

PLAY OF THE HAND

LESSON 7-B

Managing The Trump Suit - When playing in a suit contract, Declarer's most important task is the management of the trump suit. The trump cards are all powerful and give both the defenders and the declarer control of the opponent's long suits. The trump suit, in many respects, is like any other suit; i.e., winners can be developed through promotion, length or finessing. As declarer, if you decide to draw all of the missing trumps, how would you proceed with each of the following trump suits (With High Cards, Promotion, Length, Finesse), how many times would you have to draw trumps so as to take out all of the missing cards assuming an expected division of those outstanding, and how many losers would you anticipate?

EXERCISE 1

DUMMY:	KQ6	J985	A95	QJ10	K963
DECLARER:	AJ9542	Q1074	87642	A9876	A752
METHOD:	<u>High Cards</u>	<u>Promotion</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Finesse</u>	<u>Length</u>
# LOSERS:	0	2	2	0	1
# ROUNDS:	3 (3-1)	3 (3-2)	3 (3-2)	3 (3-2)	3 (3-2)

Conclusion: When drawing trumps, winners can be established through promotion, length and the finesse. Keep track of the trumps, and draw only enough rounds to eliminate any outstanding pieces.

1. **Looking At Quick Losers And Slow Losers:** - Before deciding whether or not to draw trumps immediately, declarer must first determine how many quick losers and how many slow losers are present. Remember, a **quick loser** is one that the opponents can take immediately as soon as they secure the lead, and a **slow loser** is one they cannot take unless and until they give the lead back to you. In the following holdings, how many quick and slow losers would declarer have in a final contract of 4-Spades?

EXERCISE 2

	<u>DUMMY</u>		<u>DUMMY</u>		<u>DUMMY</u>
	AQ86		Q1082		J964
	A95		AK3		A84
	742		J8		AQ3
	K54		KQJ5		Q74
	<u>DECLARER</u>		<u>DECLARER</u>		<u>DECLARER</u>
	KJ754		KJ976		Q10873
	1083		984		762
	Q		Q10		K5
	AQJ2		A82		AK8
<u>Quick Losers:</u>	1		3		2
<u>Slow Losers:</u>	2		1		2

2. **Drawing Trumps Immediately - Yes or No:** Deciding whether or not to draw trumps immediately, involves three considerations:

- a. a. Whether or not trumps are needed for some other purposes. Example: If declarer is planning to trump losers in dummy, he/she cannot afford to leave fewer trumps in dummy than is required to ruff losers.
- b. b. Whether or not declarer must give up the lead to the opponents while drawing trump.
- c. c. Whether too many quick losers exist such that the lead cannot afford to be relinquished until the number of quick losers is first reduced.

EXERCISE 3

In the following examples, the Q-Hearts has been led against your final contract of 4-Spades. In each case, will declarer have to lose the lead in order to draw trumps, should drawing trumps be the first priority, if not, why?

	<u>DUMMY</u>	<u>DUMMY</u>	<u>DUMMY</u>
	AQ86	Q1082	J964
	A95	AK3	A84
	742	J8	AQ3
	K54	KQJ5	Q74
	<u>DECLARER</u>	<u>DECLARER</u>	<u>DECLARER</u>
	KJ754	KJ976	Q10873
	1083	984	762
	Q	Q10	K5
	AQJ2	A82	AK8
<u>Draw Trumps?:</u>	Yes	Yes	No
<u>Reason:</u>	Only 3 Losers	One Loser is Slow	Quick Losers

Conclusion: It is difficult to draw hard and fast rules as to when to draw trumps, and in some minor cases, even if to draw them at all. One must plan carefully. Are trumps needed for more pressing purposes? Must the lead be forfeited if trumps were to be drawn immediately, and if so, are too many quick losers present to be able to give up the lead?

3. **Side Suit Establishment:** In a No Trump contract, in order to establish a particular suit, one sometimes needs to give up a trick or two to the opponents in that suit depending upon the number of outstanding cards held by the defenders and the distribution of same. In a suit contract, however, such a side suit can be established without losing the lead simply by utilizing the trump suit. In the following examples, how would you expect the missing cards to be divided in the side suits shown, and how many trumps would declarer need to establish the suit assuming the missing cards were to be divided as expected?

