

## Declarer Play – The Dangerous Opponent

Identifying a dangerous opponent. During the play of most hands, one opponent or the other will be “dangerous”. That means an opponent can make a lead of a suit that will cause declarer to lose one or more tricks unnecessarily.

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| 1. | <b>Dummy</b><br>♠ KJ85<br>♥ AQ7<br>♦ Q97<br>♣ KT2 | <b>Contract:</b><br>3 NT | The lead of a Heart by West could cause the loss of several tricks in Hearts, but the lead of a Heart by East would give declarer 2 stoppers / tricks in Hearts. The lead of a Spade, Diamond or Club from either defender doesn't hurt declarer. |
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Hearts are a “broken suit”, Spades are solid. Most hands will have one and sometimes two broken suits and therefore one or even two dangerous opponents.

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| ♠ QT6<br>♥ 52<br>♦ AJ86<br>♣ AJ32 | Second Hand Low. Incidentally, if the opening lead in this hand is a low Heart (the 3, 4 or 6), play the ♥7 from dummy: East will have to win, and then can't successfully attack Hearts. |
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Dealing with the dangerous opponent. Declarer must keep a dangerous opponent out of the lead. In the example above, Hearts is vulnerable to attack from the West, but not from East. If East wins the ♣Queen, she can't profitably lead a Heart because dummy would then win both the ♥A and ♥Q. Therefore, finesse through West so that any Club loss is to East – not West.

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| 2.  | <b>Dummy</b><br>♠ T2<br>♥ A94<br>♦ KQT975<br>♣ JT | <b>Contract:</b><br>3 NT | Lead: ♠3. (implying a 4 card Spade suit.) East plays the ♠Q and declarer . . . ?  |
| ♠ 3 | ♠ Q   |                          | (a) Holds up. East then leads the ♥K, and declarer loses 3 Hearts, a Diamond and a Spade for down one.<br><br>(b) Wins the ♠A and then plays Diamonds, driving out the ♦A, losing 3 more Spade tricks but making 9 tricks. (losing 3 Spades and a Diamond.) |
|     | ♠ A75<br>♥ 85<br>♦ J862<br>♣ AKQ8                 |                          | Quite a difference! The danger is not so much in the suit led, but in another suit - - in this case Hearts. In this hand, it's not so much a dangerous <u>opponent</u> as a dangerous <u>suit</u> , which either opponent might lead.                       |