

HOW TO USE SVEN'S CARD PLAYING STRATEGIES

This booklet is meant to be used at the Bridge table helping beginning and intermediate Bridge players to play their cards better. In this booklet I have identified certain “methods” and show you some carefully selected examples of putting each method into practice.

Playing to Win a Contract

If you are playing in the role of Declarer, your task is to win the contract in spite of opposition from the Defenders. In a table named “**DECLARER STRATEGIES**” I have provided a number of examples of how to do this, organised under eleven main headings:

- **Counting Certain Tricks.** In each suit you will be able to count certain tricks and find out if and where you have losers.
- **Predicting Trump Split.** How are the missing trumps split between opponent hands? Is it 2-3, 1-4 or 0-5?
- **Ruffing.** Taking a trick by trumping with low cards needs to be considered before pulling the trumps.
- **Pulling Trumps.** At the right time in a suit contract, weaken the opposition by pulling some or all of the outstanding trumps.
- **Taking Certain Tricks.** Your certain tricks in long suits may not all make if you don't do it in the right sequence.
- **Finessing.** Catching one of the honour cards held by the opposition.
- **Early Leads Using “Rule of Eleven”.** Leading 4th best ending up winning the trick on a fairly low card.
- **Taking Long Suit Tricks.** It may be possible to make even small cards of a long suit win a trick once the high cards have gone.
- **Promoting Honours.** Once the opponents' high honour cards are out of the way your promoted honours may win.
- **Retaining Entries.** How to make sure you can get back into a hand where tricks can still be taken.
- **Holding Up Play Using “Rule of Seven”.** At times holding back and ducking one or more tricks may not be a bad idea.

A quiet read of the text in the left column of the Declarer Strategies table, followed by studying the accompanying examples, may enable you to put some of it into practice.

Playing to Defeat a Contract

If you are playing in the role of Defender, your task together with that of your partner is to defeat the contract as declared by the opponents. In a table named “**DEFENDER STRATEGIES**” I have provided a number of examples of how to do this, organised under three main headings:

- **Opening Lead**. The contract is often won or lost already at the first trick. So, try to come up with a good opening lead.
- **Second Hand Play**. Often, but not always, the second person plays low. See comments and examples.
- **Third Hand Play**. Often, but not always, the third person plays high. See comments and examples.

As for the Declarer Strategies, may I recommend a quiet read of the text in the left column of the Defender Strategies table followed by a study of the accompanying examples.

Rubber Bridge Bonus Pages

In addition to the Declarer and Defender Strategies tables please take a look at the bonus pages. You may find them useful when playing Rubber Bridge socially:

- **Bidding Pad**. For use at the Bridge table keeping track of the individual bids made as the bidding progresses. It is easy to photocopy the bidding pad and cut along the crop marks to make it a convenient size.
- **Bridge Scoring Pad**. For use at the Bridge table to keep track of the scores. Photocopy onto A5 paper (or make 2 on an A4 page). Each sheet allows you to score 3 Rubbers and suggests partnership changes for each new Rubber. Write the names of the players at the top and do the scoring at the bottom (below and above the red line). If you wish you can even keep track of the contracts as they are declared.
- **Bridge Scoring Tables**. For use at the Bridge table to assist in calculating the scores. Only the most common scoring values are included.
- **Rubber Bridge Mechanics**. This section provides a summary of the mechanics of playing Bridge (dealing the cards, taking the tricks, etc).
- **Questions & Answers**. For what it is worth I have listed 30 Bridge questions I have asked myself, and the answers I have come up with.
- **System Card**. This is a summary of my Bridge bidding methods and defensive lead signals.

Happy Playing!