EXERCISE 4

<u>DUMMY:</u>	AK864	AK964	—	A97632	AK9842	AQ742
<u>DECLARER:</u>	32	2		5	53	K5
<u>DIVISION:</u>	4-2	4-3		4-2	3-2	4-2
<u>TRUMPS REQUIRED:</u>	2	2		3	1	1

Conclusion: Trump cards work well to establish a side suit thereby establishing winners without giving up the lead to the opponents.

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Combining Techniques: - All the techniques, previously discussed, can be combined in various ways, depending upon the circumstances. Many of these techniques work synergistically in powerful combination. In the following suit holdings, assuming sufficient entries between the two hands, how would you play the following (**P**romotion, **F**inesse, or **L**ength), and how many tricks would you expect if the missing high cards lie favorably and the suit divides as expected?

EXERCISE 1

DUMMY:	QJ1052	762	—	KQ862	AQ932	Q1032
DECLARER:	843	AQJ83		75	6	K654
METHOD:	P & L	F & L		F(P) & L	F & L	P & F & L
# TRICKS:	3	5		(2) 3 (4)	3	3

Conclusion: Often a suit requires the use of a combination of techniques in order to develop the maximum number of winning tricks.

1. **Choosing A Technique:** - Most technique application for winning tricks requires a combination of alternatives in order to give declarer the maximum number chance of success resulting in the maximum number of winning tricks. What is the maximum number of possible tricks, and via which combination of techniques, for the following examples?

EXAMPLE 2

DUMMY:	AJ63	A842	—	AKJ3	842	K9532
DECLARER:	K942	KJ753		862	KQ6	874
METHOD:	Finesse	A/K Drop		Finesse	Finesse	Finesse
	"Eight Ever"	"Nine Never"				
MAX.# TRICKS	4	5		4	2	3

Conclusion: The best way to play a particular suit may depend upon such things as how many tricks are needed to guarantee the contract. Inferences from the bidding are oft times helpful, but usually declarer desires the maximum number of tricks. A useful guideline when you are missing the Queen of a suit is: "Eight (or Less) Ever, Nine Never". When no other information is available, this is a good axiom to follow.

2. **Combining Alternatives:** When playing two or more suits in order to develop tricks, one must often be careful to play the suits in the proper sequence making maximum use and careful conservation of entries. If the first plan does not work, a back-up alternative should be pre-planned. On the following hands, assuming a 3NT contract, the lead of a Jack of Hearts, and no other available information; which suit, Clubs or Diamonds, should be played first, and why?

EXERCISE 3

DUMMY 742 7642 KQ KJ72 DECLARER A863 A83 A985 AQ <u>CLUBS</u>	DUMMY K4 752 KQ4 J10832 DECLARER A862 AK8 862 KQ5 <u>CLUBS</u>	DUMMY KQ8 73 962 AQ842 DECLARER A42 A2 AKQ5 7653 <u>DIAMONDS</u>
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Conclusion: When putting your **declarer play** plan into action, try and combine the best possibilities in the various suits in order to give you the maximum opportunity to make the contract, and within that context, the most number of tricks. Never loose sight of the objective! It is the contract and any inherent entry problems which might be present. The best suit to play *first* may not always be the one that looks the most attractive.

3. 3. **Choosing An Alternative:** When more than one suit can provide the number of tricks necessary, you will oft times not be able to try everything. One must choose the plan which has the greatest possibility for success. Don't go after a suit because it looks easy, if it does not provide you with the number of necessary tricks for your stated contract. If you need a favorable lie of the cards, try to pick the suit with the greatest odds. Remember, if you need a suit to divide, an odd number of cards tends to divide evenly, and an even number, oddly. If your choice is between any finesse in one suit (50% chance of success), and a 3-3 division in another suit, choose the finesse. A 4-2 division is more likely than a 3-3, and so the chances of any 3-3 split occurring is less than 50%. Finally, if the opponents force you into a position where there is only one suit which will give you the tricks you will need, go for it. Go with your only alternative. In the following, finding yourself in a 3NT contract, and a Queen of Spade opening lead, which suit, and why, should you attack?

