

# The First Workshop Series:

## Suit Declarer Play

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Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/Workshops/2013.WS-Series1-SuitDeclarerPlay.pdf>

### Types of Contracts:

1. Suit
2. Notrump

### 1. Suit Contracts:

#### A. The Steps:

1. Look at the **Board**
  - Who is vulnerable?
2. Look at the **Bidding**
  - Who opened, overcalled, pre-empted, doubled etc.
  - It should be noted that doubles and Notrump openings or overcalls are very descriptive bids. Are they descriptive when you bid them?
  - First and second seat pre-empts pretty much describe one's hand very well as well. Does a partner's pre-empt in your shortness encourage you to stay out of the bidding or to get in to a high-level misfit?
3. Look at the **Opening Lead**
  - Shortness-singleton or doubleton
  - BOSTON (bottom of something, top of nothing)
    - Top of Nothing (I prefer 2nd highest from nothing)
    - Little from an Honour (something)
4. Look at what **RHO leads** at his first chance to lead
5. **Plan** before playing first card from dummy
  - Dummy Comes down
    - Is dummy what was expected?
    - Transportation (Communication)
    - Timing
  - Are you in the correct contract?
    - Can you beat the contract most will be in?

- Risks become quite acceptable to equal or better the field when in the wrong contract.
- Moysians in a major are good, game in a minor is often bad.

## 6. Before Drawing Trump

- Take all short-hand ruffs.
- Set up resting places for losers before defenders get in with a trump stopper.
- Leave trump and ruff protection when setting up suits.

## 7. Draw Trump

- Get the kids off of the street
- If there is the highest outstanding trump still out, let them ruff-in with it and don't waste two of your trumps for one. One may want to use the outstanding trump as a throw-in card (elimination and end-play).
- If there is a bad trump split:
  - As soon as you discover or suspect a bad trump split, stop drawing trump and assess the situation.
  - Set up a cross ruff
    - Set up all ruffs before opponent takes two of your trump for one of his.
  - Lose quick losers while maintaining control of the hand.
    - Use Sluff and Ruff Protection when losing the lead to stop them, from tapping you, the declarer.
  - Do not let the defender with the short trump get a ruff
  - Letting the defender with the long trump ruff is usually good especially if he gives up a natural trick by doing so. Make sure communication between defenders is cut before doing this.

## 8. Draw Trump Quickly

- When the opponents look like they will get a ruff, draw trump as fast as you can. Do not develop side suits and do not take trump finesses.
- When an opponent will over-ruff you:
  - ruff with a high trump
  - sluff a loser

## 9. Set up side suits

This is the big reason, when leading an ace, one should have the king which:

- allows one to switch when looking at the queen or length in dummy or a discouraging signal from partner.
- does not set up a side suit immediately for declarer which leading from Ace empty can do.
- tells partner if you switch that you want him to lead the first suit through declarer.

10. **Claim** when trump are drawn and side suits are set up.

State line of play even when obvious.

## B. The Number One Rule:

Ruff in the short trump hand and avoid ruffing in the long trump hand as control of the hand may be lost. The exceptions, as listed in my advanced declarer play chalk talk, are:

1. **A Huge** trump fit
2. **Safe Transportation** is desperately needed
3. **Cross Ruff**
4. **Dummy Reversal**
5. **Trump Coup**
6. **Trump Squeeze**

Typically, the defense will try to force or tap the declarer by making him ruff in the long trump hand so he loses control of the hand.

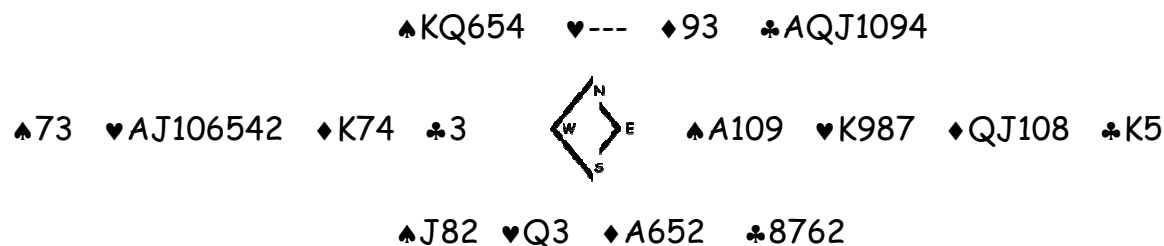
A good way to look at it:            ♠AKQJ10            ♠432

If West cashes five rounds of spades, he will get five tricks. Furthermore, if West makes spades trump and ruffs with the J and 10, he will also get five tricks, but only if spades do not split 4-1 or worse. However, if he avoids ruffing in the long trump hand with the J and 10 and instead ruffs in the short trump hand with the 4, 3 and 2, he will get eight tricks even if trump split 5-0. Therefore, one should ruff in the short trump hand whenever possible.

### Example 1. Declarer Tapped Himself

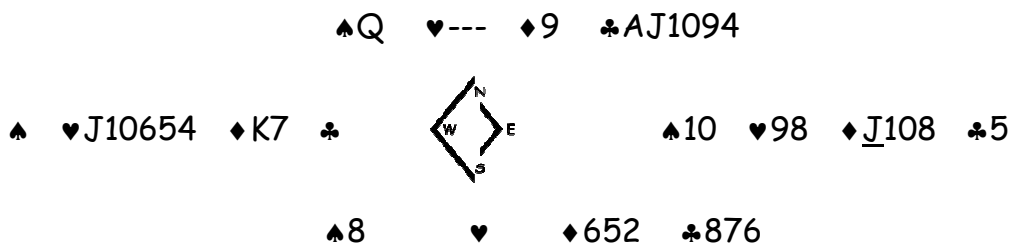
(North or West Plays)

North Dealer None Vulnerable



W	N	E	S	
	1♠	P	2♠	
P	4♠	All Pass		Opening Lead: Q♦

Declarer won the opening lead with ace of diamonds and ruffed a heart and led a spade to the jack which won. North won the next round of trump with his ace and exited a heart. Declarer ruffed and played Queen of clubs. North won the King and exited a diamond. Bye bye control of the hand.



