Active vs Passive Defence

Presenter/s
Date

ACTIVE vs PASSIVE DEFENCE

If you can see Declarer has a “threat” which will be used to make his contract, the defenders have to play an Active defence.

Only chance of defeating the contract but means taking the risk that you will give away an overtrick.

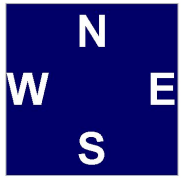
Possible threats are:-

- Declarer has enough tricks to make contract
- Long running suit
- Partner has few points

Bridge NSW

ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Passive Defence

North Deals
None Vul

	♠ 8 5 3 ♥ A K Q 10 6 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ 7 3	
♠ K J 9 ♥ 7 2 ♦ A Q 6 2 ♣ K 10 4 2		♠ 10 7 4 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ 8 5 4 ♣ J 9 8 6
	♠ A Q 6 2 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ A Q 5	

Contract: 4S by South

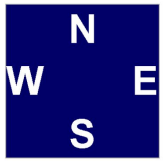
If West leads a ♠ South wins with ♠ Q
If West leads a ♦, South wins with ♦ K
If West leads a ♣, South wins with ♣ Q

The safest lead for West is a ♥. Later, if West wins a trick, lead another ♥ if possible. West should wait for the tricks to come their way not lead a new suit.

Bridge NSW

ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Active Defence

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul



	♠ K Q 5 4 3 ♥ Q 6 ♦ 5 4 2 ♣ A 7 6	
♠ 9 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A K J 10 9 7 3 ♣ 8 4 3		♠ 7 6 ♥ A K J 10 9 8 7 ♦ 6 ♣ Q 10 5
	♠ A J 10 8 2 ♥ 4 2 ♦ Q 8 ♣ K J 9 2	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
3 ♦	Pass	4 ♥	All pass

Lead: ♠ A

South leads ♠A. Dummy has a threatening ♦ suit & South knows ♦Q is no stopper. It's time to get **Active** & the only chance is in ♣s. Lead ♣2 and hope partner has ♣A and returns the suit.

It's a risky play leading away from ♣KJ92 but it's the only chance.

Bridge NSW

ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Threatening Long Suit so Active

♠ 8 6 4
♥ K J
♦ 7 6 2
♣ A K Q J T

South is in 4♥ after a straight forward auction

♠ J (led)

♠ A 7 2
♥ 7 6 5 4
♦ A 8 4
♣ 9 8 4

East wins the initial lead with the ♠A
Now what?

East, **observe dummy** - look at those winning **clubs**.
Clearly an **active defence** is called for

The threat is Dummy's long solid **club** suit on which Declarer can discard losers
The defence need to hurry to cash whatever winners they have
Lead ♦A and watch for partner's attitude signal
If partner encourages, continue with **diamond** If he discourages revert to **spades** partner might have led ♠ J from ♠K J T (top of an interior sequence). South might hold the ♠Q in which case West (partner) can capture it.

Bridge NSW

ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Looking to ruff in Dummy so Active

♠ Q 4 2
♥ A Q 9 7
♦ 3 2
♣ 7 5 3 2

South is in 4♠ after a straight forward auction

♦ Q (led)

♠ 6 3
♥ K J T 3
♦ A 9 7
♣ K J 9 4

East wins the initial lead with the ♦A
Now what?

You can see that **hearts** are no threat – you have high cards "over" dummy
You have **clubs**
The threat is that North will be able to ruff partner's **diamonds** when they are established
Switch to a trump to try to cut down on declarer's ruffing power
Play ♠3
Observe dummy so you can identify threats.

Bridge NSW

ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Long suit a threat so Active

♠ Q 3
♥ A 9 2
♦ 9 8 5 3 2
♣ K 9 4

♠ A K 9 8 6 5
♥ 7 6 4
♦ K 7
♣ J 7

♠ J T 7 2
♥ Q T 5
♦ Q T
♣ A Q T 8

♠ 4
♥ K J 8 3
♦ A J 4 3
♣ 6 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	3♠	all pass

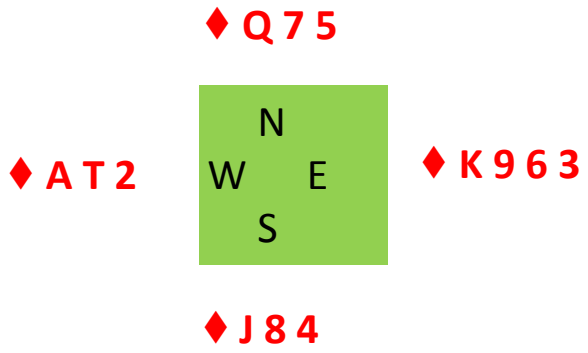
West playing in 3♠

Opening lead from North
♦9 – 'High for Hate'
South takes his Ace
Now what?

