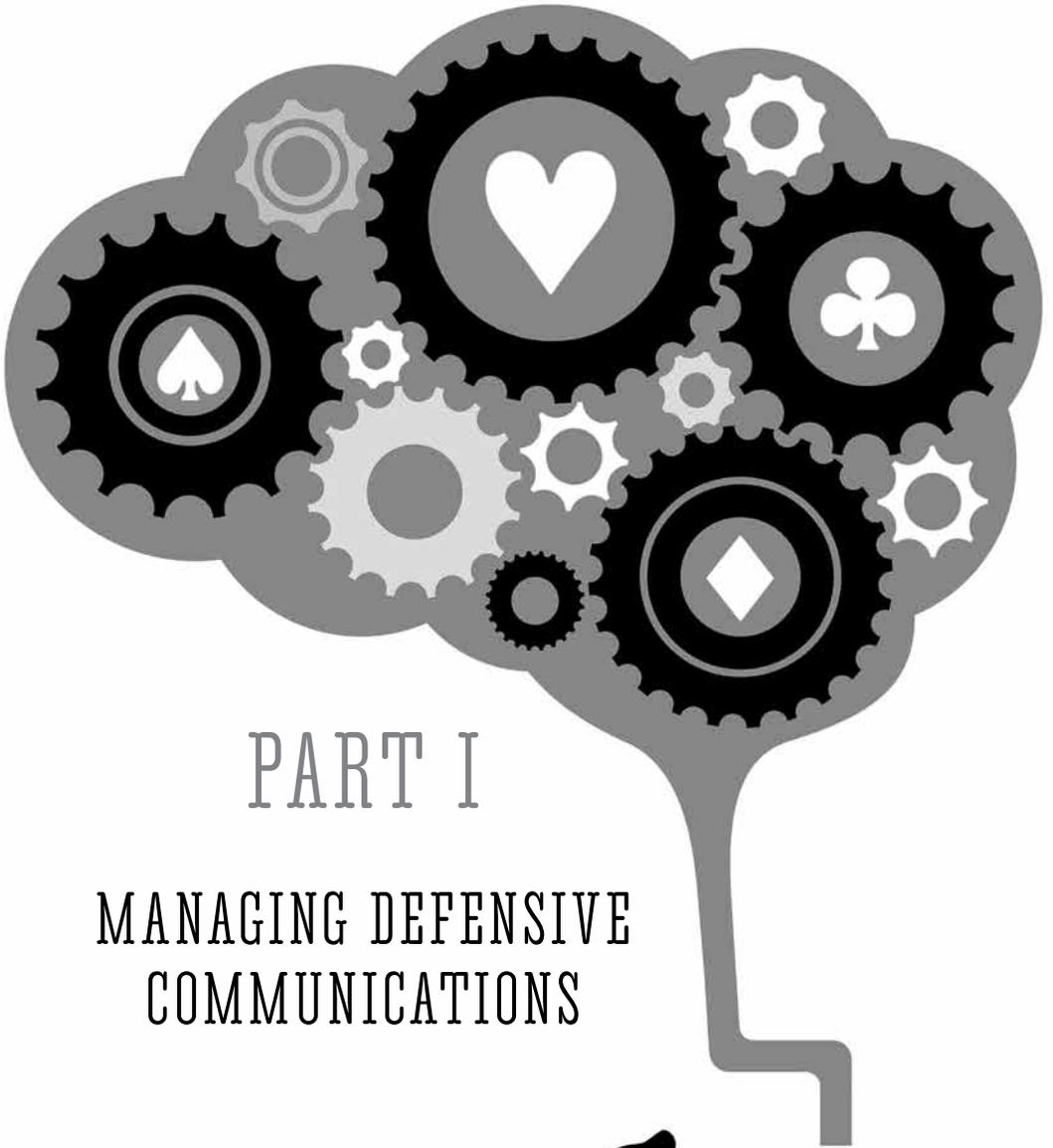
As in our two books, *Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand* and *Planning the Play — the Next Level*, the description of each deal will conclude with a brief summary of the required plan, such as:

DEFENSIVE PLAN (East): I expect declarer to hold the ♦KQ after partner's count signal of the ♦9. I will win the first round to block declarer's diamond suit.

We enjoyed writing this book and we hope you enjoy reading it. If you find winning defenses more often in the future, that will be a bonus!

Barbara and David

Many thanks indeed to Tom Anderson, who very kindly checked an early draft of this book for us. He demonstrated an eagle-eye for typos and made many valuable suggestions.



