

August 2020 ACBL Bulletin Notes

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Page 40, Phillip Alder, Card Play 101 – Passive vs. active defense

Passive vs. active defense is discussed. Active defense is best when you need to take your tricks in a hurry before they disappear. Passive defense is best when your tricks aren't disappearing and you can wait for declarer to break a suit and hopefully capture an honor with a higher honor.

You hold: ♠7 4 2 ♥A 10 6 3 ♦K 5 4 ♣J 3 2

West <i>You</i>	North <i>Responder</i>	East <i>Partner</i>	South <i>Opener</i>
			1♠
Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3NT ⁽²⁾
Pass	4♣ ⁽³⁾	Pass	4♦ ⁽³⁾
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

(1) Jacoby forcing raise: four-plus spades, 13-plus support points
 (2) 14–16 points, no singleton or void
 (3) Control bid (cuebid)

From this auction you know that N/S have plenty of tricks for game in spades; they were investigating slam before stopping in game. The 4C and 4D bids were control/cue bids showing at least second round control in both suits. Spades are trump. They stopped short of slam because they have two quick losers in hearts: North denied a heart control with the 4S bid and South did not bid on after that.

	<i>Dummy</i>	
	♥ 8 5 4	
<i>You</i>	♥ A 10 6 3	<i>Partner</i>
	♥ K J 2	
	<i>Declarer</i>	
	♥ Q 9 7	

This situation calls for an active defense. You need to get the heart tricks to which you are entitled before they disappear. This is the exception to the guideline not to under lead an ace on the opening lead in a suit contract. Partner is a good player who heard the same auction you did; he should have the HK and realize you must have the HA. He should lead a heart back to you so that you could get 3 heart tricks with a heart layout like the one shown.

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You still hold: ♠7 4 2 ♥A 10 6 3 ♦K 5 4 ♣J 3 2

West <i>You</i>	North <i>Responder</i>	East <i>Partner</i>	South <i>Opener</i>
			1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

In this auction, North has shown about 6-9 points and three spades. South invited, asking North to go to game only if he's at the top of his bid. North went. Clearly the opponents have struggled to reach this game; they don't have extra tricks.

They are probably going to have to live with their losers. This situation calls for a passive lead. The safest and appropriate lead is a spade. Do not underlead an honor; doing so could cost a trick.

Page 48, Mike Lawrence, Mike's Bridge Lesson – Who asks for key cards?

<i>North</i>	
♠	A 9 8 7 6
♥	A J 6 4
♦	A Q
♣	A 8
<i>South</i>	
♠	K 5
♥	K Q 10 8 5 3
♦	9
♣	K Q 4 3

The partner who needs the information should be the one to ask for key cards. In this example, that partner is South.

If North bids 4NT asking for key cards, he'll find out that South has one key card (the King of hearts/trump) but North won't be able to make a good decision with just that piece of information – too many holes in his hand.

This would be a reasonable auction:

	North	South
	1♠	2♥ 5+ hearts, forcing to game
Sets the trump suit. Stronger than 4♥ as 4♥ would be fast arrival, showing a minimum.	3♥	4♣ Cue bid, showing at least second-round control in clubs. 3♠ is also a possibility, but the club control would be lost if North bids 4♦.
Cue bid	4♦	4N Either 1430 or 3014
Shows 4 key cards (key cards = all the aces and the trump king)	5♣/5♦	5♥ Lets North pass holding one A. Unlikely, but it's better to go down one than two.
Shows all four aces	6♥	7♥ Might need to ruff a club