

# The Bridge Booklet

(BB04)

## Boot Camp



**Common Bidding Errors**

**Attitude Signals**

**The End Play**

**Leading When Dummy is Visible**

**Balancing**

**Establishing Long Suits**

**Opening Leads Against NoTrump Contracts**

**Knowing Your Job (What's Forcing)**

## Ten Common Errors in Bidding

1. You are dealer. What is your opening bid holding:

♠ Jxx      ♥ Axxxx      ♦ AJ10      ♣ AQ

2. You are the dealer. What is your opening bid holding:

♠ xxx      ♥ AQJxx      ♦ AKQx      ♣ xx

3. Your partner opens 1NT. Your RHO overcalled 2♦. What do you bid?

♠ AQxx      ♥ KJxx      ♦ xx      ♣ xxx

4. Your partner has opened 1NT. The next player passes. What do you bid?

♠ Axxx      ♥ Kxx      ♦ QJxx      ♣ xxx

5. You are the dealer. What do you bid holding:

♠ J10xxxx ♥ AKQJ10      ♦ x      ♣ xx

6. You are the dealer and open 2♠ holding the hand shown below. Your left-hand opponent bids 3♥. Your partner bids 3♠ and your righthand opponent bids 4♥. What do you bid now?

♠ KQJ10xx ♥ x      ♦ QJx      ♣ xxx

7. Your partner has opened the bidding with 1♠. Your bid holding:

♠ x      ♥ AJxxxxx      ♦ xxx      ♣ xx

8. You are the dealer and open 1♥. The auction goes Pass-Pass and right-hand opponent bids 1♠. You bid:

♠ AQx      ♥ Kxxxx      ♦ Ax      ♣ xxx

9. You are the dealer and open 3♥. Your partner bids 3♠. Is this forcing or non-forcing?

10. Your partner opens the bidding with 1♥. Right-hand opponent says 'Double'. What do you bid holding:

♠ xx      ♥ AQxx      ♦ Axxx      ♣ xxx

## Opener's Jump Shift

Opener's jump in a new suit-a Jump Shift-is forcing to game

Opener	Responder
♠ 7	♠ QJ82
♥ AKQ83	♥ J5
♦ AK106	♦ Q52
♣ K85	♣ 10632
Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3♦	3♥
3NT	Pass

Opener has an unbalanced hand with 19 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card heart suit. When responder bids 1♠, opener knows that there should be enough combined strength for a game contract. A rebid of only 2♦ would not be forcing, so opener makes a jump in a new suit, 3♦, a jump shift.

Responder can't pass this bid. The partnership is now committed to at least game. Responder gives 'false preference' back to opener's first suit, and opener chooses to go for game in notrump. Opener doesn't expect responder to have three-card heart support since responder didn't raise hearts right away.

## Opener Jumps in an Old Suit

Jump Raises of Responder's suit or jump rebids of opener's suit are not forcing.

Opener	Responder
♠ AK75	♠ QJ64
♥ AK863	♥ 72
♦ 4	♦ K975
♣ J82	♣ 1076
Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
3♠	Pass

When responder bids 1♠ opener revalues the hand as 15 high-card points plus 3 dummy points for the singleton diamond. That's too much for a minimum raise 2♠, so opener makes a jump raise to 3♠ showing about 17-18 points. With a minimum, responder is free to pass.

Opener	Responder
♠ AKJ	♠ Q92
♥ 64	♥ KJ873
♦ KQJ9863	♦ 4
♣ 8	♣ 10764
Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥
3♦	Pass

Opener's 3♦ rebid is invitational, not forcing. Again it shows about 17-18 points. Here opener has 14 high-card points plus 3 length points.

So if most of opener's rebids are non-forcing, even jump rebids, when is opener's rebid forcing?

## Bidding Answers

1. Open 1NT: Although you have a 5-card major you will never have a rebid that accurately describes your hand.

If you start with 1♥ and partner bids 1♠, if you now bid 2♠ you are showing a minimum opening bid: 13-15 points. If instead you choose 1NT as your rebid, your partner will expect 13-14 points and a balanced hand. Neither of these rebids describes your hand.

