

TRUST YOUR PARTNER AND USE LOGIC by Maritha Pottenger

We sometimes forget, when playing bridge, that partner is on our team. So, when your partner does something that annoys you, rather than becoming irritated (which will affect your own play detrimentally), try to figure out what she was thinking. Here are some possibilities.

Why didn't partner lead my suit!?

The most common reasons for partner to not have led a suit you bid are:

- 1) She had a "stand-out" lead in another suit, e.g., Ace from AKx(x) or King from KQx(x), etc.
- 2) She led a singleton in another suit, hoping to get you in with your suit in order to get a ruff.
- 3) She has the Ace in your suit, but does not have the King, so did not want to lead the suit until finding out where the King is. ("Aces are made to kill Kings and Queens.")
- 4) The auction "screamed" for a particular lead, e.g., Declarer bid two suits. Dummy took a preference to one suit and your partner is well upholstered in the other suit. She is leading trumps to cut down on ruffs in Dummy.
- 5) She doesn't have any cards in your suit.
- 6) Against no trump, she felt leading her suit had a better shot of setting the contract. She is probably very short in your suit.

Why didn't partner give me my ruff?

The most common reasons for partner to not have given you your ruff are:

- 1) She knows that Declarer is also out of the suit you are ruffing, and Declarer is sitting behind you so will be able to over-ruff you.
- 2) She has natural tricks in the suit in which you want a ruff, so you would be ruffing her winners. She wants you to use your trumps for better things.
- 3) She wants to set up a cross-ruff on Declarer, so she is leading HER singleton, so that when she takes the first trump trick (having Ace of trumps), she can give you a ruff AND you can give her a ruff.
- 4) She feels that forcing Declarer to ruff in the long trump hand (and eventually lose control) will be a more effective defense than giving you an immediate ruff.
- 5) She has "higher priorities," e.g., needs to knock out a key entry from Dummy right away; needs to cut communication between Declarer and Dummy in a particular suit, etc.

Why didn't partner lead the unbid suit (when opponents have bid 3 suits)? The most common reasons are:

- 1) She had a "standout" lead in one of the suits bid by the opponents, e.g., A from AKxx, etc..
- 2) She is leading a singleton (if they are in a suit contract), hoping for a ruff.
- 3) She has the Ace, but not the King in the unbid suit and is hoping you will be able to lead it to her.
- 4) If they are in no trump, she has a good 4 or 5 cards in a suit that one of the opponents has bid, and feels that has a better shot at producing tricks than the unbid suit would

Why did partner lead trumps (in an auction that does not particularly demand a trump lead)? The most common reason is that partner is trying to avoid finessing herself in the other three suits. Expect her to have scattered honors in the other three suits.

Why did partner NOT lead trump in an auction that screams for a trump lead, e.g., Declarer bids two suits and Dummy strongly prefers the second suit? The most common answer is that partner has a vulnerable trump holding, e.g., Kx or Qxx.

Trust your partner and try to figure out her logic!