PART I

MANAGING DEFENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS



1

PLANNING DEFENSIVE HOLD-UP PLAYS

One of the defenders' most powerful weapons is the hold-up play. By refusing to play a stopper on the first round or two, you can prevent declarer from enjoying extra tricks in dummy's best suit.

HOLDING UP A SINGLE STOPPER

Take the East cards on the first deal:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--|--------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| | ♠ 7 4 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ K 6 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ 9 3 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ K 10 5 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ Q 9 8 3 | | ♠ J 10 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ 8 5 | | ♥ A 10 9 7 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ Q J 10 8 | | ♦ 7 6 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ 9 6 2 | | ♣ A 8 4 | | | | | | | | | |
| | <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table> | | N | | W | | E | | S | | |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♠ A K 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ Q J 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ A K 5 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ Q J 7 | | | | | | | | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| pass | 3NT | all pass | 2NT |

Your partner leads the ♦Q and continues the suit when declarer allows this card to win. What is your plan for the defense when declarer wins the next diamond and leads the ♣Q?

If you win with the ♣A, declarer will score three club tricks to go with two further winners in each of the three other suits. Game made! To prevent this, you must hold up your ♣A not only on the first round but also on the second round,

when declarer continues with the ♣J. Your partner will assist you in the hold-up process with a **count signal**. He will play the ♣2 on the first round (low to signal an odd number of cards).

Let's say that declarer continues with a third round of clubs to your ace. You have no diamond to play, after declarer's hold-up on the first round. You also have no wish to play hearts, which would allow declarer to reach dummy with the ♥K and score the ♣K. So, you switch to the ♠J.

Declarer wins with the ♠K and leads the ♥Q, your partner following with the ♥8. This is again a count signal. He has two hearts to declarer's three. Once more you must hold up your ace in the suit, to prevent declarer from crossing to the ♥K. You duck again when the ♥J is played and the contract then has to go one down.

DEFENSIVE PLAN (East): When clubs are played, I will hold up the ♣A until the third round. When he plays hearts, I will again hold up twice. On both suits partner will give me a count signal.

HOLDING UP A DOUBLE STOPPER

On the next deal you hold a double stopper in dummy's long diamond suit.

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|----------|---|--|
| <p>♠ J 9 5 3 ♥ 8 5 ♦ 9 7 2 ♣ Q 9 6 2</p> | <p>♠ A 7 4 ♥ J 6 3 ♦ K J 10 8 3 ♣ 8 5</p> | <table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ K Q 6 ♥ A K 7 2 ♦ 6 4 ♣ A 10 7 4</p> | N | W E | S | <p>♠ 10 8 2 ♥ Q 10 9 4 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ K J 3</p> |
| N | | | | | | |
| W E | | | | | | |
| S | | | | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| pass | 3NT | all pass | 1NT |

You are sitting East and your partner leads the ♠3 against 3NT, dummy playing low. Declarer wins your ♠10 with the ♠K. What is your plan for the defense when he next leads the ♦6 to dummy's ♦10, your partner playing the ♦2?

Your first task is to read the lie of the diamond suit. Your partner's ♦2 is a count signal, showing an odd number of diamonds. The most likely situation is that

partner holds three diamonds and declarer has two. (If partner had one diamond to declarer's four, your play in the suit would not make any difference.)

Many defenders would win with the $\heartsuit Q$ and return the $\spadesuit 8$, hoping to drive out dummy's $\spadesuit A$ entry before the diamonds were set up. Not the best! Declarer would win with the $\spadesuit Q$ in his hand, set up the diamonds and later cross to the $\spadesuit A$ to enjoy three diamond tricks and make the contract.

Instead you should allow dummy's $\heartsuit 10$ to win the first round. You take the second round of diamonds and continue with the $\spadesuit 8$. Declarer wins in his hand with the $\spadesuit Q$, but he now has no diamond to play. He will score only one diamond trick and go down.

DEFENSIVE PLAN (East): It seems that declarer has two diamonds, so I will hold up on the first round. He will make only one diamond trick and go down even when he began with $\spadesuit KQx$.

