

**Esther "Pop" Quiz #0287:  
"Playing Bridge on Defense When Holding  
'Surround' or 'Near-Surround' Card Combinations"**

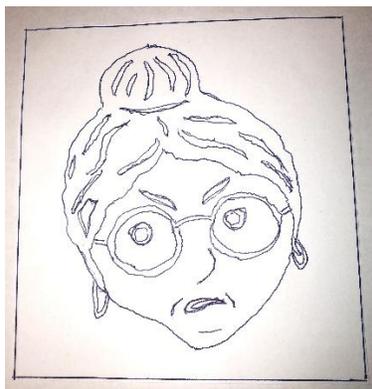
**Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen<sup>1</sup>**

To return to the "Esther Bridge Lessons," CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/index.html>

To return to the "Esther Bridge 'Pop' Quizzes", CLICK:

<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz.html>



**Esther says:**

Selecting the opening lead on defense intrinsically involves a bit of a gamble when Partner was silent throughout the auction because we cannot see the Dummy prior to making the lead. However, things are quite different when you are in the middle of play on defense. Once we see the Dummy we can make more informed choices when leading from certain card combinations.

Consider the following Board slightly modified from one presented in "Thinking Bridge The Surrounding Play by Eddie Kantar":

<http://youth.worldbridge.org/thinking-bridge-the-surrounding-play-by-eddie-kantar>

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in an article in the Winter/Spring, 2024 article in The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) Journal, [https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA\\_1\\_24.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/ABTA_1_24.pdf), Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen, the purported ACBL Double Triple Emerald Gold Platinum LifeMaster with 20+ million ACBL MasterPoints, in fact is a hypothetical, and not a real person! So, this article was really, really written by Bruce Thompson.

Dealer: **WEST**

		NORTH (9)		
		<b>S:</b> 6 2		
		<b>H:</b> K 8 5 4		
		<b>D:</b> A 7 6		
		<b>C:</b> Q 5 4 2		DUMMY
	WEST (10)		EAST (13)	
	<b>S:</b> Q J 5 4 3		<b>S:</b> A K T 8	
	<b>H:</b> Q 6		<b>H:</b> 2	
	<b>D:</b> T 8 4		<b>D:</b> K Q J 9 3	
	<b>C:</b> A J 6		<b>C:</b> 9 7 3	
		<b>YOU</b>		
		SOUTH (8)		
		<b>S:</b> 9 7		
		<b>H:</b> A J T 9 7 3		
		<b>D:</b> 5 2		
		<b>C:</b> K T 8		

**Bidding**

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
PASS	PASS	1 <b>D</b>	2 <b>H*</b>
2 <b>S</b>	3 <b>H</b>	4 <b>S</b>	PASS
PASS	PASS		

\*This "jump Overcall" is equivalent to opening 2**H** as a "weak" pre-empt bid.

Sitting SOUTH "behind" the EAST Dummy once the Dummy is exposed you must evaluate the situation and decide whether to pursue an "active" or a "passive" defense.<sup>2</sup> On this Board you see a Dummy holding (1) a powerful "side" Suit plus (2) strong Trump support. This means that the Defenders must quickly establish or "win" their Tricks in an *active* manner!

But once you SOUTH are on lead what card should you lead? You are sitting in a "surround" position over the EAST Dummy in Clubs. You can "cover" the EAST Dummy's Club 9 with your Club Ten and the Dummy's Club 7 with your Club 8. So once on lead you SOUTH should attack with the Club Ten.

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<sup>2</sup> Within the "Esther Bridge Lessons" see "Esther Bridge Dialogue Lesson #89: **Playing Active versus Passive Defense: What Are These Styles and When Should You Use One versus the Other?**": [https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/Act\\_Pass.pdf](https://esther-bridge.com/pdf/Act_Pass.pdf)

Assuming WEST "covers" with the Club Jack Partner NORTH "wins" with the Club Queen. Then Partner NORTH returns your Club lead. If Declarer WEST plays EAST Dummy's Club 7 you play your Club 8. If Declarer WEST plays EAST Dummy's Club 9 you play your Club King. This drives out Declarer WEST's Club Ace while you retain a Club "winner". Partner NORTH will later gain the lead with his Diamond Ace and lead a Club to your remaining Club "winner" and you will ultimately defeat the contract by "winning" **1** Heart, **1** Diamond, and **2** Clubs, 1 won by you and 1 by Partner NORTH.

As noted in the article, "Other surrounding plays to be on the lookout for are: (1) leading the Jack from the A,J,9 or A,J,9,x or K,J,9 or K,J,9,x when dummy to the right has the T,x,x or T,x,x,x; (2) leading the Queen from A,Q,T or A,Q,T,x when dummy to the right has the J,x or J,x,x."

Now here are some related bridge questions drawn from Robert S. Todd's "Adventures in Bridge" article, "Card Combinations in the Middle of the Hand":

<https://www.advinbridge.com/this-week-in-bridge/504>

1. You are sitting WEST and the Dummy is to your left in NORTH. The cards in a Suit which no player bid are:

	NORTH	
	x x x x	
YOU		EAST
K x x		J x x x
	SOUTH	
	A Q	

Will leading **away from your King** when sitting WEST possibly cost you **1** Trick?

To see Esther's **suggested answers**, CLICK:  
<https://esther-bridge.com/quiz/q0287 a1.pdf>