Anytime you have a 5-3-3-2 shape and 15-17 HCP just open 1NT and ignore the 5-card major.

2. Open 1NT: Ignore the useless doubleton and ignore the fact that you have 2 unstopped suits. It is far more important to show partner how many points you have. If you don't open with 1NT you will never later be able to later show your point count when it is your turn to bid again.

3. Bid 3♦ (the opponents suit). In order to use Stayman in competition you must bid the suit the opponents bid. Bidding 3♣ would not be Stayman. It would show a good hand with 5-clubs

4. Bid 3NT: In order to use Stayman you need 8+ HCP, at least one 4-card major, and a short suit (for ruffing values). This hand has no short suit.

5. Open 1♠: If your partner bids 2♣ or 2♦, you will bid your hearts. With two 5-card or 6-card suits always bid the higher ranking first whether you are the opener or the responder.

6. PASS, PASS, PASS!!: Your partner can always bid again if he wishes; but you, the pre-emptor may not!

7. Bid 1NT: The 1NT response to an opening but does NOT promise a balanced hand. It merely promises 6-10 points and no support for partner's major.

8. PASS: If you rebid 1NT after your partner promised 0-5 HCP by passing, you are now showing 18-19 HCP and stoppers in opponents suit. Stoppers you have, points you don't.

9. After you pre-empt, a new suit by partner is 100% forcing

10. Redouble: If you have 10+ HCP you must redouble. You are promising to bid again later at which time you can show your hearts.

## Attitude Signal after Partner Leads an Honour

Whenever partner leads an honour you are expected to give an attitude signal!

When you play standard carding the play of a high card is encouraging. It is sort of a yelling card that screams "I want you to continue! Please play your next touching honour card"

If you do not want your partner to continue the suit, play a low card. A low card asks partner to switch suits. It doesn't say which suit to switch to though. It is up to partner to look at dummy and figure out the switch for himself.

## Encouraging with an Equal Honour

When we see the opening lead of an Ace, we make the assumption that partner also has the King since it isn't usually wise to lead an unsupported Ace. If we hold the Queen we often encourage partner to continue.

If you know partner has the Ace and King, the Queen is considered an Equal Honour to partner's cards since it continues the sequence of honours that partner's lead promised. The Jack would not be an equal honour; someone holds the Queen and partner's lead did not promise that. It is often correct to encourage partner's lead when we hold an equal honour.

## Your Job When Partner Leads an Honour

The opening leader is often concerned about the location of equal honours to those in his hand. Give an encouraging attitude signal to show an equal honour and the desire to have partner continue working on the same suit. If you would prefer to have a different suit led, you are allowed to discourage (play a low card) even though you do have an equal honour.

After an honour is led, the opening leader should be cautious of continuing the suit if it could set up a trick for declarer. In the following layouts, what card in declarer's (South's) hand should West worry about making good? How can East prevent West from helping declarer?

Just because responder can pass, doesn't mean that responder should pass. Consider these hands:

Opener	Responder
♠ 84	♠ A9763
♥ AKJ743	♥ 106
♦ 5	♦ J97
♣ AKJ2	♣ Q103

  

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2♣	2♥
3♥	4♥

Here responder could pass opener's 2♣ rebid with a slight preference for clubs and only 7 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card spade suit. However, experienced players would give 'false preference' back to 2♥, opener's original suit.

There are good reasons for this:

- opener has at least five hearts and may have only four clubs. Playing in a 5-2 fit should be at least as good as a 4-3 fit.
- a major suit contract is worth more per trick than a minor suit contract.
- most importantly, it gives opener another chance to bid when holding more than a minimum hand.

Here opener is happy to invite game, and responder has enough to accept.

## Opener bids a new Suit at the One-level

A new suit by Opener at the one level is not forcing.