EXERCISE 4

DUMMY K82 963 AQJ7 QJ4 DECLARER A93 AKQ 985 K1095 <u>CLUBS</u>	DUMMY 642 QJ3 KQJ Q1053 DECLARER AK3 AK82 862 KJ8 <u>CLUBS</u>	DUMMY 73 Q103 AKQ3 J1043 DECLARER A2 AKJ7 642 KQ82 <u>DIAMONDS</u>
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Conclusion: Although there seems to be much to consider, knowing what you are trying to accomplish solves most of the problems. **EVEN IF YOU DO NOT MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION, AFTER MAKING A PLAN, YOU ARE ALWAYS IN A POSITION TO LEARN THE NEXT TIME. ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU NEVER PLAN OUT THE PLAY OF THE HAND, BUT MERELY PLAY THE FIRST CARD THAT LOOKS ATTRACTIVE, YOU MAY PLAY FOR YEARS AND NEVER IMPROVE.**

DEFENSIVE PLAY OF THE HAND

LESSON 9-B

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1. 1. **The Defensive Hold-Up:** Declarer is not the only player who has the ability to use the hold-up play in order to prevent the opponents from enjoying otherwise established tricks. The defenders can also use this technique in an attempt to strand declarer's suit. Suppose you are defending against a No Trump contract and there are no other entries into dummy other than the suit shown in the following example:

	NORTH (DUMMY)	
	QJ10875	
WEST		EAST
4		A93
	SOUTH (DECLARER)	
	K62	

Declarer plays the K, partner plays the 4. It is obvious that declarer is attempting to establish the suit. East should **duck**. South then continues with the 6, partner discards and dummy plays the Queen. What should East do at trick 2?

Conclusion: When declarer is attempting to establish a long suit in No Trump, defenders should hold-up as long as it takes to strand the suit. A count of the suit in question can be assisted by the partner of the defender deciding how long to hold-up by means of playing **high-low** from an **even** number of a holding in the suit, and **low-high** from an **odd** number. Even in circumstances where declarer has other outside entries, or even in the case of suit contracts, it still may be advantageous to hold-up until declarer be forced to use up an additional entry in order to continue running the suit.

In the following example, assuming declarer has no outside entries in a No Trump contract, when should you win the Ace, and how many times should you as defender hold-up?

EXERCISE 1

	<u>DUMMY</u>	
	KQJ109	
<u>YOU</u>		
A752		

You can see nine (9) cards between yourself and the Dummy. If partner has only one card, he/she will show out on the second round of the suit; declarer then, has three and you should win the third round holding up for two rounds. If partner follows suit on the second trick, declarer has only two of the suit and You can take the second trick with your Ace.

2. **Defender's Plan:** We will discuss in future lessons some specific guidelines for defender play such as: Opening Leads against No Trump and Suit Contracts, Third-hand and Second-hand play, Defensive signals, Developing Defensive Tricks, and How to Interfere with Declarer. In general, however, the Defender's must first learn to establish a Plan for the Defense. They must each consider how many tricks do we need to defeat the contract, How many do we already have, from whence can we establish more, and how do we put it all together?

EXERCISE 2

In the following hand, you are defending a contract of 4H and your partner leads the Queen of Spades. Declarer wins the trick with the Ace of Spades, and draws two rounds of trumps with the Ace and King. Declarer then finesses for the King of Diamonds and loses to your King. How many tricks do you have, how many more do you need to defeat the contract, where might they be gotten, and what do you lead after winning the Diamond King to make it happen?

	<u>DUMMY</u>	
	K5	
	Q1073	
	AQJ10	
	Q73	
QS		<u>YOU</u>
		9643
		86
		K84
		KJ6 <u>2</u>

Notice: Defender **must** not wait to switch to the Clubs, since declarer can throw off Club losers on the now-established Diamond suit. Defender must play the Clubs immediately.

Conclusion: By looking at the overall picture, one can often see how a specific contract might be defeated. Make a plan and try to imagine what your partner might need to have for your side to defeat the contract. Then play the cards as if they existed in that way.