

Play of the Hand at a No Trump Contract

Make a plan. Make it before playing to trick 1:

Count Your Immediate Winners. If the opponents have the ace, you have no immediate winners. If you have the ace but not the king, you have 1 immediate winner. Etc.

North	South	
A73	94	1 immediate winner
KQ6	J32	0 immediate winners. You do not have the Ace.
A9876	K32	2 immediate winners. (Don't count slow winners.)
AK	QJ	2 immediate winners (QJ fall on AK, only 2 tricks)
AK98	Q32	3 immediate winners (opponent cards may be 4-2)

Turn slow winners into immediate winners: (establish a long suit or take a finesse)

A9876	K32	Play K, A and another, hoping to make 8 and/or 7 good.
J9876	KQ2	Play K, Q, J, etc until opponents take their A.
AK98	Q32	Play Q, A and K, hoping to make the 9 good.
A32	KJ4	Play A, then lead towards KJ to finesse J against Q.
A73	94	Don't attack this suit. No hope of making extra winners.

Order of Attack in Your Plan:

- **1st: Suit that will produce most extra winners.** If spades can produce 3 extra winners & hearts can produce 1 extra winner, plan to attack spades, not hearts.
- **2nd: Suit that will produce next most extra winners:** If first suit does not produce enough extra winners, only then attack the suit with next highest number of extra winners.
- **Last: Suits that cannot produce any extra winners.**
- **Cash out:** After setting up all extra tricks you think you can get, take all your winning tricks.

NT is a Race To Set Up Winners: You must set up the extra tricks that you need before the opponents set up enough of their long suit tricks to beat you. Set up your long suits before playing high cards in the other suits. Playing your high cards sets up the opponents' long suit winners.

Hold Up: Refuse to play a high card now. Keep it to win a later trick, to exhaust the suit from one of the opponents, to cut their communication.

A73 94 Usually best to play the ace on 3rd trick, not 1st or 2nd.

Do not hold up with danger in another suit, when opps can take too many tricks in another suit.

Dangerous opponent: The one with a long suit that is now established. With a choice of finesses, take the finesse where the dangerous opponent cannot win the trick.

Duck: Like hold up, but to keep your communication rather than cut theirs. If the opps are entitled to a trick in your long suit, give them the 1st one. Leave a card in partner's hand for a return.

Example: N: AK9876 S: 32

If you play A, K & 9, South will have no more. If you start with the 6, giving the opponents the 1st trick, South will still have the 3 to lead back to North. Useful when playing and when defending.