

## Thinking Defense

When your partner makes the opening lead, always take time to think about the defense before you play to the first trick. If declarer plays quickly from dummy, simply inform him you are going to think about the hand for a while before you play.

### *What to think about*

#### 1. Count declarer's points.

If declarer opened 1NT, then 15-17. If he accepted an invitation, probably 16-17. If he declined, he probably has exactly 15. The same applies if he has opened a suit and rebid 1NT, about 12-14. Once you get an estimate of declarer's points, you can add them to the dummy's and your own, subtract from 40, and you have a range of points you can expect partner to have.

#### 2. Count declarer's distribution.

Again, it's easier if declarer has made a NT bid, since you can usually eliminate singletons and voids. If he has responded to a Stayman bid, you know what 4-card majors he does or doesn't have. When you know declarer's length in a given suit you can subtract from 13 to determine partner's length.

#### 3. Count declarer's tricks.

On many hands you'll be able to estimate what tricks declarer has available, depending on which of the missing cards partner has.

As play proceeds, continuously update the answers to 1, 2 & 3. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Where are declarer's tricks coming from?

Usually, you'll know declarer's length in trumps early in the play. If there is a suit in dummy on which he can take discards, which is a likely source of tricks.

2. What cards is partner likely to have? What are the various suit lengths?

3. Which tricks can go away and which can't?

In the case of a suit in dummy which can be developed for discards, the defense will usually have to attack, either to set up their own tricks or to knock out dummy's entries before they can be used to establish and run the suit.