Let's see something quite remarkable — a deal where you must hold up a double stopper twice! It's not so hard to see what will happen if you fail to do so. Take the West cards.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|---------|---|--|
| \spadesuit K 8 7 | \spadesuit 10 5 2 | \spadesuit Q 9 6 4 3 | | | |
| \heartsuit J 10 9 8 4 | \heartsuit A 6 5 | \heartsuit 7 2 | | | |
| \diamondsuit J | \diamondsuit 5 3 | \diamondsuit Q 10 9 8 6 | | | |
| \clubsuit A Q 9 6 | \clubsuit 10 8 7 5 2 | \clubsuit 3 | | | |
| | <table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td></tr> </table> | N | W E | S | |
| N | | | | | |
| W E | | | | | |
| S | | | | | |
| | \spadesuit A J | | | | |
| | \heartsuit K Q 3 | | | | |
| | \diamondsuit A K 7 4 2 | | | | |
| | \clubsuit K J 4 | | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| pass | 3NT | all pass | 2NT |

You lead the $\heartsuit J$. Partner plays a discouraging $\heartsuit 2$ and declarer wins with the $\heartsuit K$. What is your plan when declarer leads the $\clubsuit K$?

It's possible that declarer holds $\clubsuit KJx$, so you hold up the $\clubsuit A$ on the first round. Your partner follows with the $\clubsuit 3$. This is a count signal, a low card to show an odd number of clubs since the $\clubsuit 4$ is missing. It's very unlikely to be three, since declarer opened 2NT. And even if South did start with a singleton $\clubsuit K$, he would hardly have attacked the suit. So, you know that declarer started with $\clubsuit KJ4$.

Declarer continues with the ♣J. What will happen if you win this trick? Again declarer will score three club tricks. You must hold up once more. After this sparkling start to the defense, declarer will score only two club tricks instead of three. You wouldn't find such a defense at the table just because you had read about it in a book. You could work out exactly what would happen if you defended any differently!

Thwarted in the club suit, declarer will duck a diamond in the hope that the suit breaks 3-3. Unlucky, and he goes one down.

DEFENSIVE PLAN (West): When declarer leads the ♣K and ♣J, I will play low, keeping my ♣AQ. If I won the first or second round, declarer would make three club tricks and the game.

RETAINING A STOPPER IN DUMMY'S LONG SUIT

Take the West cards on this one

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|--------------|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| | ♠ 9 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ 7 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ A 10 8 6 4 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ 7 4 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♠ Q 6 2 | | ♠ K 10 8 5 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ Q J 10 8 | | ♥ 6 4 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ K Q 9 | | ♦ 7 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ 10 9 5 | | ♣ Q J 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;"> </td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> | | N | | | W | | E | | | S | | | | |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♠ A J 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♥ A K 9 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♦ J 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | ♣ A K 6 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|----------|-------|
| pass | 3NT | all pass | 2NT |

Declarer wins your ♥Q lead with the ace, partner playing a discouraging ♥3. How will you defend when declarer plays the ♦J next?

If you cover with an honor, declarer will have the chance to duck in dummy and finesse the ♦10 subsequently. He will then score five diamond tricks and make the contract easily. You can prevent this unappetizing outcome by following with the ♦9 on the first trick. Declarer's ♦J will win but he will then be restricted to two diamond tricks instead of five. The best he can do is to set up an extra trick in clubs but he will still go one down.

NOW TRY THESE... (1)

A.

♠ J 7 5 2
♥ 7 6 3
♦ 9 8 5
♣ K J 2

♥Q led



♠ A
♥ 9 8 4
♦ J 10 4 3
♣ A 9 8 6 4

After bidding of 1♠ – 2♠; 4♠, West leads the ♥Q. Declarer wins with the ♥A and leads the ♣Q, partner following with the ♣3. What defensive plan will you make?

B.

♠ A 8 3
♥ 10 4
♦ 10 7
♣ Q J 9 7 6 2

♠J led



♠ 6 4
♥ K Q 6
♦ Q 8 5 4 3
♣ A K 4

South opens 1NT and is raised to 3NT. Declarer wins your partner's ♠J lead with the ♠Q and leads the ♣10, your partner playing the ♣8. Sitting East, what is your plan?

C.

♠ J 7 3 2
♥ 9 7 5 4
♦ A
♣ J 7 5 2

♠ 4
♥ J 10 8 3
♦ Q J 10 9 5
♣ A 9 6



After a start of 2♣ – 2♦; 2NT (22-23 points), North bids 3♣ (Stayman) and South denies a four-card major. He ends in 3NT and wins your ♦Q lead in dummy, East playing the ♦3. Declarer then leads the ♣2 to East's ♣3 and his king. What is your plan?