North has the lead with the King of clubs and plays the Jack♦. South wins the king♦ and then plays a small diamond. Declarer must ruff with the Queen♠. Now North gets the ten♠ setting the contract and cashing another diamond.

Defense wins two spades, one club and two diamonds for down two.

Had declarer not initially ruffed a heart, North would have been afraid to lead a heart from his king when he can see the Q♥ in dummy. If declarer wins the opening lead with the ace of diamonds and then plays a spade to the king and ace, North exits a diamond. South wins the king and then declarer ruffs. He draws two rounds

of trump ending in dummy with the Jack and then takes the club finesse which loses. He ruffs a diamond with his last trump and claims. Declarer makes 4♠ losing a spade, a diamond and a club.

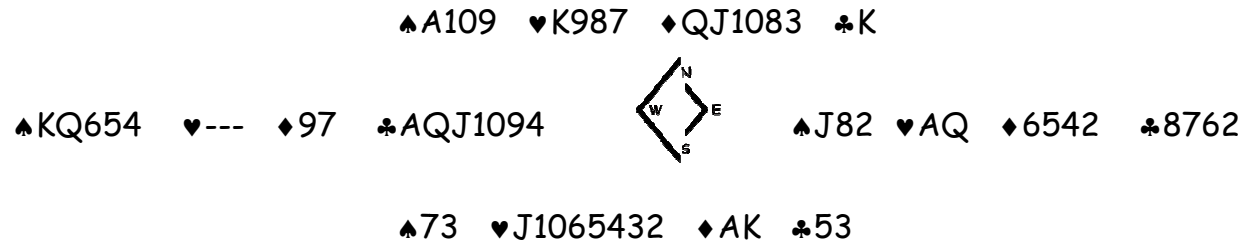
East will likely doubleton and West will show hearts. The key is for West not to ever bid 4♥, forcing the opponents to the higher ranking spade game, but if the opponents bid 4♠ then bid 5♥. A jump to 5♥ initially is not unreasonable.

One may notice that the vulnerability and having the lower ranking suit places restrictions on what you can bid with your hand.

## Example 2. The Forcing Game

(West Plays)

North Dealer Both Vulnerable



### The Number Two Rule:

The defense does not do what the declarer wants to do, and the declarer does not help the defense. They may later have beers together, but at the table they are enemies.

### C. Get the kids off the street

This means draw trump as soon as possible to prevent the opponents from getting any ruffs once you have taken care of business with the short trump hand.

### Example 3. Security of trump

(North plays)

East Dealer None Vulnerable

	♠KJ43	♥AQ4	♦KJ3	♣432				
♠82	♥J10987	♦Q982	♣109		♠765	♥52	♦765	♣AKQJ8
	♠AQ109	♥K63	♦A104	♣765				

W	N	E	S
		P	1♣
P	1♠	P	2♠
P	4♠	All Pass	

Opening Lead: Ace♣

#### Better minor Openings:

One opens with 12 or more high card points. One may pass any 12 that has King singleton, Queen (Qx) or Jack (Jx) doubleton or Jack (Jxx) tripleton.

If one can open but does not have either a balanced 15-17 high card points or a five card major, one opens one's better minor.

This means that one opens the longer minor and if they are both three in length, one always opens 1♣ even if diamonds are AKQ tight. That way if partner is not 4-4 in the majors, he always has four diamonds or more when he opens 1♦.

When the minors are both four in length, one can choose either, but I recommend diamonds.

One should realize that a 1♣ opening is not lead directive (only with nothing better to lead) and a 1♦ opening is mildly lead directive.

#### Flat Hands:

Before one runs to 3NT because neither hand has any ruffing value, one should realize the importance of a trump suit to stop the opponents from running their long suit. In 3NT, an opponent will grab five club tricks.

However in 4♠, the opponents will take three clubs and then switch to a heart or a trump.

**Finding the Queen of diamonds:**

East would have likely opened if he had AKQJx of clubs and the queen of diamonds. Play West for having the queen. When the player with 12 points has Qx, he may not open, but East has such a good club suit he would still likely open with Qx.

One can come to the same conclusion by counting out the hand. Declarer will get a count from the length of the other three suits and will play the opponent with the most diamonds for the queen. From the first three tricks, it is known that East has AKQJx of clubs and West has two clubs.

One then draws trump to find that East has three spades. Then one cashes three hearts to find that East had two hearts.

Therefore, East's distribution is 3-2-3-5 with three diamonds. West has more diamonds so he is played for having the Queen. If East has Qxx of diamonds, he certainly would have opened 1♣. West has the queen.

If one does not get enough information from either points or length (both methods are available here), one will have to guess diamonds.

One should make 4♠ where 3NT was impossible.

South opened 1♣. Is it lead directive? No, but it is if East had opened 1♣.



## D. Delay Drawing Trump:

There are three reasons to delay drawing trump:

1. You want to ruff a loser in the short trump hand.
2. You want to set up a winner to pitch a loser before the opponents get in with their trump control.
3. You want sluff and ruff protection to stop opponents from tapping the long trump holding.

