

2ND EDITION REVISED & EXPANDED

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a playing card. The card is white with a blue and purple gradient. In the background, several other playing cards are visible, some held in another hand. The overall scene is set against a dark green background.

POSITIVE  
DEFENSE  
of bridge

TERENCE REESE & JULIAN POTTAGE

**MASTER POINT PRESS | TORONTO**

**POSITIVE**  
**DEFENSE**  
at bridge

**TERENCE REESE & JULIAN POTTAGE**

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**Master Point Press**

331 Douglas Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
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Website: <http://www.masterpointpress.com>  
<http://www.masteringbridge.com>  
<http://www.ebooksbridge.com>  
<http://www.bridgeblogging.com>

Email: [info@masterpointpress.com](mailto:info@masterpointpress.com)

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Reese, Terence

Positive defense / Terence Reese & Julian Pottage. -- Rev. ed.

ISBN 978-1-55494-122-3

1. Contract bridge--Defensive play. I. Pottage, Julian II. Title.

GV1282.42.R43 2005                      795.41'53                      C2004-906796-6

Editor	Ray Lee
Cover and interior design	Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix
Interior format	Luise Lee
Copy editing	Suzanne Hocking

Printed in Canada by Webcom Ltd.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

09 08 07 06 05

# Introduction

Many bridge players, if they are honest, admit that they find defending difficult and some say that the deals they misdefend return to haunt them in their dreams. Fortunately, this need not be the case. If you make a little effort — thinking logically, taking a little time to work out what declarer's plan is and what you can do to counteract it — you will find yourself defeating more contracts. Of course, developing an awareness of the things to look out for, a sense of intuition, takes time and practice, and that is what this book is about.

A few of the problems, if you managed to solve them at the table, would win you a prize for brilliance. The vast majority, however, are within the grasp of anyone with a sound grounding in bridge technique and the willingness to spend a few minutes searching for the right play.

There are two ways of approaching a book of this kind. The first is to treat each deal as a puzzle, only turning to the solution when you are confident that you cannot improve upon your answer. The second is to take as much time as you think would be reasonable at the table. Either way you will learn how to think along the right lines, which is what counts in this game.

Unless otherwise stated you may assume a rubber bridge setting. This means that you can forget about stopping overtricks and that you can assume simple bidding as well as standard leads and signals. What we have normally done where a deal comes from actual play is to preserve the original sequence. Anything out of the ordinary, we shall point out as we go along.

*Terence Reese 1985*

*Julian Pottage 2005*

# Acknowledgments

For their part in inspiring this book, in accepting it for original publication, and for introducing Terence Reese and Julian Pottage to each other, the authors are indebted to Richard Plackett, Peter Crawley and Patrick Jourdain respectively.

For enabling this new, expanded and improved edition to appear in print, the authors also owe their gratitude to William Bailey, Peter Burrows, Maureen Dennison, Ron Garber, Mark Horton, Ray Lee and Alwyn Reese.

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# Opening Exchange

♠ A Q  
 ♥ J 9 6 4  
 ♦ Q J 6  
 ♣ Q J 10 6

♠ K 10 7 5 4  
 ♥ A 10 2  
 ♦ 9 7 5  
 ♣ A 5

Lead: ♥8

	N	
W		E
	S	

Dealer South  
 Neither vul.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT <sup>1</sup>
pass	2♣	pass	2♦
pass	3NT	all pass	

1. 12-14

South's 1NT is 12-14. North's Stayman 2♣, with his values in all the suits, seems highly dubious but that's the way of the world. In order for a 4-4 heart fit to produce game when 3NT would fail, it would need to yield two extra tricks, which is only likely to occur if the declaring side has a weak suit or two ruffs are possible. Also, if no fit comes to light, the defenders will have an easier task when they know about declarer's major-suit lengths.

West leads the ♥8, presumably top of nothing from three small, and dummy plays low. How should you, as East, plan to beat the contract?

	♠ A Q				
	♥ J 9 6 4				
	♦ Q J 6				
	♣ Q J 10 6				
♠ 9 6 3 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ 9 4 3 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W                  E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W                  E	S	♠ K 10 7 5 4 ♥ A 10 2 ♦ 9 7 5 ♣ A 5
N					
W                  E					
S					
	♠ J 8 2				
	♥ K Q 5				
	♦ K 10 3 2				
	♣ K 8 7				

West leads the eight of hearts against 3NT and dummy plays low.