ANSWERS (1)

- A.** Declarer may have started with ♥AKx. He is probably playing the ♣Q to set up a discard for a heart loser in his hand. Your partner's ♣3 is a count signal, showing three clubs and leaving declarer with ♣Qx. You should therefore hold up your ♣A on the first round, to prevent him from crossing to dummy for a discard. If he plays a second club, you will win with the ♣A and return a heart to set up a winner for partner. You will need him to have one more trick, perhaps the ♠K or ♦A, to beat the contract.

The full deal is:

| | | |
|------------|-----------|-------------|
| ♠ 8 6 | ♠ J 7 5 2 | ♠ A |
| ♥ Q J 10 5 | ♥ 7 6 3 | ♥ 9 8 4 |
| ♦ A 7 6 2 | ♦ 9 8 5 | ♦ J 10 4 3 |
| ♣ 10 7 3 | ♣ K J 2 | ♣ A 9 8 6 4 |

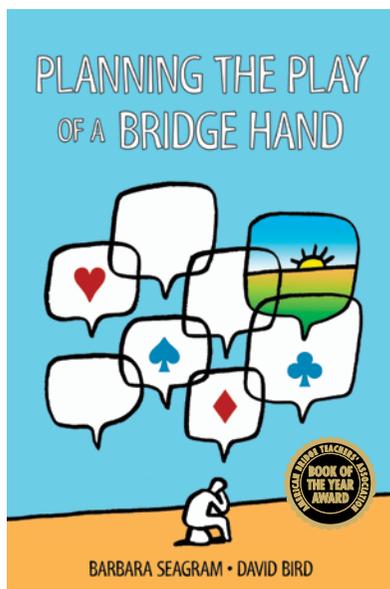
| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|---------|
| ♠ K Q 10 9 4 3 | N W E S | ♥ A K 2 |
| ♥ A K 2 | | ♦ K Q |
| ♦ K Q | | ♣ Q 5 |
| ♣ Q 5 | | |

If partner had signaled with the ♣7 instead, you might place him with ♣10732, leaving declarer with a singleton ♣Q. Then you would win the first round of clubs.

DEFENSIVE PLAN (East): Partner's ♣3 count signal tells me that declarer has two clubs. I will hold up the ♣A on the first round, to prevent declarer from discarding a heart loser on dummy's clubs.

- B.** Declarer is a big favorite to hold the ♠K. If you win the first round of clubs, he will win your spade return with the king and clear dummy's club suit. The ♠A will remain as an entry for him to score the long cards in the suit. Since dummy has only one side entry, the ♠A, you must hold up in clubs even though you have a double stopper. Declarer will then make only one club trick instead of four and go down.

ALSO AVAILABLE

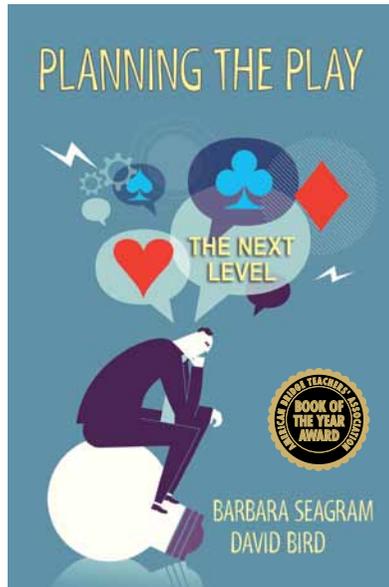


Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand

978-1-897106-51-8

Barbara Seagram and David Bird

Winner of the 2010 American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year award. Beginning bridge players are taught some of the basic techniques of declarer play: suit establishment, ruffing losers, the finesse, and so forth. The hard part is learning when each applies. This book, starting from the basics, explains how to go about making a plan as declarer.



Planning the Play: The Next Level

978-1-77140-039-8

Barbara Seagram and David Bird

Winner of the 2018 American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year award, this sequel to *Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand* extends the idea of making a plan as declarer to more complex situations, covering ideas such as safety plays, avoidance play, trump control, dummy reversal, and endplays. It will appeal to players who have a solid grasp of the basics of declarer play, and are looking to improve from there.

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Following on from their earlier book, *Planning the Defense*, Seagram & Bird move on to more sophisticated aspects of defensive cardplay for advancing players. Using the same step-by-step approach, the authors guide the reader through the issues involved in communications, deception, trump promotions, discarding and avoiding the embarrassment of being endplayed.



BARBARA SEAGRAM (Toronto, Canada) travels the world teaching bridge. She is author or co-author of more than a dozen well-known books, the most popular being *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know*.



DAVID BIRD (UK) is the most prolific bridge author of all time, with 138 titles to his credit. He is the holder of a record eight American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year awards.

