



THE
**SETTING
TRICK**

PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN BRIDGE DEFENSE

IAN MCCANCE

THE
SETTING
TRICK
PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN BRIDGE DEFENSE

IAN McCANCE

MASTER POINT PRESS • TORONTO

Text © 2008 Ian McCance

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Cover Picture © PictureNet/Corbis

Master Point Press

331 Douglas Ave.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada (416) 781-0351

M5M 1H2

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Websites: www.masterpointpress.com

www.masteringbridge.com

www.bridgeblogging.com

www.ebooksbridge.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

McCance, Ian

The setting trick : practical problems in bridge defense / Ian McCance.

ISBN 978-1-55494-026-4

1. Contract bridge--Defensive play.

I. Title.

GV1282.42.M33 2008

795.41'53

C2008-904144-5

Editor

Ray Lee

Copy editing

Sarah Howden

Interior format

Sarah Howden

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

INTRODUCTION

These deals all occurred in actual play. Most were encountered by the author, while others were found elsewhere, chiefly in Vugraph files at BridgeBase. Occasional minor changes have been made to sharpen the focus.

As the title implies, the emphasis throughout is solely on defeating the contract. We are playing teams, not matchpoints, and the number of undertricks is irrelevant. The reader is being encouraged to seek out the critical fourth trick against a major suit game, the fifth against 3NT, and so on.

Signaling: Attitude, count, or suit preference? There would be no point here in leading the reader through the complexity of arguments for and against the various signaling methods. If you Google “bridge+signals+attitude”, you’ll see what I mean. For our purposes it has been necessary to adopt a consistent approach and that is:

- “Standard” signals are used – a high card encourages or shows even count.
- Attitude is shown on partner’s lead.
- Count is shown when following suit.
- Suit preference is shown whenever and wherever possible/sensible within the constraints of attitude and count. This may be foreign to some readers, but many years of struggling to defend adequately have convinced me of its value.

Occasionally the text will discuss whether the defense might have been assisted or hindered by the use of alternative signaling methods.

System: The auctions are mostly as they happened and so are based on Acol, Standard American or Precision, all in common use in Australia. Relevant notrump ranges are shown.

Standard of play: At least an intermediate level of competence is assumed, but the declarers do not always play perfectly (or for that matter bid perfectly). That is all part of the rich tapestry — good defense has to take advantage of every opportunity.

Complexity: The deals are presented in no particular order and the level of difficulty is quite variable. That's how defensive situations arise at the table — sorting for difficulty gives the reader “unauthorized information”! Also, since what I find difficult you may find easy and vice versa, sorting may be misleading.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This material first appeared in the monthly bulletin of the Victorian Bridge Association, whose permission to use it is acknowledged.

Bill Jacobs was formerly co-editor with me of the *VBA Bulletin* and is now its sole editor. His keen eye for detail and expertise in analysis have contributed immeasurably to the preparation and presentation of this material.

PROBLEM 1

TO SOLUTION

Partner leads the $\spadesuit 9$ and it is clear that his two-suited overcall took full account of the vulnerability. The $\spadesuit 9$ is obviously a singleton. How do you proceed?

\spadesuit K Q J
 \heartsuit K J 2
 \diamondsuit J 5 4 3 2
 \clubsuit 10 7

N-S Vul.
Dealer N

\spadesuit 9 2
 \heartsuit 9 5 4
 \diamondsuit A K 8 7 6
 \clubsuit K 9 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	pass	pass	1 \heartsuit
2 \heartsuit ¹	dbl	2NT ²	3 \heartsuit
pass	4 \heartsuit	dbl	all pass

1. Michaels, 5+ spades, 5+ minor.
2. Which minor?

PROBLEM 2

TO SOLUTION

Partner leads the $\spadesuit Q$ to declarer's $\spadesuit A$.

South takes trumps in two rounds, partner discarding the $\spadesuit 7$ (suggesting a six-suit). South next leads a club from hand. Your $\clubsuit K$ wins. What do you return?

\spadesuit A 10 3
 \heartsuit Q 8 7 4 2
 \diamondsuit 9 7 5
 \clubsuit Q J

N-S Vul.
Dealer N

\spadesuit Q J
 \heartsuit J 6
 \diamondsuit 6 3 2
 \clubsuit K 10 8 6 5 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	pass	pass	1 \heartsuit
1 \spadesuit	3 \heartsuit	pass	4 \heartsuit
all pass			

PROBLEM 3

To Solution

The ♠6 is led to the ♠10, ♠Q and ♠K. Declarer successfully runs the diamond ten and plays the ♦K. He wins as partner plays the ♦J, then plays another diamond, which partner wins with the ♦A.

You give up on spades and discard a helpful ♠9. Partner switches to the ♥4, your ♥10 winning. Your ♥Q holds, then a third heart is played to the ♥9, ♥8 and ♥A. You are

reduced to black cards, and as declarer starts to cash two winning diamonds you contemplate his three tricks in spades, one in each of hearts and clubs and four in diamonds. So what is your plan?

♠ A 10
♥ A J 5
♦ Q 9 7 4 3
♣ A 5 3

None Vul.
Dealer S

♠ Q 9 8 7 4 3
♥ Q 10 3
♦ 5 2
♣ K 9

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	1♦	2♠ ¹	pass
pass	3NT	all pass	2NT

1. Weak.

PROBLEM 4

To Solution

Your ♠9 lead is covered by the ♠J, ♠K and ♠A. Declarer produces the ♦2. How will you defend?

♠ J 3
♥ K Q 5 4 2
♦ 10 9 8 7 5
♣ 2

None Vul.
Dealer E

♠ 9 8 7 6 5
♥ A 9 3
♦ Q 6
♣ 10 8 7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	1♥	pass	1♣
pass	3♥	pass	2NT ¹
all pass		pass	3NT

1. 18-19 HCP.