You would have been happier with a spade lead but you should give partner some credit for trying to find your suit; presumably he has similar holdings in the majors and guessed wrongly this time. There are still chances, however, because there is room for partner to hold the ♦A. Even the ♣K would be good enough in some circumstances, though partner would need four diamonds as well. In any case, you must win and attack spades even though it means leading into the tenace. No matter which minor declarer chooses to attack first, one of the defenders will win at once and persevere with spades. Either way, you can hold him to eight tricks: two spades, three hearts and three tricks in the minor he attacks first.

If dummy had held ♠A-K, and you had ♠Q-x-x-x-x then you would hardly have paused for a moment before winning with the ♥A and returning a spade.

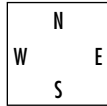
# Excess Baggage



Lead:  $\heartsuit$ J

$\spadesuit$  K 10  
 $\heartsuit$  K 9 7 6 5 2  
 $\diamondsuit$  J 10  
 $\clubsuit$  J 7 5

$\spadesuit$  A 6 3  
 $\heartsuit$  Q J 8 3  
 $\diamondsuit$  K 6 4  
 $\clubsuit$  K Q 8



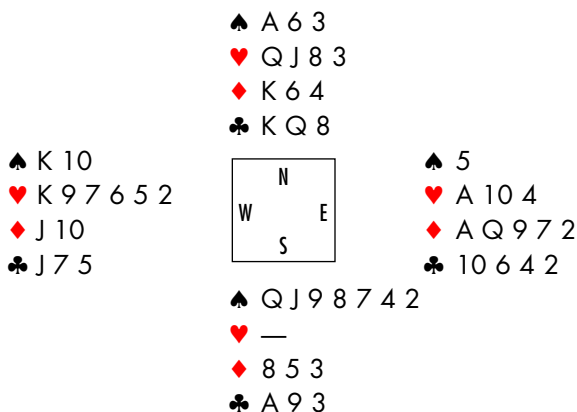
*Dealer East*  
*Both vul.*

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	3NT	pass	3 $\spadesuit$
all pass		pass	4 $\spadesuit$

North may have bid 3NT with the idea of protecting his  $\diamondsuit$ K, but South persisted with his long suit, as players tend to do. To bid 3NT, North should have either a source of tricks of his own or sufficient support for spades to expect the suit to run.

You start with the  $\diamondsuit$ J; this choice turns out well as it holds the trick. You continue with the  $\diamondsuit$ 10; your partner overtakes with the  $\diamondsuit$ Q and lays down the  $\diamondsuit$ A, declarer still following suit.

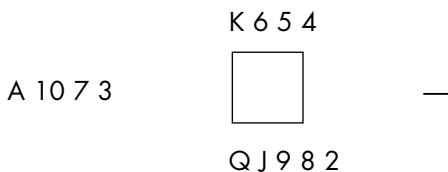
What should you play on the third round of diamonds?



Your lead of the jack of diamonds holds the first trick. When you continue with the ten, partner overtakes with the queen and cashes the ace.

You must not sit back thinking: ‘If partner has an ace, he’ll cash it and I may make a spade trick as well.’ You can be certain that a fourth diamond will establish the setting trick. Don’t give partner any scope to do the wrong thing. Discard the king of hearts on the third diamond. After learned thought he will lead a fourth diamond and you will be able to relax. If declarer ruffs high, look the other way; otherwise, insert the ♠10 to force dummy’s ace.

If a defender leads a suit of which the other three players are void, other trump layouts can be vulnerable to attack:



Here West threatens to ruff with the seven and declarer is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

**ALL BRIDGE PLAYERS**, if they are honest, have to admit that defense is the weakest part of their game. Now help is at hand. This superb collection of problems is designed to teach players how to think along the right lines and thus defeat contracts that might otherwise be made. Most of the hands are quite difficult, which is as it should be: there is no easy path to success at this game. But the reader who is prepared to make a small effort will be rewarded with a real understanding of what defense is all about.

**TERENCE REESE**, who died in 1996, held center stage in the bridge world as a player for more than forty years. He is also generally regarded as the greatest bridge writer of his generation, and many of his books are landmarks in the development and understanding of the game.



**JULIAN POTTAGE** is known as one of the world's best creators of bridge problems, and his *Play or Defend?* was the winner of the 2004 IBPA Book of the Year award. He lives near Basingstoke, England.



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