### Example 4. Short trump hand ruffs

(South plays)

South Dealer North South Vulnerable

♠J32	♥5	♦KJ109	♣Q8765					
♠9876	♥AKQ108	♦75	♣102		♠10	♥J976	♦864	♣KJ943
♠AKQ54	♥432	♦AQ32	♣A					
W	N	E	S					
			1♠					
P!	2♠	P	4♠					
All Pass								

West will always overcall a minor with one heart but not at the two level.

The ace♥ was led against 4♠.

Ruff two hearts in dummy then draw trump making 4♠+2.


Do not ruff any clubs until trump are gone. Ruffing clubs is called ruffing in the long trump hand and is to be avoided as shown by example 1. Ruffing hearts in the short hand is a goal of the declarer before drawing trump.

A goal of the defense is to stop declarer ruffing in the short hand and lead trump. This keeps declarer to 4♠+1.

### Example 5. Short Hand Ruffs

(South plays)

West Dealer East West Vulnerable

	♠982	♥43	♦32	♣AQJ763				
♠---	♥QJ10987	♦QJ10987	♣2		♠7543	♥52	♦54	♣K10984
	♠AKQJ106	♥AK6	♦AK6	♣5				

W	N	E	S
P!	P	P	2♣
P	3♣	P	3♠
P	4♠	P	4NT
P	5♦	P	5NT
P	6♣	P	7♠
All Pass			

#### Notes:

- This is column 140.
- It did not occur to me when I made the hands that West would ever try to preempt. One never pre-empts with a five-loser hand. Furthermore, one never pre-empts with a two-suited hand or a hand that makes game opposite a minimum opener from partner. This could make slam opposite certain minimum openers. In addition, one does not think of game when partner makes a weak two bid and one has 12 to 14 points.
- Rule of 17: When partner makes a weak two, one adds ones HCP's (hopefully aces and kings which are more useful than queens and jacks opposite a preempt.) to the length of support. If this equals 17 or more, one can raise partner's weak two to the four-level. For example, partner opens 2♠. You would raise to game with:

♠K32 ♥Ax ♦KQxx ♣Kxxx

and pass with:

♠KQ2 ♥QJ ♦QJ10x ♣QJxx

and raise to 3♠ as a further preempt with:

♠QJx ♥xxx ♦xx ♣AKxxx

- A **positive response** will get the partnership to seven. No other bidding that I can think of gets one beyond six. If partner opens 2♣, one always bids 2♦, waiting with any strength, unless one has a positive response. A positive response in a minor (3♣ directly over 2♣) shows two of the top three honours and a six-card suit. However a positive response in a major could be five in length. South knows that North has three spades and six clubs. North has only four red cards which are covered by South's two red aces and two red kings.
- North is too flat to pre-empt. With a six card club suit, one should be a little more distributional. This is a third seat pre-empt only.
- Is there a finesse or ruffing finesse possible in clubs? Should you try it?
- Lead: Not the singleton. It is 7♠. You have no trump and partner will never be able to give you a ruff. Singleton leads are nice when they work but they are more dangerous the higher the contract is. Even if you had a trump, do you expect to ever get a ruff?
- Cash AK of hearts and diamonds before ruffing. When declarer can see one singleton, there is a 68% chance the opponents have a singleton (better than a finesse which is 50%). Distributional hands in declarer's hand or dummy often create distribution in an opponent's hand.

### **If West is allowed to play 5♥x, does he make it?**

Let's see what happens. North leads a spade, west ruffs (QJ1098♥ left, tricks: 0-1). North loses to the king♥ (J1098♥ left, tricks:1-1). South leads a club which North wins and exits the queen of clubs. It is covered, ruffed with the 6 and overruffed (J109♥ left, tricks 2-2). West then loses to the ace♥. South exits a spade which is ruffed. (10♥ left, tricks 3-3). West plays the queen♦ which South wins and exits a spade which is ruffed (no trump left, tricks 4-4). South wins the ace of diamonds and cashes the rest of his spades. Declarer will win the last trick because South has a diamond left. Tricks 8-5.

South will be down 6 doubled for -1700. 7♠ makes for +1510.

## Roman Keycard Blackwood:

**Keycards:** A and K of trump and the three side aces.

**Kings:** Three side kings.

1♠ 4NT

5♣ 0 or 3 keycards

5♦ 1 or 4 keycards

5♥ 2 keycards without the Queen of trump

5♠ 2 keycards with the Queen of trump

5NT asks for kings

(There are only three kings because the king of trump is a keycard)

6♣ 0 kings

6♦ 1 king

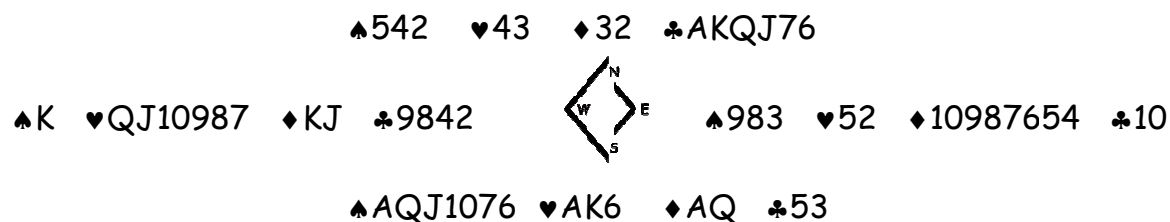
6♥ 2 kings

6♠ 3 kings

## Example 6. Ruff, Finesse or Pitch

(South plays)

North Dealer None Vulnerable



In six spades, declarer should not risk a heart over-ruff in a suit led by the opponents or a club ruff trying to get to the board.

