

# ACTIVE vs PASSIVE Defense

# What is the Difference?

- In Active defense, you are trying to take your tricks before they get away. Often, you may break a new suit, or make some other risky play that on a bad day may cost your side a trick.
- In Passive defense, you are trying to avoid giving any tricks away to declarer by playing as safely as possible. Your plan is to wait for your tricks to come to you.
- Mike Lawrence estimates that on average, breaking a new suit costs almost half a trick. Therefore, we much prefer passive defense unless we need to be active.

# When Should We be Active?

- We need to be active when there is a danger of our tricks running away.
- This involves remembering the auction, and looking at the dummy. Sometimes the opening lead will also give you clues.
- Sometimes it is very obvious. Declarer may have a beautiful source of tricks in the dummy that is either ready to run or that he is about to set up, and we need to get our side suit tricks before he can discard them.
- Sometimes it is less obvious; sometimes even the 4<sup>th</sup> round of a suit in dummy that is breaking 4-3-3-3 around the table could give declarer a discard.

# When Should We Be Passive?

- We should be passive whenever the dummy is worthless, or whenever we can tell by the count of the hand that being passive will be successful.

# A Special Case: Leading Trump

- Playing a trump can be either an active or a passive defense.
- If it looks like declarer may wish to ruff losers in the dummy, playing a trump actively cuts down on ruffs.
- On the other hand, if all suits look dangerous, playing a trump can be your only play to avoid helping declarer.

HAND 1

♠ AK52

♥ 753

♦ QT2

♣ KJ2

♠ 73

♥ KQ96

♦ J85

♣ Q984

♠ QT864

♥ J

♦ A43

♣ T643

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1H	1S
3H	4S	AP	

♠ J9

♥ AT842

♦ K976

♣ A7

HAND 2

♠ 65  
♥ T72  
♦ KJ9843  
♣ AJ

♠ J8742  
♥ KJ83  
♦ J85  
♣ Q984

♠ AKQ9  
♥ Q95  
♦ Q76  
♣ KT2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		P	1NT
P	3NT	AP	

♠ T3  
♥ A64  
♦ 52  
♣ Q98743

HAND 3

♠ KJ  
 ♥ 9632  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ AQT742

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1S
P	1NT	P	2S
	4S	AP	

♠ 532  
 ♥ KT87  
 ♦ KQT6  
 ♣ 86

♠ 76  
 ♥ J54  
 ♦ AJ98  
 ♣ KJ95

♠ AQT984  
 ♥ AQ  
 ♦ 5432  
 ♣ 3



HAND 4

♠ KJ732

♥ T87

♦ T7

♣ J73

♠ Q

♥ K954

♦ KQJ93

♣ KT8

♠ AT9864

♥ J62

♦ 8

♣ A94

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			P
1D	P	2D*	2S
3H	4S	5D	AP

♠ 5

♥ AQ3

♦ A6542

♣ Q652

HAND 5

♠ Q732

♥ 987

♦ T

♣ KJ753

♠ KJ

♥ Q54

♦ AQJ973

♣ T8

♠ AT9864

♥ T62

♦ 8

♣ A94

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1D	P	1H	2S
3D	4S	5D	AP

♠ 5

♥ AKJ3

♦ K6542

♣ Q62

HAND 6

♠ AJ732

♥ J985

♦ A7

♣ J3

♠ 98

♥ 4

♦ KJ963

♣ KQ987

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1H
2NT	3C*	5C	5H
AP			

♠ K54

♥ 3

♦ T854

♣ AT652

♠ QT6

♥ AKQT762

♦ Q2

♣ 4