Opener	Responder
♠ K975	♠ J863
♥ 74	♥ KJ532
♦ KQ	♦ 742
♣ AKQ52	♣ 3

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥
1♠	Pass

Responder has just enough to scrape up a 1♥ response to the opening bid of 1♣ - 5 HCP plus 1 length point for the 5th heart. When opener rebids 1♠, continuing the search for a major suit fit, responder does not have to bid again.

Opener's 1♠ rebid covers a wide range of about 13 to 18 points. Here, opener has the top of that range, 17 HCP plus 1 length point for the 5-card club suit. Yet game is well out of reach. Responder does well to pass and settle for part score. If responder raises to 2♠, opener will at least make a move toward game, and the partnership will be too high!

## Opener bids a New Lower-Ranking Suit at the Two Level

Opener's bid of a second suit at the two level that is lower-ranking than opener's first suit is not forcing.

Opener	Responder
♠ 5	♠ K10763
♥ AJ873	♥ 4
♦ AQ62	♦ J97
♣ KQ2	♣ J543

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
2♦	Pass

Opener's second suit, diamonds, is lower-ranking than opener's first suit, hearts. So the 2♦ rebid is not forcing, even though opener can have anywhere up to about 18 points. With a bare minimum, responder can pass and leave the partnership in partscore.

### Example 1

		♥ 763		
		N		
♥ AKJ2	W		E	♥ 854
		S		
		♥ Q109		

West is worried about making the Queen good. East can discourage (play the 4) to make West hold on to the K J to trap the Queen.

### Example 2

		♥ 972		
		N		
♥ KQ104	W		E	♥ 865
		S		
		♥ AJ 3		

West leads the King and should be worried about the location of the Jack. Declarer does not deserve the trick since West's remaining Q-10 have it trapped. East must discourage (play the 5) so West will not lead hearts again.

### Example 3

		♥ 872		
		N		
♥ AK104	W		E	♥ J96
		S		
		♥ Q53		

West has no trap himself but together with East's cards. Declarer's Queen is trapped. East must stop West from leading a second heart honour and make West wait for East or declarer to play another heart.

## Encourage with a Doubleton (play High-Low)

When you partner leads the Ace from Ace-King, you will often encourage with a doubleton in order to trump the third round of the suit. Partner may not know if your encouraging signal shows an equal honour or a doubleton but it is not important; he will follow your wishes and cash the Ace and King and continue leading the suit.

Do not encourage with a doubleton if:

- You would be trumping with a natural trump trick
- You have no trumps to ruff with
- Dummy is also trumping and you cannot over ruff
- You would rather partner lead something else

When partner leads an honour other than the Ace, an encouraging signal usually shows an equal honour rather than a doubleton.

## The Endplay

An end play in bridge is a tactical play where a defender is put on lead at a strategic moment, and then has to make a play that loses one or more tricks. Most often the losing play either constitutes a free finesse, or else it gives declarer a ruff and discard. In a case where declarer has no entries to dummy (or to his own hand), the defender may also be end played into leading a suit which can be won in that hand.

Consider-South is playing in 6♠ and West leads the diamond King

♠ A98532

♥ KJ54

♦ 4

♣ K4

**N**

**S**

♠ K764

♥ A109

♦ A87

♣ AQ9

If the adverse spades are divided 2-1, there are 12 certain tricks (6 spade tricks, 2 hearts, 1 diamond, 3 clubs) and the possibility of a 13th by correctly guessing the two-way finesse (or dropping the queen) in hearts. But if the spades are 3-0, the declarer will need an end play to avoid the heart guess. He should start by winning the diamond ace and ruffing a diamond in dummy, then cash the spade ace and spade king. If this reveals a 3-0 trump split, he now ruffs another diamond in dummy. If this is not over ruffed, the contract is now assured. Declarer's plan now is to play the king, ace, and queen of clubs, discarding a heart from dummy to reach this end position:

♠ 98

♥ KJ5

♦

♣

**N**

**S**

♠ 76

♥ A109

♦

♣

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South now exits with a spade, and whoever wins is end played. If he leads a heart, North-South must make three heart tricks; if a club or diamond, declarer will ruff in one hand and discard a heart from the other, making an extra trump trick. Or if the defender has fewer than 3 clubs and chooses to ruff before the above position is reached, he is likewise end played, having to lead a heart or a diamond.