Let's say South plays a club to dummy and does a spade finesse.

Two Reasons for not doing this:

1. West could win the spade finesse and return a club. Now South has no entry to dummy after he finishes drawing trump.
2. There could be a club or heart ruff if the spade finesse loses. There is likely distribution in one opponent's hand.

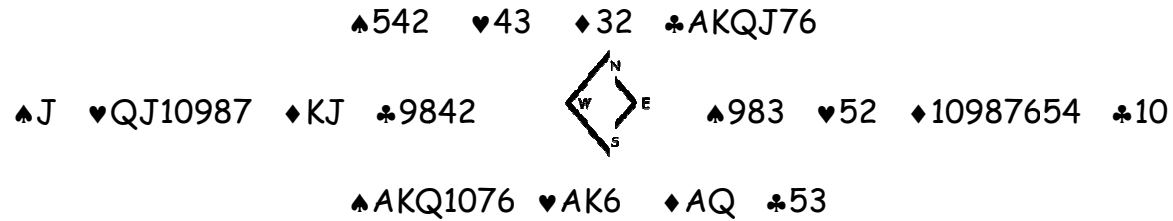
Therefore, declarer should remove trump quickly by cashing the ace. The king falls and you make seven. Do not take a diamond finesse and do not ruff a heart. Just draw trumps and pitch your losers on the club suit. Playing it that way makes six rock solid. You can afford to lose the king of trump but not a ruff too.

A safe rule: play the clubs to be split 4-1 and hearts 6-2.

### Example 6b. Ruff, Finesse or Pitch

(South plays)

North Dealer None Vulnerable



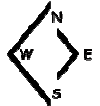
W	N	E	S
	P!	P!	2♣
P	3♣	P	3♠
P	4♠	P	4NT
P	5♦	P	5NT
P	7NT	All Pass	

The bidding. South opens 2♣ and North gives a positive response (showing a six-card minor and two of the top three honours) in clubs and later supports spades. When South asks for keycards (4NT), he will find out that he has all five keycards in spades and the Queen of trump. He tells partner this by asking for kings (5NT). Partner will not answer kings but instead will go directly to 7NT because of the club suit, spades and all the keycards.

## Example 7. Setting Up a Pitch

(South Plays)

East Dealer North South Vulnerable

♠AQ43   ♥KJ4   ♦KJ3   ♣A32  
 ♠52   ♥A652   ♦A65   ♣QJ109      ♠J1098   ♥8   ♦98742   ♣874  
 ♠K76   ♥Q10973   ♦Q10   ♣K65

W	N	E	S
		P	P
P	1♣	P	1♥
P	2NT	P	3♣
P	3♠	P	3NT
P	4♥	All Pass	

Bidding notes:

North will skip a four card spade suit to jump to 2NT but will not do so when rebidding one notrump. North jumps to 2NT to make sure the strong hand declares the contract and to tell his partner his point range (18-19). If North had four hearts and 18 to 19 points, he would have jumped to game in hearts.

If South is not interested in game, he either passes or rebids hearts. To make a forcing bid, he bids three clubs which is called Check Back Stayman. The modern convention is called new minor forcing (NMF).

CheckBack Stayman (CBS):

N	S	
1♣	1♥	
2NT	3♣	Do you have four spades or three hearts?
3♠	3NT	
4♥		

North has four spades but South does not so South must have five of his original major.

N	S	
1♣	2♠	Do you have four hearts or three spades?
2NT	3♣	
3♥	4♥	

North has four hearts and so does South. They play in their four-four fit. South skipped his four card heart suit to bid his five card spade suit.

1♣	1♦	Do you have four hearts or four spades?
2NT	3♣	
3♥	3NT	
4♠		

North bid his four card majors up-the-line after CBS. South denies four hearts by bidding 3NT so he must have four spades.

**When CheckBack Stayman (CBS) is the same as NMF:**

N	S	
1♦	1♥	
2NT	3♣	Do you have four spades or three hearts?
3♠	3NT	
4♥		



**Why a four-four major fit is better than a five-three major fit:**

With a four-four fit, one can pick which hand takes care of the short-hand ruffs. With a five-three fit, the hand with three trumps may not need any ruffs and is the only hand which can make short-hand ruffs (Unless there is a Dummy Reversal). With both a five-three major fit and a four-four major fit, play trump in the four-four fit and make discards on the five-card suit.

**The play:**

The Queen♣ was led against 4♠. Declarer wins it with the King♣, keeping the Ace♣ as an entry to his long diamond. He then plays the 10♦. West holds up, hoping his partner has the Queen and on the next trick, takes the Queen♦ with his ace. He returns the 8 of clubs which declarer wins with the Ace and pitches a club on his good diamond making 4♠+1.


Note that West leads the top of his sequence first then leads the bottom of the sequence next. This way, his partner knows the length of the touching sequence.

If declarer tries to draw trump before touching diamonds, he will make just 4♠, losing a spade, a diamond and a club.

## Example 8. Sluff and Ruff Protection

(South plays)

South Dealer East West Vulnerable

♠KJ4 ♥Q ♦J874 ♣QJ872  
♠6 ♥AJ10952 ♦K653 ♣109  ♠A852 ♥8743 ♦92 ♣A43  
♠Q10973 ♥K6 ♦AQ10 ♣K65

Not vulnerable, West could pre-empt in hearts.

West leads the A♥ against 4♠. This is the best of bad leads.

