

Play Inferences

1. When the defenders do not make an obvious play, there must be an obvious reason.

North	South
A2	KJ10943
3	876
AK765	32
AKJ87	Q4

You are in six spades. West leads the King of hearts. East overtakes with the Ace and switches to the queen of diamonds. Where is the queen of spades and how should you play the hand?

East has two spades to the queen. If east/west forces North to ruff declarer will have to play the Ace of spades and the king dropping the doubleton queen. The defense can only win if declarer finesses the Jack.

2. If a good defender is gives you an entry to dummy where none existed he is probably trying to get you to take a losing finesse. This is very common on defense. You might see the Ace and King of a suit in dummy and defender is leading that suit. Be very suspicious! Perhaps he has a singleton honor in trumps or even a side suit.

3. When the dummy comes down with a long threatening side suit and the defenders are making an active defense assume the suit is breaking normally.

4. In the same situation as 3 the defenders are making a passive defense. Assume the long side suit is breaking badly.

5. If a defender does not make an obvious play he probably has a key honor he fears leading from.

6. Read your opponents' hesitations. For example if the defender thinks a bit before coming up with an opening lead he/she probably has difficult choices to make.

Basic Bridge Mathematics

7. With seven cards between your hand in dummy the defender's cards will divide 4-2 48% of the time and 3-3 36% of the time.
8. With an eight card fit the cards will divide 3-2 68% of the time and 4-1 28% of the time.
9. With a nine card fit the cards will divide 3-1 50% of the time, 2-2 40% of the time and 4-0 10% of the time.
10. With a ten card fit the cards will break 2-1 78 % of the time and 3-0 22% of the time.
11. If you do not feel like doing math a good way to remember is that with an even number of cards the cards will more often divide unequally and with an odd number of cards they will break as evenly as possible. So with six cards missing they are more likely to divide 4-2 than 3-3. With five cards missing they are more likely to be 3-2.
12. With ten trumps between your hand and dummy, missing the king of trumps, take the finesse unless you can use the king of trumps to throw the defender in to make a losing return.

QJ1043

A72

K4

A76

A9876

K3

A75

KJ10

In six spades in a team game play the ace of spades. If the king does not drop strip the hand and put the defender in to lead clubs. Notice it does not matter who has the king. If the spades break 3-0 you can still fall back on the club finesse.

13. A finesse in one suit is more likely than a 3-3 break in another.

AQ	872
543	J96
A765	KQ3
5432	AKQJ

Defense takes first four heart trips ending in south. South leads a spade. We have eight top tricks. Play the queen of spades, a 50% chance. Playing for the diamonds to be 3-3 is a 36% chance.

14. In the west hand on tip 13 add a fifth diamond and subtract a club. Given the same defense above when the defense switches to the spade go up with the ace and play for the 3-2 diamond break (68% chance versus 50% chance)

15. No matter how bored the a defender looks do not play him for a complete Yarborough (no card higher than a nine). The odds of that are 1 in 1,827