South can see that **clubs** are a threat. If there is a finesse it will be working for Declarer
There is no future in **diamonds** (Remember partner's 'High for Hate' lead)
Attack the other suit - **hearts**
Lead ♥3. 'Lead Low for Like'
This is a dangerous lead but you have to take the risk
You hope North has the ♥A but there is no guarantee

Bridge NSW

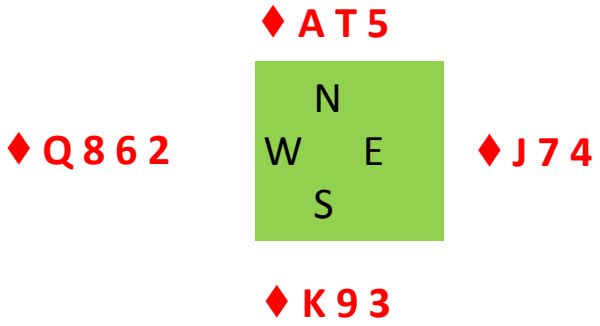
ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Passive Defence examples



The side which leads **diamonds** will give a trick away

If N (or S) leads **diamonds** he will win no tricks in the suit (provided that second hand plays low).
It is the same problem for E/W. They can take ♦A and ♦K but give N/S the third trick.

This is known as a frozen suit



Another example
If N/S lead this suit N/S will win only 2 tricks (provided that second hand plays low).
If E/W lead it, then N/S win 3 tricks

Defenders – recognise frozen suits i.e. where you have isolated unsupported honours in the suit.
Do not be the side to open this suit

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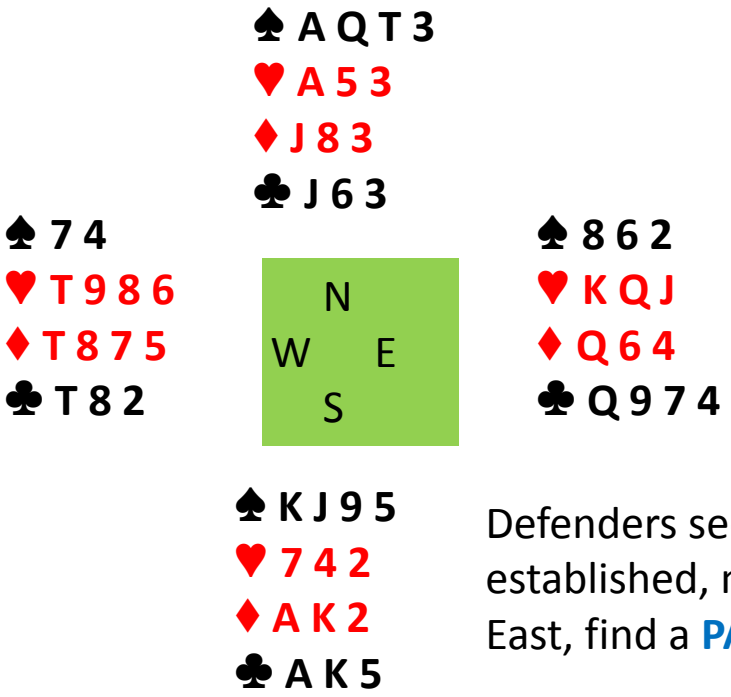
ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Dummy balanced so Passive

South	West	North	East
1♠	pass	4♠	all pass

South playing in 4♠



Opening lead from West - ♥T

Defenders see no threats in dummy. There is no long suit to be established, no short suit which could be ruffed.
East, find a **PASSIVE** lead that gives nothing away.

The lead of either minor risks giving a trick away.
Possible **passive** leads are another **heart** or a trump

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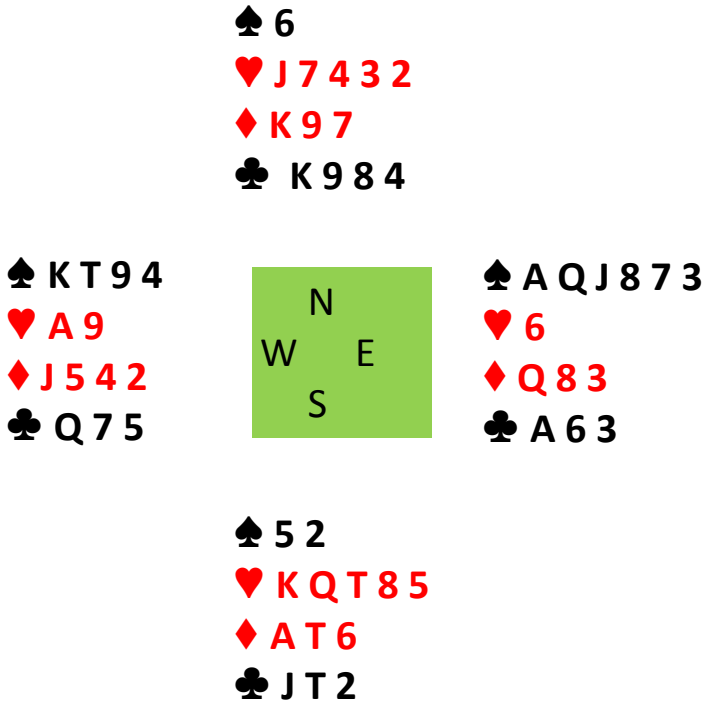
ACTIVE vs PASSIVE - Dummy balanced so Passive



East	South	West	North
1♠	pass	3♠	all pass

East plays in 3♠

Lead ♥K from South
Declarer can see 8 winners and needs one more
Two possibilities

1 Finding ♣K in South – this fails
2 Force defenders to lead the **diamonds**

Declarer should ruff a **heart** Draw trumps before playing **clubs**
When in with ♣K North must a find **PASSIVE** lead. Give nothing away.

Avoid giving a ruff and discard (in **hearts**)
Avoid giving a trick away in **diamonds**
Continue with another **club**

Bridge NSW