

## Planning the Play

### Set up your tricks



#### Developing a Plan

- ✓ Count your tricks and determine how you can set up the maximum number of tricks while maintaining control of all the suits.
- ✓ Count your losers and determine how you can "trump" or "pitch" losers on winners in dummy.
- ✓ Set up the long suit in dummy for "pitching" losers.
- ✓ Consider a "dummy reversal"

One of your first thoughts as "declarer" should be "Is there a long suit in dummy to establish for losers in my hand?"

A "dummy reversal" is when you make the dummy the playing hand and discard on a long suit in dummy from your hand and trump dummy's losers in your hand.

After trumping in hand, the dummy long trumps are used to "pull trump".

A good declarer loses their tricks early in the play of the hand, while a poor declarer cashes their tricks early in the play before they have set up their tricks necessary to make their contract.

*In "Social" Bridge an overtrick is worth 20 or 30 points. The same is true in "Duplicate", an overtrick is worth 20 or 30 points, but in the comparison scoring an overtrick can mean that you have won the hand (or board) because others did not score an overtrick. Every trick is important in Duplicate.*

*Recommended Reading "Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand" by Barbara Seagram and David Bird.*

#### Duplicate Scoring

♥/♠	30 per trick	4♥/♠	
♣/♦	20 per trick	5♣/♦	
NT	40 the 1st trick	3NT	
	30 for each additional trick		

#### Game (100 points)

Bonus	Not Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Game	300	500
Small Slam (12 tricks)	500	750
Grand Slam (13 tricks)	1000	1500

#### Setting the Contract

Per trick (un-doubled)	50	100
Doubled (1st trick)	100	200
Each add'l trick	200	300
4th setting trick & add'l	300	
Redoubled - times 2		

#### Making a doubled Contract

Insult	50	50
Contract tricks	Double	Double
Over-tricks	100	200
Redoubled - times 2		

#### Duplicate bridge is a tactical game

Each hand stands on its own in importance. As an example the opponents have found a fit and are likely to make 4♣ and your side has found a fit in ♥. The opponents are vulnerable and will score 620 for making 4♣ (4 times 30 plus 500 for the game bonus).

The question you must ask yourself is "If we bid 5♥, how many will we go down and will our score be more or less than 620?"

If "Not Vulnerable" you can go down 3 and your score is minus 500 or less than 620, you win the board. On the other hand if you are "Vulnerable" and go down 3, your score is minus 800 and you lose the board.

This same logic applies to part-scores, particularly at the 2 and 3 level where auctions are often competitive. Winning bridge is to push the "opponents" one level too high and then set them.

Bidding too high when the opponents would not have made their contract is called a "Phantom Sacrifice".



## Play of the Hand Beginning Series #3

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| #1 – Bridge Bidding Basics   | #11 – Strips and Squeezes |
| #2 – Six Basic Conventions   | #12 – Blackwood           |
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| #6 – Advanced (Two over One) | #16 – Four Suit Transfers |
| #7 – Stayman and Transfers   | #17 – Weak No Trump       |
| #8 – Lebensohl               | #18 – Wolf Sign-off & XYZ |
| #9 – Doubles and Overcalls   | #19 – Unusual/NMF/4SF     |
| #10 – Online Bridge          | #20 – One Level Transfers |



So Bridge

#### Grafton Duplicate Bridge Club

Thursday Noon – Ameriprise Financial Bldg  
Stratified Pairs – Bridge lessons at 11am  
Director – Michael Leighton (701) 520-0753

#### Grand Forks Duplicate Bridge Club

Monday 6:30pm – GF Senior Center  
Stratified Pairs – Bridge lessons at 5:45pm  
Friday 12:30pm – EGF Senior Center  
Director – Tom Rand (701) 742-3676

#### Ambassador Bridge Club Winnipeg MB

Tuesday 12:15pm – MB Bridge Centre  
Stratified Pairs  
Wednesday 7pm – MB Bridge Centre  
Invitational Pairs and Swiss Teams  
Thursday 1pm – (0 – 200) Temple Shalom  
Play and learn  
Saturday 12:30pm – MB Bridge Centre  
Swiss Teams  
Director – Bill and Sue Treble (204) 669-1458

## Planning the Play in a Suit Contract

### Think before you play to the first trick



Declarer Play is the fun part of Bridge that is relatively easy to master as compared to the structure of the bidding.