The end play is an important tactic that is sometimes available to declarer. It takes some work, however. Declarer must recognize the benefit of having the defenders, or a particular defender lead a specific suit. Then declarer must maneuver to force the defenders to lead the suit. This is accomplished by eliminating other options and then putting a defender on lead

## Know Your Job (What's Forcing)

The majority of bidding disasters occur because the players are missing a crucial yet fundamental concept. They do not know their own job description. Do you know anyone that has the annoying habit of continually talking? They never hear a word you have to say because they are always talking. If you are talking then you are not listening and vice versa. The same principals apply to a bridge auction. If everyone is talking, then no one is listening. A bridge auction works much better if one player talks and the other player listens.

### Opener's Job Description

The Opener is the Talker. The Talker describes her hand as accurately as is needed. The talker answers questions. The talker follows instructions.

### Responder's Job Description

The Responder is the Listener. The Listener asks questions and listens to the answers. The Listener issues instructions. The listener makes the decisions for the partnership.

The better job that opener does with respect to accurately describing her hand, the better job that responder will do in making the final decisions as to HOW HIGH and WHERE the contract belongs.

### Show Opener's Strength When Rebidding

13-15 (16) Minimum Opening Strength

(16) 17-18 Medium Opening Strength

19-21 Maximum Opening Strength

### What's Forcing

Ely Culbertson first suggested in the 1920's that Responder's bid of a new suit at the one-level should be forcing. This has remained a fundamental cornerstone of bidding ever since. If we open 1♦ and partner responds 1♥, we are expected to bid again; the only exception being if our partner originally passed showing less than an opening bid.

What though if we now bid a new suit as opener, or jump in a suit?

## Making the Best of Partner's Good Opening Lead

Sitting East, with the following:

♠Q652 ♥AK743 ♦A73 ♣5

we open the bidding 1♥ but that doesn't stop the opponents from reaching 3NT:

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♥	1NT
pass	3NT	pass out	

Partner leads our suit, the ♥2. North (Dummy) comes down and we see:

♠1084 ♥108 ♦Q5 ♣AQ10976

With Dummy down we must decide on our defensive plan! What does the lead of the ♥2 tell us?

It can't be top of a doubleton because there is no card lower than the 2. It's unlikely to be a Singleton since that would give declarer a five card suit. So it looks like partner led low from three or more cards, leaving declarer with at most three hearts. What does this tell us? ....

We can establish our little hearts by playing three rounds of the suit, and we will have Ace of Diamonds as an entry. This defeats 3NT

Compare if instead West (Partner) leads the ♥9. How does this affect our thinking?

It can't be low from an honor. Partner would lead the Q from QJ9. Partner would have led low from J92 or Q92. The lead of the 9 must be from shortness, a singleton or top of a doubleton.

This means that declarer has at least four hearts headed by the QJxx. If we continue the hearts by cashing the Ace. King and another heart, declarer will get two heart tricks to go with dummy's six clubs tricks. And the declarer will have plenty of time to establish an extra trick in spades or diamonds. The declarer will make her contract with this defence.

So ..... we should win the ♥K but not continue hearts. Instead then switch to a spade and try this out.

**Continue the suit led or switch to another? The card partner**

## Leading a Suit with Dummy on the Table

When Dummy's on the LEFT, lead through HEFT

This is a nifty way to remember the guideline of leading THROUGH strength and UP TO weakness

North (Dummy)	
AQ10	
West	East
862	KJ93
South (Declarer)	
752	

Suppose East and West are defending against a Notrump contract and this is the layout of the heart suit. Is it better if East or West leads this suit?

