

Hand 228 Reading a Signal. Deception. The attitude discard. Reading a Discard. Getting a Ruff.

Dir: North

Vul: N-S

	North	
	S. AQ73	
	H. Q92	
	D. 1098	
	C. 1092	
West		East
S. 108542		S. J9
H. 853		H. K6
D. A6		D. KQ543
C. K83		C. A764
	South	
	S. K6	
	H. AJ1074	
	D. J72	
	C. QJ5	

South	West	North	East
		Pass	1D
1H	1S	2H	All Pass

Opening lead: DA

Bidding Commentary: West's 1S response shows five spades. With four spades and enough to respond, West normally makes a negative double. As West, you should assume that your partner, East, has fewer than three spades given the pass over 2H. After all, East knows you have five spades.

Lead Commentary: As West, holding the ace in a suit partner has bid, and planning to lead the suit, start with the ace. As East, you can't be sure of West's diamond length. However, since diamonds have not been supported the inference is 'shortness'.

Defensive Commentary: Playing standard signaling methods, East encourages with the D5. West reads the 5 as encouraging! Why? When there are two or more lower cards than the one partner has played outstanding, assume partner is encouraging a continuation. If there is only one lower card outstanding, it's not clear whether partner is signaling encouragement or not. Clever declarers have been known to conceal low cards to deceive the defense. As the opening leader, train your self to look beneath the card partner has played. This is the way to determine what partner's card means. Even a 7 can be a discouraging signal if all the lower cards are visible.

Play Commentary: As South, signal West, the opening leader as if she were your partner using the opponents' signaling methods! Yes, you read that right. In this scenario, say the opponents are playing 'standard' attitude signals. Looking at your hand and dummy, decide if you want West to continue a diamond (treat West as if she was your partner). If you want a diamond continuation, play the 7. If you don't (you don't), play the D2. This technique should be added to your ever-growing arsenal of deceptive plays.

Further Defensive Commentary: Say West continues a diamond to the queen and king. As East, you have a discard to make on the third round of diamonds. Try the C8, an encouraging discard. If partner is on the same wave length and shifts to a low club, win the king, return a club to partner's ace and ruff the club return. Your side takes the first six tricks. What a defense!

Hand 210 Responding to an overcall. Reading the lead. Third hand play.

Dlr: West
Vul: E-W

North
S. QJ1097
H. AJ105
D. 76
C. 42

West
S. 52
H. K87632
D. AK9
C. A5

East
S. 86
H. 94
D. 854
C. K98763

South
S. AK43
H. Q
D. QJ1032
C. QJ10

West	North	East	South
1H	1S	Pass	4S
All Pass			

Opening lead: H8

Bidding Commentary: As North, you have a minimum for a one level overcall. As South, 16 support points (not counting the HQ) facing a one level overcall 'usually' produces game.

Defensive Commentary: As West, decide what partner's is leading from to determine what declarer has in the suit. The lead is a likely top of a doubleton. With 9xx(x) in an unsupported suit, partner leads low. If partner has a doubleton, declarer has the AJ10x. If you cover, declarer will eventually be able to discard two clubs from dummy on the J10 of hearts. If partner has the CK, your cover costs a club trick, the setting trick! When partner's lead shows no honor cards, dummy has a singleton honor, and you have a higher honor than dummy, cover if you can promote a second or third round trick for yourself. For example, cover holding the KJ or the K10 of hearts. If you can't promote at least a third round trick, play low.

Play Commentary: As North, If West covers the HQ, blow West a kiss, draw trumps, and discard two clubs on the J10 of hearts. Instead of losing two clubs, you lose only one and bag a miracle game.

Defensive Commentary #2 As East, give count (D4) when a diamond is played. As West, make sure you take four tricks in the minors assuming you have low at trick one. Partner needs the CK to defeat the contract and you know two diamonds are cashing.

#234 Responding to 2C. Trumping high. Entries.

Dlr: N

Vul: E-W

	North	
	S. 732	
	H. 1087	
	D. KQ865	
	C. 65	
West		East
S. AKQ		S. 8654
H. AQ5		H. 942
D. J		D. 432
C. AKQJ104		C. 932

	South
	S. J109
	H. KJ63
	D. A1097
	C. 87

West	North	East	South
2C	Pass	2D	Pass
3C	Pass	3D	Pass
5C	All Pass		

Opening lead: DK

Bidding Commentary: How should one respond to a 2C opening bid with a bust (no ace, no king and no two queens)? One method is to respond 2H directly. Another is to start with 2D, denying a strong suit. If opener bids 2H or 2S, a rebid of 3C, artificial, shows a bust. If opener bids 3C a 3D rebid by responder, artificial, shows a bust. Another possibility is to show high card points at once by steps. A fourth method is to show controls (ace and kings) by steps. Each method has its plusses and minuses. What's important is a partnership agreement. **EVEN A BAD AGREEMENT IS BETTER THAN NO AGREEMENT.** Here 2D followed by 3D over 3C was used to show a bust.

Defensive Commentary: South plays the D10 at trick one, higher equal when encouraging. Given the looks of this dummy, a passive defense (avoid breaking news suits) is in order. As North, continue with a low diamond at trick two as requested.

Play Commentary: As West, trump the second diamond high! If clubs divide 2-2, the C9 will provide a dummy entry-if you have save the precious C4. After clubs divide 2-2, it can't cost to play the AKQ of spades in case they break 3-3. It's your lucky day, they do! Now it is easy enough to cross to the C9, discard a heart on dummy's S9, and take the heart finesse for an overtrick. Be sure to tell your partner after you make an overtrick that in the future you expect her to bid more aggressively with wonderful hands.

When holding a powerful trump suit facing a bleak dummy and forced to trump early, consider trumping high rather than low. That low trump may be your salvation- it may be your only egress to dummy!

Hand 255 The opening Lead. Waiting for a discard. Making a clear discard.

This hand was rotated 90 degrees for the lesson!

Dir: North

Vul: E-W

	North	
	S. QJ109	
	H. J1098	
	D. KQ	
	C. KQ4	
West		East
S. A65		S. 2
H. A6		H. 5432
D. 10643		D. J8752
C. 8765		C. A32
	South	
	S. K8743	
	H. KQ7	
	D. A9	
	C. J109	

North	East	South	West
1C	Pass	1S	Pass
2S	Pass	4S	All Pass

Opening lead: HA

Bidding Commentary: If the bidding didn't go this way, don't mention it in public.

Lead Commentary: As West, the best time to lead from shortness is when holding trump control (Ax, Axx, Kxx). Here, you can visualize defeating the contract if partner has the HK (immediate ruff) or a minor suit ace in which case you will put partner in after winning the SA and get a ruff.

Play Commentary: As South, win the HK at trick two (higher equal for deceptive purposes) and lead a spade.

Defensive Commentary: As West, if South leads a spade at trick three, no point in rushing up with the ace (partner might have a singleton king!) and guessing which ace partner has. (A play you would make with Ax of spades.) If partner has a singleton spade, partner's discard on the second spade will tell you what you need to know.

Defensive Commentary: As East, discard the D2 on the second spade, discouraging. You have been cursed with such terrible club spots that partner might not read the C3 as encouraging! If for one of many reasons you cannot signal encouragement in one suit, signal discouragement in the other-six of one, a half dozen of the other. Assuming partner is breathing and shifts to a club upon winning the second spade, you win and give partner a heart ruff.

These hands are from Eddie Kantar's "Thinking Bridge" series. Contact me if you have any questions: LynnYokel@gmail.com