

PLAY OF THE HAND

MAKING A PLAN - The objective for declarer play in a Suit Contract is centered around focusing upon potential losing tricks and their elimination, and around potential winning tricks in a No Trump contract and their possible supplementation. Before a declarer initiates his/her declarer play, however, it is essential to organize the play of the hand. Four basic steps are indicated and necessary to accomplish these goals:

Pause To Consider The Objectives - What is the contract, who are my opponents, what card was led and what is its significance to me and to my opponents and need I play conservatively or aggressively as a result of the lead. What is the number of acceptable winners or losers in order to fulfill the contract.

Look At The Projected Winners Or Losers - Dependent upon either a No Trump or suit contract respectively.

(A) **In a No Trump Contract**, playing techniques include:

- (1) Promotion of high cards (Developing a sure trick when holding a suited KQ)
- (2) Suit establishment (Developing tricks through length)
- (3) Finessing (Attempting to develop a second trick when holding a tenace)

(B) **In a Suit Contract** all of the above apply plus:

- (1) Trumping Losers
- (2) Discarding losers on extra winners

Analyze The Alternatives - Need you play conservatively or aggressively based upon such variables as; the skill of the opponents, the quality of your game so far that event, what you believe the rest of the field is likely to have been faced as to their suspected contract and its probability of success.

Now Put It All Together - Using the above information along with factors such as being aware of entries, avoiding the dangerous opponent, using the hold-up-play, inferences and probable placement of missing high cards, trump pieces and suit distribution all deduced from previous bidding or lack of same

Exercise 1: Counting Objective of Winners/Losers

3C (4 Losers) 6NT (12 Winners) 4S (3 Losers) 1NT (7 Winners) 2D (5 Losers)

Exercise 2: Counting Sure Winners (Sure Tricks = ones capable of being taken without giving up the lead to the opponents.

N - AKQ (3) AK (2) JX (5) KQX (0) AXXXX (5) AKQ (3) AXXX (2)
S - XXX QX AKQ10X JXX KQXXX XX KXX

Conclusion: Winners are counted by looking at the combined holding in each suit. A winner is a card that will take a trick without giving up the lead to the opponents. The maximum number of winners one can count is the number of cards in the longer hand. If one has enough cards in the suit such that the opponents will have none left after your top cards are played, you do not need all the honors in order to run the suit.

Exercise 3: Counting Losers - defined as the number of tricks the opponents are likely to take.

N (Dummy)	KQ	KQ	QJ10	XXXXX	AK	XXX	KJ10
S (Declarer)	AXX (2/0)	XX (2/1)	XX (2/2)	AK (0)	XXXXX (5/3)	AQJ (1/1)	XXX (3/2)

There are two basic types of losers; **quick losers, and slow losers.** Quick losers are those that the opponents can take immediately if they have the lead. Slow losers are those which the opponents can never take immediately because they must first give one the lead back first.

Exercise 4: Counting both quick and slow losers:

DUMMY	KQJX	J1098	XXXX	AX	KXX	QX
DECLARER	XX (1 Quick)	XXXX (3 Quick)	AX (1 Slow)	XXXX (3 Slow)	XX (2 Quick)	XXX (1Q,1S)

If the cards in the dummy and declarer's hand are unevenly divided, the order in which the cards are played; the first trick(s) should be won by the high card(s) from the short side.

Exercise 5: Which high card would you win the first trick with in each following combination:

DUMMY	AQJ10X	AX	AJX	QX	KQX
DECLARER	KX (King)	KQX (Ace)	KQXX (Ace/Jack)	AKJX (Queen)	AJX (Any)

LESSON 2 - B

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRICKS - There are numerous ways of developing tricks that would otherwise not be there as quick winners. These methods include but are not limited to the following:

A. A. THE PROMOTION OF HIGH CARDS - Giving up of one's high card(s), especially when a sequence of high cards is present, is one of the most certain methods of developing additional tricks. One must consider the losing of such a promotional trick to the opponents as early as is possible in the play of the cards before controls are expended in other outside suits.

Exercise 1: How many times would you have to give up the lead in order to promote otherwise unavailable tricks, and how many winners would be produced in the following holdings?

DUMMY:	KQJ10	J1098	Q10X	KX	JXX
DECLARER:	XXXX	XXXX	JXX	QX	109X
	1-3	3-1	2-1	1-1	0

Notice that in the above examples, the more high cards you have in the suit, the more potential the suit has for the development of tricks - even though the opponents have one or two higher cards. Patience is required and one must not be afraid of losing the lead to the opponents if, in the end, tricks are promoted.

Exercise 2: Assuming an outside entry in another suit in dummy, how many tricks would you expect to develop through promotion, and which card would you play first in the following suit combinations?

DUMMY:	KJ109X	QJX	KQ10X	J10X	Q1098X
DECLARER:	QX	KX	JX	QX	KJ
	4-Q	2-K	3-J	1-Q	4-K

Notice that by starting with the high card from the short side when promoting winners, you lessen the chance you will become stranded wondering how to return to the promoted winners across the table.

B. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRICKS THROUGH LENGTH - One can statistically conclude (in all but the most unusual circumstance) that the division of missing cards within any suit amongst the opponents is as follows:

(1) If there are an even number of cards outstanding in a suit (2, 4, 6) - then the cards tend to be unevenly divided. For example, if there are six cards held by the opposition, they would probably be divided 4-2 rather than 3-3

(2) If there are an odd number of cards outstanding in a suit (3, 5, 7) - then the cards tend to be divided as evenly as possible. For example, if there are five cards held by the opposition, they would likely be divided 3-2 rather than 4-1.

Exercise 1: If the opponents hold the number of cards shown below, how would you likely find the Cards distributed between the two opponent's hands?

3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2-1	3-1	3-2	4-2	4-3	5-3	5-4

Exercise 2: When deciding how many tricks you can expect to develop from a long suit holding, it helps to estimate how the opponents holding is likely to be divided. In the following examples, how many tricks would you get if the suit were to be divided as favorably as possible?

DUMMY:	AKXX	AXXX	AXXXX	KXXXXX	AKXXX
DECLARER:	XXXX	KQX	KXX	AX	XXXX
	3	3	4	5	4

Exercise 3: Giving of a trick to the opponents which you otherwise could have won is called

DUCKING.

The ducking of a trick(s) can be very useful when trying to establish a long suit. Assuming there are no outside high card entries in the dummy other than the ones in the suit shown, how would you play the following holdings? How would you expect the opponent's cards to be divided, how many tricks would you expect to take, and how many times should you duck in order not to strand the established winners?

DUMMY:	AKXXX	AXXXX	AKXXXX	AXXXX	AXXX
DECLARER:	XXX	KXX	XX	XXX	KXX
	3-2, 4	3-2, 4	3-2, 5	3-2, 3	4-2, 2
	Duck Once	Duck Once	Duck Once	Duck Twice	- 0 -

When you have a limited number of winners in the dummy, it is oft times necessary to take your losses early in a suit so that you have enough cards left in declarer's hand to enable you to get to the winners you worked so hard to establish.

In conclusion, developing long suits, in order to promote winning tricks, works in no trump and in trump contracts. In a No Trump contract, you are attempting to develop extra winners. In suit contracts, however, you are trying to eliminate extra losers. Often all that is required is a normal division of the missing cards and the ability of declarer to play the cards in the proper sequence in order to take advantage of the distribution of the missing cards held by the opponents.