North is the dummy so his-hand is visible to East. It should be apparent to East that it is not a good idea to lead a heart UP TO dummy's strength. West should be the one to lead hearts THROUGH dummy's strength (heft).

"When dummy's on the RIGHT, lead the WEAKEST suit in sight"

In this instance, if East is on lead, she'll look at the dummy for the weakest suit. She'll lead this suit instead of the hearts and will essentially be leading THROUGH the strength of the Declarer UP TO the weakness in the dummy.

### B-O-S-T-O-N

The abbreviation for "Bottom Of Something, Top Of Nothing" refers to partnership lead agreements. Thus, the lead of a low card promises partner a useful honour in the suit led (Bottom of Something). It suggests that partner can return the lead.

Conversely, the lead of a middle or high spot card (Top of Nothing), warns partner that the leader cannot provide help in the suit lead. It indicates no encouragement for partner to return the lead. It asks partner to consider switching to another suit.

## The Impact of the Opening Lead on NoTrump Contracts

<b>Dealer:</b> South	♠ K753	<b>Contract:</b> 3NT
<b>Vul:</b> Both	♥ 4	<b>Declarer:</b> South
	♦ AKJ963	
	♣ Q6	
	N	
♠ 1094	W      E	♠ AQ6
♥ AQ104		♥ 9532
♦ 1052		♦ 874
♣ 1098	S	♣ 432
	♠ J82	
	♥ KJ87	
	♦ Q	
	♣ AJ75	

### Suggested Bidding

South opens 1♣ and North responds 1♦. South shows the second suit by bidding 1♥. It's still possible that the partnership has a spade fit, so North bids 1♠. With only three spades and a singleton diamond, South suggests playing in notrump by bidding 1NT. North has shown both suits and doesn't have a fit with either of South's suits, so North puts the partnership in game in notrump.

### Suggested Opening lead

The opponents have bid all four suits. The guideline in such situations is to lead through strength, up to weakness. So West doesn't want to lead a heart or a club, since that would be leading into South's strength. North bid diamonds before spades, so North likely has more length and strength in diamonds. So West leads the ♠10, through dummy's second suit, hoping partner has something in the suit, or it at least won't give away any tricks.

When leading from a three-card holding headed by one honor (Axx, Kxx, Qxx, Jxx, 10xx) you lead your lowest card.

When leading from a three-card holding headed by no honors (9xx, 8xx, 7xx etc) you lead your top card. These are called top of nothing leads.

When leading from a three-card holding that has two honor cards, lead the top honor if they are touching and the lowest card if they are not. (AKx, KQx, J10x, 109x,) lead the top card. But (AJx, KJx, K10x, Q10x) lead the lowest card.

When leading from any two-card holding, lead the top card.

The rules for leads apply to both the opening lead and any time the suit is being initiated later in the play, unless common sense dictates otherwise.

As a general guideline, honor leads show sequences, high middle cards tend to be top of nothing, and low cards tend to be fourth best. The lead of the 9 always denotes the highest card in that suit.

Always keep your objective in mind. You are trying to set up your suit or your partner's suit before declarer can set up his suit or suits. You have a head start because the defence makes the opening lead. Don't waste your opportunity.

### Leading Partner's Suit against No Trump Contracts

If our partner bids a suit during the auction, but the opponents wind up playing in No Trump, our partner will be expecting us to lead her suit.

#### Guidelines for choosing the card to lead are:

Top of a doubleton - examples

Q 7 (lead the Q); or, 9 3 (lead the 9)

Top of touching honors - examples

J 10 5 2 (lead the J); or, K Q 3 (lead the K)

Low from three or more cards - examples

K 6 4 (lead the 4); or, 973 (lead the 3)

## Opening Leads Against NoTrump Contracts

In order to select the proper opening lead you must listen to the bidding.

With no clues in the bidding the opening leader normally leads his longest suit.

Sequence leads are better than fourth-best leads and take precedence over them. A four-card suit headed by a sequence is usually a better lead than a longer suit without a sequence.

