# **DECLARER PLAY**

## THE DANGEROUS OPPONENT **Identify the Safe Opponent**

# **Bridge Lab**

# with the Monroes

When planning the play, be aware of the concept of the danger hand and which opponent is safe and which opponent is dangerous.

• Danger Hand is the opponent that may be able to run a side suit or be positioned to attack a vulnerable suit once on lead.

1 <sup>ST</sup> Declarer Ma	akes a Plan - BEFORE Playing to Trick One!			
<ul> <li>☑ With enough tricks to make your contract, take them!</li> <li>☑ If you need to develop tricks to make your contract, evaluate options.</li> <li>☑ Lose the tricks you need to lose early</li> <li>☑ Protect your vulnerable weak suits and unsupported honors.</li> </ul>				
GATHER CLUES	<ul> <li>☑ Review the bidding.</li> <li>☑ What does the opening lead tell you?</li> <li>☑ Use defenders' signals for information.</li> <li>☑ Count defenders' tricks.</li> </ul>			
IDENTIFY SAFE OPPONENT	<b>CAN'T</b> defeat the contract upon gaining the lead.			
BEWARE! DANGEROUS OPPONENT	<ul> <li>CAN defeat the contract upon gaining the lead.</li> <li>Has side-suit winners to take.</li> <li>May make a damaging lead.</li> </ul>			

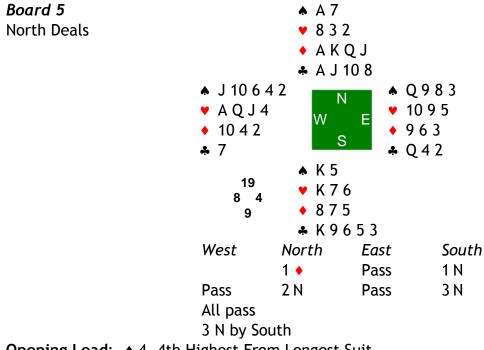
Techniques to Create a SAFE Opponent				
THE DUCK		<ul> <li>Hold up winning your ACE.</li> <li>Break card communication between the Defenders to create a Safe Opponent. Place the Safe Opponent on lead.</li> </ul>		
	RULE OF 7	<ul> <li>May help Declarer decide how many times to "Duck."</li> <li>With only one stopper in a suit led by the opponents, subtract the combined number of cards you hold in the suit led from the number "7". The difference is the number of times to "Duck."</li> </ul>		
TI	THE FINESSE Plan to lose a finesse to the Safe Opponent YOU want to have leadin			
	ΜΑΧΙΜ	<ul> <li>Eight Ever, Nine Never. Applies to a suit holding A-K-J missing the Q</li> <li>Eight combined cards (ever), 50% finesse for the Queen.</li> <li>Nine combined cards (never): better than 50% to drop the Queen on the first two rounds (A-K of the suit).</li> </ul>		

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# THE DANGEROUS OPPONENT

Protect the **v** K. Don't let East gain the lead.



**Opening Lead:** A, 4th Highest From Longest Suit

What is the Danger? South's ♥ K is "unprotected." A heart lead from East would be dangerous, and the contract would fail.

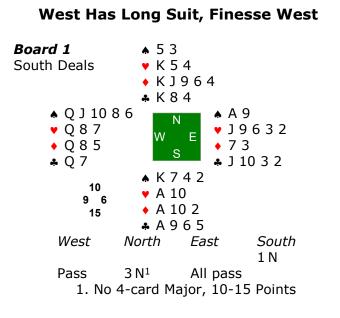
Declarer has seven sure tricks: two spades, four diamonds, one club. Two more tricks are needed and can be established in the club suit. With nine total clubs headed by the \* AKJ, only the \* Q is missing from the top four honors. The maximum "eight ever, nine never" suggests not to take the finesse ("nine never") and instead play the \* AK and hope the \* Q will drop. The Dangerous Opponent warns otherwise.

Who is the Dangerous Opponent? EAST is the Dangerous Opponent. If East gains the lead and makes the likely switch to the  $\checkmark$  10, Declarer's  $\checkmark$  K will be trapped and four hearts will be lost to the defense to set the contract.

Who is the SAFE Opponent? WEST is the Safe Opponent. Rather than following the maximum of "eight ever, nine never," Declarer must finesse for the AQ, planning to lose to West, the SAFE opponent. Declarer can afford to lose the AQ, but cannot afford four potential heart losers. At trick two, Declarer plays the AA, then the AJ to finesse the AQ. If West happens to hold the AQ and gains the lead, the contract is safe. The clubs are established for three additional winning tricks, and a heart lead is not a threat if West is on lead.

Regardless of how the clubs are divided between E/W, finessing for the & Q is the winning play. It's a "safety play" when the clubs are not divided 2-2, and avoids the danger of East gaining the lead 100% of the time.

## **Dangerous Opponent**



**Contract:** 3 NT South, 9 Tricks **Lead:** ▲ Q, Solid Sequence, East Overtakes **Sure Tricks:** 2-♥, 2-♦, 2-♣ = 6.

**Play:** East overtakes with the ♠A and returns a ♠. South holds up and wins the 3rd trick. South plays the ♦A, then the ♦ 10, finessing the ♦Q so West cannot win.

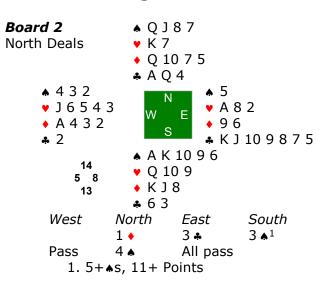
#### West Can Lead Clubs Not East

Board 3 North Deals A Q 10 8 7 J 7 5 2 A 8 5 2 18 7 6 9	▲ 6 3 7 6 ₩ ₩ ↓ 5 3 ♥ K 9 ♦ K 1	$\begin{bmatrix} 10 \\ 7 & 4 & 3 \\ & & \end{bmatrix} $	432
	♣ K 7	74	
West	<i>North</i> 1 ♦	<i>East</i> Pass	<i>South</i> 1 N
All pass	2 N <sup>1</sup> 19 Points	Pass	3 N

**Contract:** 3 NT South, 9 /trucks **Lead:** ▲ 7, 4th highest, East plays high **Sure Tricks:** 2-▲, 3-♥, 2-♦ = 7.

**Play:** South wins the  $\bigstar A$ , and finesses  $\blacklozenge s$  through East to protect the  $\bigstar K$ .

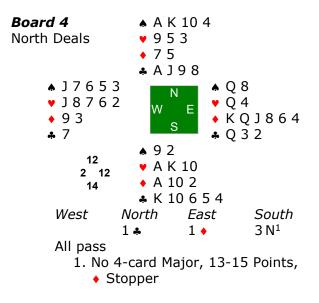
#### Singleton?



**Contract:** 4 ▲ South, 10 Tricks **Lead:** ♣ 2, Partner's suit **Losers:** 2-♥, 1-♦, 1-♣ = 4.

**Play:** Declarer does not finesse the ♣K (key) but plays the ♣A, draws trump and promotes the ♥s and ♦s. West will trump a ♣ if South tries the ♣ finesse.

#### Isolate East's Long Suit



**Contract:** 3 NT South, 9 Tricks **Lead:** ◆ 9, Partner's suit, East plays ◆ J **Sure Tricks:** 2-♠, 2-♥, 1-♦, 2-♣ = 7.

**Play:** South wins the 3rd ◆ trick, wins the ♣ A, and finesses East in ♣s.

Bridge With The Monroes - 8/15/2020

### **Dangerous Opponent**

