

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.

1ST Declarer Makes a Plan - BEFORE Playing to Trick One!

- With enough tricks to make your contract, take them!
- If you need to develop tricks to make your contract, evaluate options.
- Lose the tricks you need to lose early
- Protect your vulnerable weak suits and unsupported honors.

GATHER CLUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review the bidding. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What does the opening lead tell you? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use defenders' signals for information. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Count defenders' tricks.
IDENTIFY SAFE OPPONENT	CAN'T defeat the contract upon gaining the lead.
BEWARE! DANGEROUS OPPONENT	CAN defeat the contract upon gaining the lead. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has side-suit winners to take. • May make a damaging lead.

Techniques to Create a SAFE Opponent

THE DUCK	Hold up winning your ACE. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break card communication between the Defenders to create a Safe Opponent. Place the Safe Opponent on lead.
RULE OF 7	May help Declarer decide how many times to "Duck." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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."
THE FINESSE	Plan to lose a finesse to the Safe Opponent YOU want to have leading.
MAXIM	Eight Ever, Nine Never. Applies to a suit holding A-K-J missing the Q <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight combined cards (ever), 50% finesse for the Queen. • Nine combined cards (never): better than 50% to drop the Queen on the first two rounds (A-K of the suit).

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THE DANGEROUS OPPONENT

Protect the ♥ K. Don't let East gain the lead.

Board 5

North Deals

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

West	North	East	South
	1 ♦	Pass	1 N
Pass	2 N	Pass	3 N
All pass			
3 N by South			

Opening Lead: ♠ 4, 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 ♥ 10, Declarer's ♥ 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 ♣ Q, planning to lose to West, the SAFE opponent. Declarer can afford to lose the ♣ Q, but cannot afford four potential heart losers. At trick two, Declarer plays the ♣ A, then the ♣ J to finesse the ♣ Q. If West happens to hold the ♣ Q 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

West Has Long Suit, Finesse West

Board 1
South Deals

♠ Q J 10 8 6 ♥ Q 8 7 ♦ Q 8 5 ♣ Q 7		♠ A 9 ♥ J 9 6 3 2 ♦ 7 3 ♣ J 10 3 2	
10 9 6 15	♠ K 7 4 2 ♥ A 10 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ A 9 6 5		
West	North	East	South
Pass	3 N ¹	All pass	1 N

1. No 4-card Major, 10-15 Points

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.

Singleton?

Board 2
North Deals

♠ 4 3 2 ♥ J 6 5 4 3 ♦ A 4 3 2 ♣ 2		♠ 5 ♥ A 8 2 ♦ 9 6 ♣ K J 10 9 8 7 5	
14 5 8 13	♠ A K 10 9 6 ♥ Q 10 9 ♦ K J 8 ♣ 6 3		
West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♦ 4 ♠	3 ♣ All pass	3 ♠ ¹

1. 5+♠s, 11+ Points

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.

West Can Lead Clubs Not East

Board 3
North Deals

♠ Q 10 8 7 6 ♥ J 7 5 ♦ 2 ♣ A 8 5 2		♠ J 4 ♥ 6 4 3 2 ♦ Q 6 5 ♣ Q J 10 9	
18 7 6 9	♠ 5 3 2 ♥ K 9 8 ♦ K 10 9 8 ♣ K 7 4		
West	North	East	South
Pass	2 N ¹	Pass	3 N

All pass
1. 18-19 Points

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

Play: South wins the ♠ A, and finessses ♦s through East to protect the ♣ K.

Isolate East's Long Suit

Board 4
North Deals

♠ J 7 6 5 3 ♥ J 8 7 6 2 ♦ 9 3 ♣ 7		♠ Q 8 ♥ Q 4 ♦ K Q J 8 6 4 ♣ Q 3 2	
12 2 12 14	♠ 9 2 ♥ A K 10 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ K 10 6 5 4		
West	North	East	South
All pass	1 ♣	1 ♦	3 N ¹

1. No 4-card Major, 13-15 Points, ♦ Stopper

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 finessses East in ♣s.

Dangerous Opponent

West Has ♥ Winners, Finesse West

Board 5

South Deals

	♠ J 8 6		
	♥ A 3 2		
	♦ K 10 6		
	♣ A J 9 2		
♠ 7 4	N	♠ 10 9 5 3 2	
♥ K Q J 10 8 6	W	♥ 9	
♦ Q 8 7	E	♦ 9 5 4	
♣ 6 5	S	♣ Q 8 4 3	

♠ A K Q
♥ 7 5 4
♦ A J 3 2
♣ K 10 7

13
8 2
17

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♥	3 N ¹	All pass	1 N
1. ♥ Stopper, 10-15 points			

Contract: 3 NT South, 9 Tricks

Lead: ♥ K, Solid Sequence

Sure Tricks: 3-♠, 1-♥, 2-♦, 2-♣ = 8.

Play: Declarer wins the 2nd ♥ and finesses both ♣s and ♦s through West, the dangerous opponent.

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LARRY'S BRIDGE QUIZ - Danger Hand

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-quiz/detail/69>