Avoid leading suits that the opponents have bid unless you have threecard or longer sequences in those suits.

Aces, kings, queens, jacks, and tens are considered honor cards. The more honor cards you have in a particular suit the more apt you are to lead the suit. A lead from K1042 is preferable to a lead from K862.

If partner has bid, especially if he has overcalled, you tend to lead his suit. The only exception is if you happen to have a very strong opening lead of your own (KQJxx, for instance, with an outside entry): **see Leading Partners Suit ... following**

Sequence leads against notrump contracts should have **three** cards or longer in the sequence. Holding KQJxx, or QJ10xx, you would lead the top card. But, holding only a TWO card sequence in your longest suit, AKxxx or KQxxx you would lead fourth best against a notrump contract.

A Broken sequence is two touching high cards with a break before the next lower-ranking card. QJ9xx or KQ10xx are broken sequences. Treat a broken sequence like a three-card sequence and lead the top card.

An Interior sequence is a sequence of two or more cards with a higherranking card in the suit. Holding KJ 10x or AJ 10x you would lead the top of your touching cards, the jack. Other possible interior sequences could be A109x, K109x, AQ109, or AK109, in which case you lead the top of touching cards, the ten.

If you have an interior sequence beginning with a nine or less, you still lead fourth best. A9872, K9873, Q9872, or J987, you lead the 7. In order to lead from top of a sequence there must be one honor card in the sequence.

## Play of the Hand

Declarer has six diamond tricks and five club tricks to take on gaining the lead. Declarer just has to hope that the defenders can't take too many tricks before gaining the lead.

### Suggested Defense

When West leads the ♠10, suppose declarer plays low from dummy. East knows from the lead of the ♠10 that South holds the ♠J, so East wins with the ♠Q. It's now East's turn to decide what to lead. Continuing with another spade will only establish dummy's ♠K, and perhaps another spade trick for declarer through length. East applies the same principle that West used on opening lead: lead through strength up to weakness. South has bid hearts and likely has some strength in that suit, and there is heart weakness in the dummy. East may be able to help partner by leading a heart through declarer.

To warn partner that East doesn't hold any strength in hearts, East leads the ♥9, top of nothing. Declarer will probably play the ♥J, and West wins the trick with the ♥Q. Knowing from the first trick that East likely holds the ♠A, and warned by the ♥9 that East doesn't have any help in hearts, West leads another spade.

East wins the ♠A and finishes an excellent defense by leading another heart through declarer. South's ♥K is trapped by West's ♥A and ♥10, and the defenders get two more heart tricks. In total, they get two spades and three hearts before giving up the lead.

### Conclusion

When a defender has to lead an opponent's suit, the guideline is to lead through the suit bid by an opponent rather than up to the opponent's suit, hoping to trap the opponent's high cards with higher cards in partner's hand. In effect, the defenders are taking a finesse by leading toward the cards they hope will take tricks.

Here, the defenders take three finesses. By leading spades, West traps dummy's ♠K. By leading hearts, East traps declarer's ♥K and ♥J. If West had led a heart originally, declarer takes twelve tricks.

## BALANCING

### (A competitive philosophy for bidding)

Sitting in the West position the auction starts .....

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	???

If West passes now, the auction is over. We are sitting in the pass out seat, commonly referred to as the BALANCING SEAT.

This is our hand - ♠QXXX ♥xx ♦KJ10x ♣Axx

We have 10 HCP and not enough points or the right shape to have entered the auction in "Direct Seat".

Now in the Balancing Position we should think competitively. Here's an important equation:  $13+7 = 10+10$

The opponents have **stopped in a part score** and could have  $13+7=20$  points. They have an ESTABLISHED 8-card or longer fit. Our side could also have 20 points, divided  $10+10$ . We could have an 8-card spade fit.

**A Competitive Philosophy: Don't let the opponents play in an established 8-card fit at the two level.**

**Balancing Guideline:** If you have shortness in the opponents' suit (fewer than 3 cards), either overcall a 5 card suit or make a takeout double.

