

Etobicoke Bridge Centre



Declarer Play - Lessons



(Last revised Apr 21/2014)

Location: Legion Branch 3 (150 8th St.)

Starts: Monday April 21, 2014 12:30 – 2:45 (3:00 usually)

Duration: 5 lessons, last class June 2

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Notes



General Guidelines

- Before you play from dummy at trick one, make a plan
- In a suit contract
 - Count your losers. If you have say, one too many, you must come up with a way to eliminate one.
 - **Master** hand is the hand with the longer trumps. Account for each card in the master hand; allowable losers plus how all other cards will be winners.
 - Draw trump unless you have a reason not to (which you often do)
- In NoTrump
 - Count your winners. If you don't have enough, figure out your options to develop the number needed to make your contract.
 - Usually you will first develop winners, typically in longer suits
 - Keep high cards in short suits for communication between two hands
 - Also, if you cash these before you have developed enough winners, you are setting up tricks in opponents' hands
 - Visualize the order in which you cash your tricks, with some thought given to not getting any suits blocked
 - Ie, AK opposite QJxx ; cannot cash 4 tricks; need an outside entry after unblocking(playing) AK.

How to develop tricks

- Finessing – review
 - Weakness to strength
 - AQ xx
 - Kx xx
 - KQx xxx
 - If high cards on both sides, trap missing card
 - QJ10 Axx
 - Choice of which way to finesse
 - A10xx KJxx
- Promotion- review
 - KQJ xxx will promote ____ winners
 - QJ10 xxx will promote ____ winners
 - Kx QJx will promote ____ winners

(with equivalent high cards on both sides, play the high card from the short side first)

- Ruffing losers – review (suit contract only, of course)
 - Trump: xxx AKxxx
 - Sidesuit: x Axx{ }

Play

Length – establishing long cards

Card Combination Exercises

- You can make X tricks if the opps cards are divided Y:Z

1. AKxxx	xx	3:3	___	4:2	___
2. KQJxx	xx	3:3	___		
3. AKQx	xxx	3:3	___	4:2	___
4. QJ109x	xx	3:3	___	4:2	___
5. Axxxx	xxx	3:2	___		
6. Axxx	xxxx	3:2	___	4:1	___

- Assume even split and missing honour cards are all best-placed for success. Unlimited entries assumed. How many tricks can you make?

1. AKJxx	xx	_____
2. QJ10xx	xx	_____
3. Axxxx	Qxx	_____
4. KQxx	xxx	_____
5. AQJxx	xx	_____
6. AJ10xx	Kx	_____
7. AQ10x	xxx	_____
8. KJxx	xxx	_____
9. Kxxx	xxxx	_____
10. Axxxx	Qx	_____

Card Combinations

Note: entries back and forth are unlimited, but play suits as efficiently as possible

West	East	(Tricks Needed)	Explain how to play
1. Axxx	Qxx		low towards the Q, hoping N has K_____
2. KJx	xx		_____
3. AQ10xx	J9x		_____
4. AQxxx	Jxx		_____
5. AJxx	K10xx		_____
6. AJxx	Kxxxx		_____
7. Axxxx	Kx		_____
8. AQxxx	xx		_____
9. AQ10x	xxx		_____
10. AJ10xx	xxx		_____
11. AJ9xx	xxx		_____
12. AKJ9	xx	(4)	_____
13. AKJ9	xx	(3)	_____
14. AKJxxx	xx	(6)	_____
15. AKxx	Jxx		_____
16. KQ10x	A9xxx		_____
17. AQxx	Jxxx		_____
18. AK109	xxx	(4)	_____
19. A109	Qxx		_____
20. KQ10	xxx		_____
21. Axxxx	J109		_____
22. Kxxx	Q10xx		_____
23. Kxxx	Qxxx		_____
24. J10xx	Axxx		_____
25. KQ98x	A765		_____

○ Play Hand:

- Playing Suit contracts

Draw Trump unless you have a reason not to. Reasons not to, include ...

- Quick discard of a loser required
- Need to trump losers in dummy first
- Trump cards are needed as entries

The following are ways for declarer to gain winners or avoid losers in a suit contract

Discarding Losers

- Sometimes you can discard a loser **after** pulling trump {Seagram Pr 5 – 6D by West}
- Sometimes you cannot afford to draw trump, as you must discard a loser before giving up the lead {Seagram Pr. 3 – 4S by South}
- Even with a 3rd round loser, you may have to delay drawing trump {Seagram Pr. 7 – 4S by North}
- Combining your odds {Seagram Pr. 9 – 4S by East}

Ruffing Losers

- With ruffing needed in dummy, you may be able to pull all the opp trump, a few of them, or none at all.
- Trump high in dummy when you can afford to {Seagram Pr. 12 – 4S by South}
- You may need to lose a trick before you can ruff a loser {Seagram Pr. 13 – 4H by South}
- Note: Ruffing in long trump hand does not add tricks, only in short trump hand. Reasons to ruff in the long hand are for an entry or to stop the opponent from winning a trick in a suit they have led
- When you have a shortness in both hands, consider not drawing trump and making them separately by ruffing back and forth; this is called a “cross-ruff” hand
 - Cash side winners early, before begin crossruff. This avoids them getting trumped later, since you are not pulling the opponent’s trumps {“Cross-ruff” – 4S by South}

