

## VIC'S TIPS

*Buy Baloney Bill*

### It's OK to get defensive!

So, on average, what percentage of hands do you declare and personally play? \_\_\_\_\_ %

On average, what percentage of hands do you and partner defend? \_\_\_\_\_ %

Hmmm, so what's the best way to improve partnership performance when playing duplicate bridge?

Let's talk about defensive skills then. Frequently. Again and again. How about today? Yes \_\_\_\_\_

What, likely, is the most important defensive play in bridge (in Baloney Bill's opinion)? \_\_\_\_\_

Assume that opponent's have reached a 3S contract, unopposed during the bidding: 1S, 2H, 3H, 3S.  
Below are several examples of hands (S, H, D & C, top to bottom). Best opening leads (circle, please)?

7 6 3	7 6 3	7 6 3	9 7	9 7	7 6 3	7 6 3
K 10 6 3	J 10	J 10	J 9 7 5 3	K 2	J 10	J 10
Q J 10	9 7 5 2	9 7 5 2	Q 10 7 3	J 9 8 5 3	8	2
A 3 2	K 10 5 4	A K 5 4	A 2	Q 9 6 3	A Q 10 8 6 4 2	A J 9 8 5 3 2

I've left some space below for you to write some notes.

### Attitude signals

During the play of the hand against the 3S contract, you finally take a trick when declarer loses a club finesse to your club queen. You lead your Ace of diamonds, and partner follows with the 9. Should you lead another diamond, or try a different suit?

	Dummy	
	8 5 4	
You		Partner
A J 6 3		? 9 ?

### Discard signals

Declarer leads spades three times, and on the third lead partner has no more so must find a suitable discard. You and partner play "Laventhal" discards. Partner tosses the 9 of hearts. What does partner want you to lead, if you can ever take a trick? Partner has informed you that she does not like hearts, but likes the "higher ranked" of the remaining suits (clubs and diamonds, since spades are being led and partner doesn't like hearts). Which remaining suit is higher ranked? \_\_\_\_\_

Several other discard systems exist, but why not try *Laventhal* and see if you understand/like it? And get ready to learn about suit preference signals the next time we discuss defensive.