In Balancing position, HCP have nothing to do with it. If the opponents have stopped in 2♥, our side should have approximately half the points in the deck. Otherwise, they would have been trying to get to game. Even if I have 6 or 7 HCP, I still know our partnership has roughly 20 combined points - half the 40 HCP in the deck. When I have 6 or 7 points, partner likely has 13 or 14 points with a hand unsuitable to enter the auction earlier.

With the hand above we should *double* in the balancing seat, asking partner to bid a suit.

If our hand were - ♠Qxxxx ♥xx ♦Axxx ♣xx, we would overcall 2♠ in the Balancing Seat

Go back to our last example. Our combined holding in spades was seven cards. That means the opponents started with six spades. When you play the King and both follow, they have four left. When you cross to the Ace and both follow, they have two left. The numbers get (smaller and it is easier to know when the remaining small cards in dummy are good. Say you lead a third spade from dummy and trump in your hand. If both follow, they have no more spades and dummy's two remaining spades are high. But, if only one opponent follows, they have one spade left and dummy's spades are not yet good. In order to make one of those spades a winner, you must return to dummy, ruff another spade, draw trump, and still be able to return to dummy to use the established spade. ARE YOU HAVING FUN YET?

Six card suits are easier to establish than five card suits, and no good player ever takes his eye off a usable six card suit in dummy.

		♥ J87654		
		Dummy		
♥ A109	W		E	♥ KQ2
		S		
		♥ 3		

Given enough dummy entries and a strong enough trump suit, you can actually get three tricks out of this moth-eaten suit, but you have to attack it early while the dummy entries are still there. First, concede a heart, counting how many they have left, of course. Then you enter dummy two more times to trump hearts. Voila, they don't have any more hearts. Now you must also be sure to remove their trump, if you haven't already, and you must also be sure you have a way back to dummy to use those three hearts.

At times the only entry (entries) to dummy are in the trumps itself. If you establish a side suit by ruffing, you must draw trump **ending** in dummy if you want to use the suit.

Spades are trump and those two tiny spades you see in dummy are high. In order to draw trump ending in dummy, assuming a normal

3-2 division, play the king, queen, and then over to the ace

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Before you begin the play of any contract, check out dummy's long suit to see whether it is usable (has enough entries to set up).

Do it!!!

your hands as safely as possible when you are in a secure contract and as optimistically as possible if you have too many losers.

12. Any five card suit has the potential to provide an extra winner. The same is true if there is a total of seven cards between declarer and dummy. Any seven cards. Three in one hand and four in the other. When you have a total of seven cards, that leaves six cards in the opponents' hands. If those six cards are divided 3-3, the hand that started with the four-card suit will have established an extra winner after the suit has been played three times.

ANY 5 card suit might be established if there are enough entries:

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          ♥ 65432
          Dummy
♥ A1087  W      E  ♥ KQJ9
          S
          ♥ Void
    
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Assume spades are trumps and you have to get rid of a minor suit loser. If you have enough trumps and enough entries, you can actually set up one of dummy's hearts. However, you need five entries to do it - four times to trump hearts and once to get over there to use the last heart.

Yes this is an extreme example, but it does show you what is possible. If you don't have the five entries, look around for another play. Also, you need a little luck - the opponents' hearts must be divided 4-4. But, if you have no other hope ...