Finessing: 3 Sample Hands

- Hand: Playing Axx opposite Qxx Seagram Pr 27
- Hand: Playing xxx opp AJ10 Seagram Pr 28
- Hand: Playing xxx opp AQ10x Seagram Pr 30

Length: 4 Sample Hands

- Hand: AKxxx opp xx, trump entry only Seagram Pr 31
- Hand: Kxxxx opp Qx, trumps for entries Seagram Pr 33
- Hand: AKx 10xxx play for 3-3 Seagram Pr 34
- Hand: Duck a trick to maintain commun. Seagram 40

Managing the trump suit

- As we mentioned above, draw trumps unless you have a reason not to. Because you should have 8 or more of them, drawing trumps should normally be a reasonable task. Count the opponent's trumps until they are all out of them. Once the opponent's trumps are gone, stop pulling trump and now use your trumps for ruffs and to control the hand.
- Do not shy away from weak trump suits, losing one or two trump tricks might be just fine.
 - A9753 w 864
 - If the opps trumps are divided 3:2, you will lose ___ trump tricks. Best way to play this is to duck one round, play Ace to win the 2nd round, and perhaps leave the boss trump in opponent's hand

{note: paragraph deleted}

- Also; leave last single top trump out unless there is no reason to draw it. This may allow you to keep better control of the hand or gain extra ruffing tricks. If the defender gets in, he will usually be right to cash this card. DeclPlay #9
 - The exception is when you have a long running suit with no extra entry and you don't need the aggravation of a defender trumping in killing the rest of the suit.

- Playing NT contracts
 - Count your quick (immediate or top) winners
 - If not enough, determine what suits offer possibilities for additional tricks via promotion, finessing or length, and how.
 - ie, with xxx opposite KQx, will lead twice towards honours, making two tricks if ace onside, 1 otherwise.
 - Usually play a long suit to develop tricks, avoid high-card-only suits, use them for communication and to avoid setting up opponent's winners in those suits {DeclPlay#2} {}
 - Developing Long suits
 - Often you will have to establish a long suit that is not blessed with lots of honours. {} Refer to our charts earlier for how to play such suits {DeclPlay#13}
 - Consider the opening lead.
 - Is it 4th best of a long suit? (usually). Top of a sequence? Short suit?
 - Is the suit led a significant threat to your contract?
 - Should you duck, ie, with Axx, to exhaust one opponents holdings in that suit
 - It may be right to duck even with 2 stoppers if you have to lose the lead twice
 - Dangerous Hand: Often allowing one opponent to get the lead will spell doom, so decisions need to be made to keep that opponent (dangerous hand) from getting the lead. Select suits where, if you have to lose a trick, it will be to the safe opponent : the one who has none of their led suit left. for example {DeclPlay # 11}
 - There are several situations when you should not duck
 - You have two stoppers, ie AQ, and only need to give up lead once
 - You have a holding that is two tricks by taking the first trick
 - x led, you have Jx opposite A10x. duck in dummy, then either win the 10, or beat K/Q with A, since this gives you two tricks
 - If you duck, opponents can switch to another suit that will beat your contract. {Seagram Pr 47}
 - Consider what hand you will wish to lead from and when.
 - You need to count cards played by opponents as you develop long suits, so you know when your long cards are high.
 - What suits to develop first ? Usually the longest but not always.
 - When you have to develop tricks in two suits (versus just one), usually attack the better suit first.
 - Maintaining communication w winners,
 - Consider if any high cards need unblocking
 - ie cashing tricks in the right order (vs getting blocked)
 - {DeclPlay # 18}

- Combining your odds
 - Any time you can increase the odds of success, it sure makes sense. Before committing to a guess in one suit, perhaps you can safely try another suit (or suits) first. DeclPlay #16

- Loser-on-Loser: This is where you ultimately get rid of two losers by losing one trick, hence you gain.
 - Consider S KQ opp void
H xxx opp Axx
Lead the K and instead of ruffing it, pitch a losing heart. Now on the good Q of spades, pitch the other losing heart DeclPlay #10 R:

- Listening to the Bidding
 - When the opponents have bid (or not bid), one can often use this information to assist your declarer play. An opponent who opens the bidding will typically have 12 or more HCPs. If his partner passes this opening bid, he has less than 6 pts, etc, etc. When you have to guess which way to finesse a queen, consider which opponent showed values

- Analyzing the opening lead
 - ie, missing AK of side suit, leader does not have them both
 - lead of a 2 vs NT shows 4 of them
 - high card usually top of a sequence

- Teacher's favourite card
 - Bridge Bites <http://www.acbl.org/learn/bites/OLBtopicindex.htm>
 - Hand #3

Any questions email etobicokebridge@gmail.com