Harold Vanderbilt invented "Contract Bridge" in 1925. It quickly grew to one of the most popular card games world-wide.

Charles Goren wrote "Contract Bridge for Beginners" in 1949 with it's easy to comprehend "high card point" system and it became very popular. The book was re-printed and updated through 1981. Later versions of "Goren" featured weak two bids, Stayman and many other modern day accepted bidding practices.

It takes effort to communicate with your bridge partner and to learn the modern bidding systems. On the other hand, "declaring or playing" a bridge hand hasn't changed much at all. For that reason, you will find discussion on "Play of the Hand" more familiar than the bidding innovations presented.

However, you should know that...

"A Bad Declarer is better off in a good contract than a Good Declarer in a bad contract."

**In other words, you will win more consistently if you are in a good contract. Put the effort into learning good bridge bidding techniques and you will win more often.**

As a general rule, "**Cover an Honor with an Honor**". The exception is when you can see that your honor is "tenaced" by declarer or dummy.

A "tenace" is when the opponents have each card both higher and lower than your card.

Some feel that "Cover an Honor with an Honor" does not apply to the trump suit.

### The "finesse"

Declarers love to take finesses, maybe it's because they are taking a risk and there is an immediate element of winning or losing. Strong players avoid finesses that are 50/50. They listen to the bidding, count the cards and finesse into the hand least likely to hold the card being finessed. They also avoid finesses as much as possible and end-play the opponents making them break the suit instead.

As a general rule, during play of the hand -

**"Second hand low / third hand high"**

### Keep the "Danger Hand" off of the lead

Partner's Hand "Dummy" is     ♠KJx ♥Axxx ♦ATx ♣xxx

You are Declarer in 3NT with     ♠ATx ♥KQJ ♦KJxxx ♣Kx

You have 8 top tricks (2♠ / 4♥ / 2♦ / and no ♣). The opening lead is a ♥. You need to develop 1 more trick to guarantee your contract. You could finesse to the Jack ♠ or run the Jack ♦ and if either finesse wins, you are home free with 9 tricks. But what if the finesse loses and Right Hand Opponent (RHO) puts the Q♣ on the table, you are sunk when the Ace ♣ is on your left.

It is better to avoid the situation and finesse into your Left Hand Opponent (LHO) because if LHO wins and leads a ♣ it will not hurt you. You have the K♣ protected from a lead on your left. Therefore, lead either a ♠ from dummy to the Ten or a ♦ from dummy to your Jack / or let the Ten ♦ run.

An experienced declarer would see that ♦ suit is the best source of tricks and would do the ♦ finesse after taking the Ace ♦, because the Q♦ could be singleton with LHO.

### Counting Cards

The beginner is taught to "pull trump" and count them to make sure that all the trump is pulled. Good first step.

Beginners will play one round of trump and say to themselves "there's 4" and after the second round, they'll say to themselves "there's 8" and then they will count the dummy trump and the trump in their hand and if it all totals 13, they will say to themselves "Good! Trump are drawn".

There is an easier way!

The experienced player thinks to themselves "It's easier to count a few cards rather than a lot of cards. In fact, if I'm just counting a few cards, I can count more suits than just trump".

As an example, you are declarer in 4♥ with 5♥ in your hand and 4♥ in dummy for a total of 9♥. You ask yourself "How many ♥ do the opponents have?" The answer is (13 - 9) 4. The experienced player then says to himself "4 cards split 3/1 or 2/2 over 95% of the time, let's see what they are". He plays a round of trump and sees both defenders follow suit and says to himself "there's 2, let's see if the rest fall on this next round or do I have to pull three rounds?" That is a lot easier than going 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Furthermore, when the opponents discard, the experienced player notices the suit and the card discarded and asks, "Why did they discard that suit? Do they have extra length? Are they indicating a good suit or a bad suit with their carding?"

Counting cards is much easier when you just count the opponents cards.

### Drawing Trumps

Sometimes it is important NOT TO DRAW TRUMPS too soon. The reason not to draw trumps is that you may need those trumps as ruffing cards for losers. This is particularly true if you have a singleton or void in the "weak" hand. The "weak" hand is the hand that will not be pulling trump.