In a trump contract, the opening lead will not be:

- an unsupported Ace (no king) even if you or your partner has bid the suit.
- a singleton trump
- an interior sequence. Jack from KJ10xx. This is a notrump lead.
- small from an ace
- a singleton when it is unlikely partner will get in.
- Bottom of any honour against a slam
- a worthless doubleton in a suit bid by the opponents.
- Kx doubleton

In a trump contract, the opening lead will only very rarely be:

- a worthless doubleton in a side suit not bid by anyone.
- a singleton in a suit bid by opponents.
- doubleton Ax, Qx, Jx.
- a trump from a long trump holding.

These are gospel, but one can make any of the above leads in the middle of play.


West then continues to declarer's king with the jack. If declarer draws trump right away, this is what happens. East will hold-up twice, winning his ace of trump on the last trump in dummy. East exits a heart and South must ruff. If South draws the last trump, he will have no more trump and still needs to lose the Ace of clubs. He will lose control of the hand.

Instead, after winning the King of hearts, declarer must take one round of trump and then will attack clubs and drive out the club ace. Since there are still two trump in dummy, declarer will ruff a heart in dummy if the defense returns a heart after getting in. East will likely exit a club. Now declarer can draw trump and when he loses the Ace of trump, he still can ruff a heart, draw trump and claim. Declarer will not take the diamond finesse because he will pitch the losing diamonds on his clubs.

## Example 9. Sluff and Ruff Protection

(West plays)

West Dealer Both Vulnerable

♠7	♥KQ1074	♦98763	♣A7					
♠QJ654	♥AJ	♦QJ	♣KJ32		♠K32	♥98	♦K1054	♣Q1096
♠A1098	♥6532	♦A2	♣854					

If you play two-suited bids such as top and other, unusual or Michaels, this is not the time for it. These are weak bids, always less than opening, but they must show playable suits. The heart suit is playable while the diamond suit is far from it.

North leads the top of a broken sequence, the King♥. Declarer, South, holds up once before taking the ace. If he draws trump first, defender with A10x will take the ace after holding up twice so there is no trump in dummy and exits a heart.

Declarer ruffs and the hands look like the following:

♠x	♥	♦QJ	♣Jxx	♠	♥	♦K10x	♣Q109
----	---	-----	------	---	---	-------	-------

Declarer still has two aces missing. He knocks out the club ace. The hands look like the following after the declarer knocks out the diamond ace. At this point, the defenders have the lead and there is no more trump.

♠	♥	♦Q	♣	♠	♥	♦10	♣
---	---	----	---	---	---	-----	---

Declarer loses the three aces and two hearts for down one. 3♠-1

However, if declarer does not draw trump and kicks out the side ace with the shorter combined length, the opponents cannot play hearts without giving a sluff and a ruff. Declarer will ruff in dummy and draw trump. He cannot drive the club ace out because one opponent may ruff. When defender takes the ace ♦, he returns the suit.

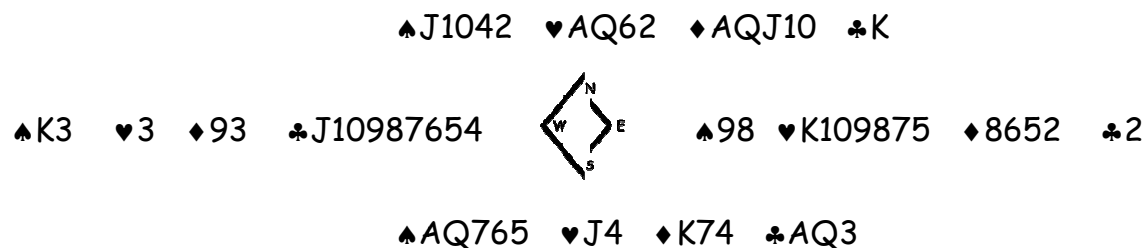
♠QJxxx	♥	♦	♣KJxx	♠Kxx	♥	♦K10	♣Q109x
--------	---	---	-------	------	---	------	--------

Now declarer draws trump and has two trump left in his hand. One to regain the lead after losing the ace of trump and one to regain the lead after the ace of clubs is driven out.

## Example 10. Fast Removal of Trump

(South plays)

West Dealer East West Vulnerable



### Some reasons West should not lead his stiff

1. He likely has a natural spade trick.
2. He cannot continue the heart suit to get the winner in it.
3. Opponents are in slam and likely have first round control in all suits sewn up.
4. The jack of clubs is a pretty good natural lead. If declarer takes a spade finesse, East will get a ruff.

### What declarer should do:

1. Win the opening lead with the King♣.
2. Play the Jack♠ to the Ace♠. Some players cover everything.
3. Exit a small trump.
4. Win the return and pitch a heart on the long diamond and claim.

## E. Loser on Loser

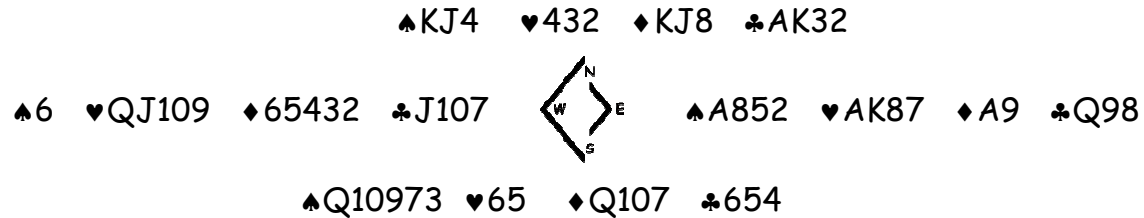
A loser on loser play can be used for three purposes:

- To get sluff and ruff protection.
- To keep the danger hand off of lead.
- To set up an honour.

