

2nd and 3rd Hand Defensive Play

Note to Teachers

It is best to break this into 2 lessons, as there is a lot to cover. We have separated these notes into two sets for this reason

1. First session: Take the students through second hand play and two defensive tips.
2. Second session: Take the students through third hand play and the other two defensive tips.

Session 1

Lesson Content

Use your honours productively. The way to play honours depends on the circumstances.

- Second Hand play – various examples that depend on your holding and what is in dummy. 2nd player plays low if a small card is led, cover an honour with an honour, cover the second of 2 touching honours. Don't cover if you have greater length than dummy, if it will promote tricks for declarer, or if you have the queen of trumps.
- Defensive tips:
 - hold-up play
 - lead through strength

Main Points to Emphasise

- Emphasise that each defensive situation is different. They should follow the principles for second hand as covered in the examples but **think** before playing.
- The defensive tips are useful for getting a count of the suit - to either keep your communication with partner, or to stop declarer communicating with dummy.
- Communicating with partner is vital.

Lesson Progression

- Teach the principles of second hand play using the given examples – use others if you wish to split this lesson.
- Teach the principles of third hand play – high if partner leads low, or signal attitude if partner leads an honour. Use and explain each example.
- Defensive tips – perhaps do ducking after the first 2 examples of returning partner's suit
- Finish the remaining tips

Play boards 1 to 4

If playing splitting the lesson into two sessions, play Boards 1-4, then rotate each board 90° and replay the hands.

At some stage review the play of the first two boards to check that everybody is playing correctly. Some boards have 2 or 3 aspects of the lesson with emphasis on one (see below)

Topic Boards 1 to 4 cover

1. returning partner's suit, cover 2nd honour
2. attitude signal, hold up winner
3. cover 2nd honour
4. attitude signal, cover an honour

Session 2

Lesson Content

Use your honours productively. The way to play honours depends on the circumstances.

- Third Hand play – generally play high if partner leads low 3rd hand should play the lowest of touching honours or a surrounding honour. If partner leads an honour, signal your attitude.
- Defensive tips:
 - returning partner's lead
 - when to duck a trick

Main Points to Emphasise

- Emphasise that each defensive situation is different. They should follow the principles for third hand play as covered in the examples but **think** before playing.
- The defensive tips are useful for getting a count of the suit - to either keep your communication with partner, or to stop declarer communicating with dummy.
- Communicating with partner is vital.

Lesson Progression

- Teach the principles of third hand play – high if partner leads low, or signal attitude if partner leads an honour. Use and explain each example.
- Defensive tips – returning partner's suit and ducking

Play boards 5 to 8

If playing splitting the lesson into two sessions, play Boards 5-8, then rotate each board 90° and replay the hands.

Topic Boards 5 to 8 cover

5. surrounding honour, lead up to weakness
6. returning partner's suit, ducking
7. returning suit to give count
8. lowest of touching honours, don't cover with trump