More often, the long suit looks like this:

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North (Dummy)
♠ A 7 6 5 4

South (You)
♠ K3
    
```

I'm sure you have noticed by now that when you are establishing dummy's long suit **you must count that suit to know when the small cards in dummy are good**. Most partners don't appreciate the humour in your continuing to trump small cards when the opponents don't have any more.

### COUNTING

When setting up a long suit, the subtraction method for counting the suit works best. Here's how it works:

When we make a balancing call in this position, anyone of three good things might happen:

1. We reach a contract we can make.
2. We go down in our contract but lose only 50 or 100 points instead of the 110 or more points they would receive for making their contract. This small difference is crucial at match point duplicate.
3. We may push them a level higher and then defeat them.

In the balancing position, we bid aggressively on hands we wouldn't dream of acting on in direct position.

**THE PARTNER OF THE BALANCER:** If we're going to follow a competitive philosophy of trying to stop the opponents from playing comfortably at the Two Level in their established 8-card fit, both partners have to be aware that this is our style. If partner makes a balancing bid, we don't want to punish partners effort. It is very important to understand that

The Partner of the Balancer will NEVER raise a balancing action. Remember, the balancer didn't overcall in direct seat. She may have only 6 or 7 points. DO NOT raise partners balancing bids, you will find that you partner will stop balancing!

**WHEN NOT TO BALANCE:** It is very important to understand when to reopen an auction that has died at a low level. In other words, when to BALANCE. Most importantly, it is very important to understand when NOT to balance. **Most balancing decisions should be based on whether or not the opponents have established an 8-card fit. If a fit has NOT been established, it is very dangerous to be balancing. Just pass the auction out**

A fit has not been established until one of your opponents-has RAISED their partner.

```

West  North  East  South
                1♥
Pass  2♥   Pass  ???
    
```

This is one of the most common decisions you will face. You *may not pass* in this situation. Protect your partnership. Time to Balance. They have an established 8 card fit and are trying to stop at the two level. **Don't let them!**

Compare with the following auction:

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	Pass	???

We are in the Balancing Seat. If we pass the auction ends. The opponents have NOT found a fit. The opponents have stopped at the two level, so it's likely we have about half the points. However, there's no guarantee the opponents have found an 8-card fit. Opener has shown a six card suit but responder may have no spades. If the opponents don't have a fit, we may not have a fit either. A balance here is very dangerous. If they potentially have a misfit, you will be much better off in the long run if you choose to defend. Don't Balance. PASS.

Good balancing decisions will earn you many more match points than they will cost you. Partner and you need to understand that every now and then your decision to balance will lead to zero. The potential gain more than outweighs the risk. Learning to balance in the right situations will not only improve your scores, it will serve to frustrate your opponents and earn you respect as a tough competitor!

Most importantly you must notice if the opponents have NOT established a fit and just merely stopped bidding. There is a BIG DIFFERENCE. Don't get involved in hands that sound like misfits. You'll be in trouble if you balance.

But: ***Don't let the opponents play at the two level with an 8-card fit***

## LONG SUIT ESTABLISHMENT IN SUIT CONTRACTS

### Key Pointers

1. The key to roughly fifty percent or more of all suit contract play is long suit establishment.
2. The key factors are losers, entries, and a decent trump suit.
3. Declarer must always figure out in advance how many losers he must get rid of in order to make the hand and how many entries to dummy he needs to do this.
4. If dummy has insufficient entries, declarer should look around for another way of getting rid of losers.
5. One of the most likely suits in which dummy may have an entry or two to his long suit is the trump suit. This means that trumps must be drawn AFTER the long suit has been established and declarer must draw trumps ending in the dummy.
6. When establishing dummy's long suit before drawing trumps, be careful about trumping too low if you have a plentiful supply of high trumps.
7. If dummy's suit is so strong that it does not need establishment, declarer normally draws trumps before using the suit.
8. Creating extra winners will do you no good if the opponents have little trumps to use on your extra winners.
9. Declarer must count both trumps and the suit that he is establishing in order to know exactly how many cards the opponents have in these suits at all times.
10. When establishing dummy's long suit, you might keep in mind that if the opponents have started with an even number of cards in the suit (for example, six cards), they are most likely to divide unevenly (4-2). Conversely, if the opponents have started with an odd number of cards (for example, five cards), they are most likely to break as evenly as possible (3-2).
11. Remember that the only reason why you are establishing dummy's long suit in the first place is because you have too many losers. If you can make your contract without establishing anything, go ahead and do so. The extra tricks are next to meaningless. Play