### Example 11. Sluff and Ruff Protection

(North Plays)

North Dealer Both Vulnerable



W	N	E	S
	1NT	Dbf	2♥
P	2♠	All Pass	

East leads the Ace♥ against 2♠ and West signals with the Queen♥. A player leads, signals or discards the top of a sequence, yet wins as cheaply as possible with the bottom of a sequence. East continues two more rounds of hearts. Declarer pitches a losing club on the third heart. If hearts are continued, declarer can ruff in the short trump hand and maintain control of the hand and make 2♠. If declarer ruffs the third heart, he will be down one.

## Example 12. A Danger Hand

(West or perhaps South Plays)

East Dealer None Vulnerable

♠6 ♥AK109 ♦AQ432 ♣J107  
 ♠AQ10973 ♥J ♦K98 ♣654      ♠KJ4 ♥432 ♦765 ♣AK32  
 ♠852 ♥Q8765 ♦J10 ♣Q98

W	N	E	S
		P	P
1♠	Dbl	Rdbl	2♥
P	P	2♠	All Pass

West opened light in third seat and North makes a takeout double with four hearts and support for the other suits. South is expected to favour the heart suit. West redoubles and then makes a two spade raise because partner is likely to have opened light in third seat and the opponent has taken Drury away which would have showed a limit raise in spades.

South has to bid over a redouble. He is showing no points (less than 8 or 9).

West leads the Ace of hearts and when he continues, declarer sluffs a club from his hand and ruffs the third heart. He sees five potential losers, but if he does not let East in to lead a diamond, he may be able to pitch a diamond on the long club. Declarer cashes the ace of clubs and plays a spade to his hand. He leads a small club to the king and ruffs a club high. Clubs fall 3-3 and he draws trump ending in dummy. He pitches a diamond on the good club and leads a diamond towards his king which loses. He loses two hearts and two diamonds making 2♠+1 for +140.


Had he let East in with the Queen of clubs, declarer will lose three diamonds and just make his contract. East is the danger hand and sluffing a club from his hand kept East off of the lead.



### Example 13. Promoting an Honour

(South Plays)

South Dealer North South Vulnerable

	♠KQJ	♥Q43	♦AK3	♣A832
♠65	♥AK875	♦J874	♣107	♠432
			♥J1092	♦Q109
	♠A10987	♥6	♦652	♣J654

None Vulnerable

	W	N	E	S
				P
	P	1♣	P	1♠
	P	2NT	P	3♠
	All Pass			

North opens a club and South replies 1♠. With a five-card major to the ace and probable club support, he is correct in finding a bid. A misfit in clubs is a reason to pass not to bid.

Partner jumps to 2NT showing 18-19 and South signs off in 3♠. 3♣, called check back Stayman, is the only forcing bid. If new minor forcing is used instead of check back Stayman, then 3♦ would be the only forcing bid at this point. If neither method is being used, a new suit by responder is always forcing. 3♣ or 3♠ are to play.

West leads the Ace♥ against a 3♠ contract and seeing the Queen in dummy switches to the 10♣. Declarer ducks and East wins the Queen (he wins touching honours as cheaply as possible).

East cannot continue clubs without giving up a trick and returns a heart. Declarer pitches a club and West wins the king. He returns another club which declarer wins with his ace. Declarer draws trump ending in dummy and throws his last club on the Queen of hearts. He ruffs a club, making the clubs in dummy good. He has a resting place for the losing diamond in his hand. He makes 3♠+1 for +170.

## F. Separate Ruffing and Drawing Trump

When there is a trump suit, one ruffs in the short trump hand and then draws trump with the long trump hand. A Dummy reversal is just the reverse of this. You ruff in the long trump hand and draw trump (assuming they are split 3-2) with the short trump hand.

Furthermore, one tries not to ruff with the hand one is drawing trump with unless the cross-ruff situation exists. If declarer can set up and run a side suit, he should draw trump and not cross-ruff. Both dummy reversal and cross-ruffs are advanced topics.

A tip for playing a suit contract is one should make either dummy or declarer's hand good assuming sufficient entries exist.

Mike Lawrence says Matchpoints is not real bridge. He is right. You do things not because it is sound bridge, but because there is a good chance to get a couple more matchpoints.

Everybody is familiar with the situation when one makes 420 from four of a major only to find that the people in Notrump are making 630. The rule of thumb is that with all suits well stopped, one should be in notrump if there are no short hand trump ruffs.

However, when one has a four-four major fit or a five-four major fit, one can make either hand the ruffing hand and draw trump with the other. So it is usually impossible to determine whether partner has no shortness either. That is why, it is a rarity to try 3NT with a four-four major fit. This is further discussed in the advanced topics handout.

### Example 14. Separate Ruffing and Drawing

(North Plays)

West Dealer East West Vulnerable (Board 29 of workshop 14)



W	N	E	S
	1NT	P	2♣
P	2♠	P	4♠
All Pass			

South with 8 points has enough for Stayman and when they have found a Golden fit in spades, South can count distribution and raise to 4♠. The 4♣ was led against 4♠ and declarer chooses to ruff with the South hand and draw trump with the North hand. North ruffs the club and plays a diamond to the ace and ruffs another club. Returning on the King♥, declarer ruffs the last club. The King and Jack of spades are cashed and a heart is ruffed to get back to the North hand to draw the last trump.

This is an example of a safety play. A small diamond is played to the Ace♦ and then back to South and a small diamond is played to the Queen. This play works as the King♦ falls singleton. Even with the finesse working, declarer will still lose a trick to the jack so the safety play loses nothing here.

Furthermore, the KJ of hearts is a mirage. One should not take the heart finesse until it is discovered diamonds have two losers. Take the heart finesse and pitch a diamond on the ace of hearts.

### Example 15: Make One Hand Good

(North Plays)

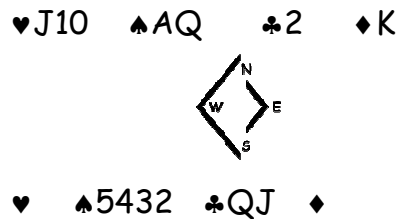
North Dealer None Vulnerable

With complex hands, one can look at one hand either the dummy or the declarer's hand and make it good. From Bridge Master 2000 Level 3 B-12.

4♥ was led against a 7♥ contract.



Make the North hand good by ruffing 3 diamonds in the South hand. Win K♥, cash A♦ and ruff the 3♦ with the 3♥. Go to the A♣ and ruff the 4♦ with the ace♥. Go to q♥ with the 8♥ and ruff last small diamond with the 9♥.



Now go to the A♠, draw last two rounds of hearts, cash K♦ and pitch Q♠ on the clubs.

## **G. Semi-Advanced Topics**

### **1. Ruffing Finesse**

- With a singleton (stiff) opposite AQJ or better
- Cash ace and play the queen. If covered, ruff, otherwise, pitch a loser.
- x AQxxx You may or may not need a normal finesse here. This is not a ruffing finesse situation.

### **2. Two-Way Finesse**

- Use the bidding.
- Get a count of the hand either points or length.
- Offer the Jack because some players cover everything.
- Elimination and End play.
- Show-up Squeeze.

### **3. Cross Ruff**

- Do not touch trump.
- Count your tricks.
- Take finesses and develop side winners if necessary.
- Cash Side suit winners.

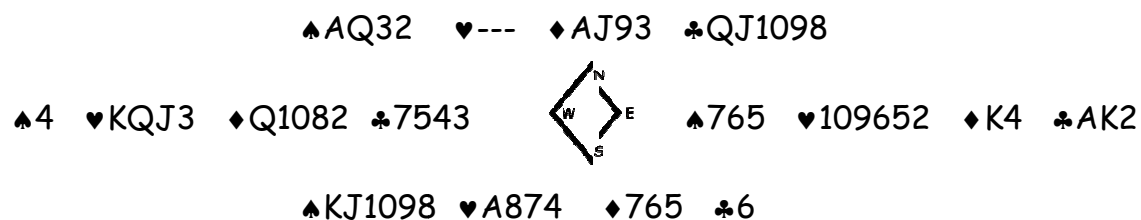
### **4. Moysian Play**

- Get every short trump hand ruff you can.
- Cash winners and cross ruff if right.
- Draw three rounds of trump and let the person with four trumps ruff in if right.

## Example 16. Ruffing Finesse

(South plays)

East Dealer North South Vulnerable




- West has a natural lead of the King♥.
- Declarer will ruff, saving the Ace♥ for later.
- Declarer puts the Queen♣ on the table which East wins with the King♣ and exits a trump.
- Declarer wins the Ace♠ and puts the Jack♣ on the table which East ducks, and declarer sluffs a diamond. It holds. East covers the Ten continuation with the ace which declarer ruffs. The 9 and 8 of clubs can now take one more diamond sluff and a heart. One more heart is ruffed, and trump are drawn. The Ace♦ serves as the entry to the good clubs for the last small heart and diamond.
- Declarer makes 4♠+2 for +680.
- East always holds-up once with only one honour left (when declarer is ruffing).
- If West had the ace, declarer loses one more trick (a 50% chance) but the clubs would be setup.

## Example 17. Two Way Finesse

(South plays)

South Dealer East West Vulnerable

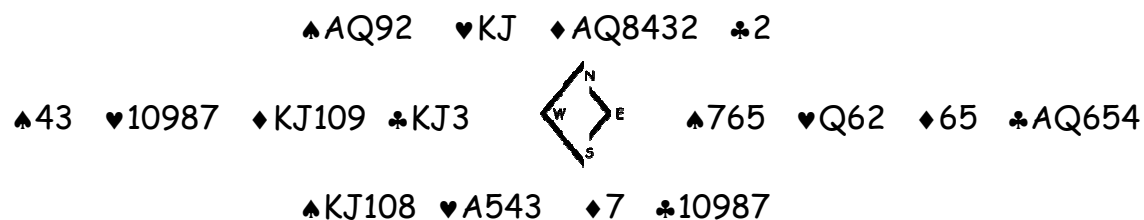
	♠AQ32	♥32	♦AJ83	♣987
♠4	♥K7654	♦Q92	♣QJ104	♠76
				♥J1098
	♦764	♣AK65		
	♠KJ10985	♥AQ	♦K105	♣32
W	N	E	S	
			1♠	
P	3♠	P	4♠	
	All Pass			

- West has a natural lead of the Queen♣.
- It holds and West leads the bottom of the sequence, the Ten.
- One would never (almost never) lead Queen from Q10 doubleton unless partner bid the suit so West is showing partner how many honours he has in his touching sequence.
- East wins the King♣ (the cheapest of his touching honours) and switches to his natural lead, the Jack♥.
- Declarer wins the Ace♥ and draws trump at the same time eliminating clubs (ruffing the last club).
- Declarer now exits a heart forcing the defenders to give him a sluff and a ruff or to play diamonds. This is called an elimination and end play.

## Example 18. Cross Ruff

(North plays)

West Dealer Both Vulnerable



The key steps to a cross ruff:

1. Do not touch trump.
2. Void a suit in hand and in dummy.
3. Count your winners.
4. Take any needed finesses.
5. Cash all side suit winners.
6. Cross-ruff.

West leads the 10♥ against 5♠. Interior sequence leads are not done against a suit contract, at least not the opening lead. Declarer wins the Queen with the Ace and loses a club. The defenders return a trump.

Count your tricks.

- ♠: 1 + 3 ruffs in dummy + 3 ruffs in hand
- ♥: 2
- ♦: 1 or 2?
- ♣: 0

To get 11 tricks, one needs to take the diamond finesse before cross-ruffing. However, if the contract is 4♠, the diamond finesse would not be taken because if it loses, the defenders will return another trump and you can only get 9 tricks. If defenders do not play trump when they get in with a club, declarer will get 4 + 4 + 2 + 1 + 0 = 11 tricks without needing a diamond finesse. He can actually get 12 tricks if he takes a diamond finesse and it wins.



## Example 19. Moysian Play

(North plays)

South Dealer North South Vulnerable

		♠AQ108	♥Q5	♦AQ103	♣1098			
♠43	♥10987	♦J92	♣AKJ4	⋈	♠7652	♥J62	♦K8	♣Q765
		♠KJ9	♥AK43	♦7654	♣32			

W	N	E	S	
			P	
P	1♦	P	1♥	
P	1♠	P	3♦	
P	3♠	P	4♠	All Pass

### Bidding Notes:

North does not have four hearts so he has four or more diamonds. South raises to 3♦ with a limit raise. South did not choose 2NT because he has no stopper in the unbid suit (clubs). North has to pass, if he thinks game is out of reach opposite a limit raise. North cannot bid Notrump either so he suggests a spade Moysian. 3♠ is forcing and South accepts a game in spades.

### Play Notes:

- AQ10x xxxx Play to the Queen. If it loses then play to the ten.
- West leads the suit that kept the opponents out of 3NT, the 5♣.
- Declarer ruffs the third club in dummy and plays a small diamond to the Queen which loses.
- East plays a heart. Another club is not so bad because a sluff and ruff is fine when it is trump control (declarer has side-suit control) everybody is after.
- Declarer now plays a small diamond to the ten since the queen lost and it holds.
- Declarer draws four rounds of trump and claims.

**Result Notes:**

- The Moysian works because declarer is able to ruff in the short trump hand and draw trump with the other.
- The Moysian will fail if:
  - Trumps are 5-1 or worse.
  - Trumps are 4-2 and declarer ruffs in the long trump hand. East's 7♠ will become a trick.
  - Declarer draws trump before establishing diamonds.
  - A four-three fit will get a three-three break 36% of the time. Not so good so declarer assumes trump split 4-2.

**The Number Three Rule:**

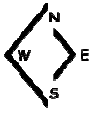
Never worry about failure. Play the odds, and if the conditions are not right, you will go down. That is just the way it goes sometimes.

It would be nice if 4-3 fits splitting three-three 36% of the time meant that it split always for you and never for 64% of the other people. However, the odds do not work that way.

## Example 20. Moysian Play

(North plays)

South Dealer North South Vulnerable

♠AQ108	♥Q54	♦AJ103	♣98				
♠43	♥10987	♦942	♣AKJ4	♠7652	♥J62	♦K8	♣Q765
							
♠KJ9	♥AK3	♦Q765	♣1032				

### The Bidding:

W	N	E	S
			1♦
P	1♠	P	1NT
P	2♦	P	2♥
P	3♥	P	3♠
P	4♠	All Pass	

### Bidding Notes:

- 1NT does not promise unbid stoppers but 2NT or 3NT does.
- Neither one has a club stopper so they end up in a spade Moysian.

### Play Notes:

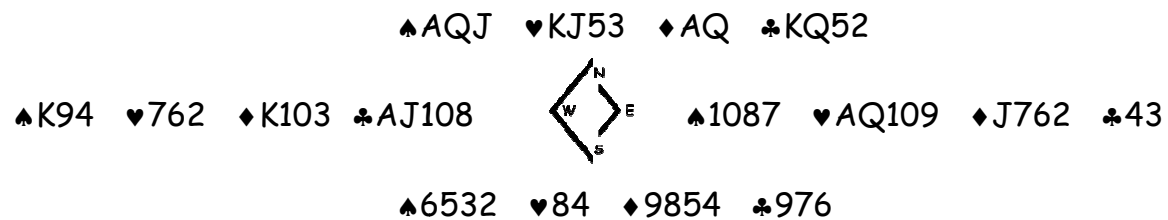
- Club opening lead.
- Pitch diamonds on clubs and ruff in the short trump hand.
- Take diamond finesse before drawing trump.

## Example 21. Tricks Not Points

(North plays)

In West's hand of example 5, we saw how a six-point hand was too strong to open a weak two because it had 5 losers. North's hand of this example, with 22 high card points, also has 5 losers. However, which one is easier to play? How many entries does North in this example need? Can you find the seven times that entries are needed? Eight if declarer wants to get to the thirteenth spade.

North Dealer None Vulnerable



## H. Advanced Topics

See the chalk talk 'Advanced Declarer Play'

1. Dummy Reversal
2. Trump Coup
3. Squeezes
4. Elimination and End Play
5. Playing 3NT with a four-four major fit