

Stamford Bridge Club

16th September 2015

More Declarer Play In No Trumps

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Note

The focus this morning is on playing **as safely as possible** to guarantee the contract – don't worry about overtricks unless they come naturally

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Crucial

Before we play a single card

We make a plan – this can never be overemphasised

Those who make a play have a **significant advantage** over those who don't

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No trump play

There are

Five guiding principles

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1 Count your winners

**When you know how many
guaranteed tricks you have you can ...**

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2 Decide whether you need to develop extra tricks to fulfil your contract

**If your sure tricks are insufficient
you know you must look for ways of
making others and one way we do
this is by ...**

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3 Not being afraid to give up the lead

**By knocking out the defence's
top/winning cards (including taking
finesses) our secondary holdings can
be promoted to winning status**

But if we do give up the lead ...

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4 Remember to establish our extra tricks before cashing our sure tricks

**We don't want to establish extra
winners for the defence so we
shouldn't cash sure tricks too early.**

**That may release winners for the
opponents.**

**and the final part of the planning
process ...**

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5 Plan your entries

Dummy play doesn't get more frustrating than establishing winners only to find that there is no entry to cash them

Here is a simple example. You might have wanted to be in 4♠ but 3N is the contract. ♣Q is led.

♠ K Q 9 8 2	♠ A 4 3
♥ J 10 9	♥ A 7 4 3
♦ 7 6 4	♦ K Q J 10
♣ A 3	♣ K 10

So we plan as follows using our guiding principles:

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♠ K Q 9 8 2	♠ A 4 3
♥ J 10 9	♥ A 7 4 3
♦ 7 6 4	♦ K Q J 10
♣ A 3	♣ K 10

1 Counting your winners

Q : How many do we have?

A : 6 (3 spades, 1 heart and 2 clubs)

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♠ K Q 9 8 2	♠ A 4 3
♥ J 10 9	♥ A 7 4 3
♦ 7 6 4	♦ K Q J 10
♣ A 3	♣ K 10

2 Deciding whether you need to develop extra tricks to fulfil your contract

Q: How many extra tricks do we need?

A: 3

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♠ K Q 9 8 2
 ♥ J 10 9
 ♦ 7 6 4
 ♣ A 3

♠ A 4 3
 ♥ A 7 4 3
 ♦ K Q J 10
 ♣ K 10

3 Not being afraid to give up the lead

Q: How will we give up the lead?

A: By playing on diamonds – once the ♦ A is knocked out we have our 3 extra tricks

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♠ K Q 9 8 2
 ♥ J 10 9
 ♦ 7 6 4
 ♣ A 3

♠ A 4 3
 ♥ A 7 4 3
 ♦ K Q J 10
 ♣ K 10

4 Establishing our extra tricks before cashing our sure tricks

Q: What shan't we cash too early?

A: The 3 top spades, ♥ A and the other top club

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♠ K Q 9 8 2
 ♥ J 10 9
 ♦ 7 6 4
 ♣ A 3

♠ A 4 3
 ♥ A 7 4 3
 ♦ K Q J 10
 ♣ K 10

5 Planning your entries

Q: What problems might there be?

A: None but it's good discipline to double-check this

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♠ K Q 9 8 2
 ♥ J 10 9
 ♦ 7 6 4
 ♣ A 3

♠ A 4 3
 ♥ A 7 4 3
 ♦ K Q J 10
 ♣ K 10

Q: Can you think of a plan that doesn't work?

A: Yes, one where we play on spades early. Let's say spades break 4-1 and we play 4 rounds of the suit to enjoy the 5th spade as a winner.

The defence continues clubs. We see the problem – we have failed to count to our intended trick total. We have 4 spades, 1 heart and 2 clubs. That's 7 tricks. We haven't knocked out ♦ A and we'll fall short when the defence cashes 3+ clubs.

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Perhaps the above is mundane but when you next fail in a cold (unbeatable) contract ask yourself

Did I really make a plan?

Or did I muddle through and blamed Lady Luck for deserting me?

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Now an aside on counting losers

Don't do this in no trumps.

It doesn't work. This is a technique for playing suit contracts where we make one hand the master and count the losers from that hand (taking into account the cards in the other hand).

When counting losers we say that we cannot have more losers than we have cards in the suit.

This technique works **because it assumes that we hold trump cards** that stop the opponents cashing more tricks than we have losers in the played suit.

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Let's say we stumble into the wrong contract – 6N instead of 6♠

♠ K Q 9 8 2	♠ A J 10 4 3
♥ A	♥ 2
♦ 7 6 4	♦ A Q J 10
♣ A 4 3 2	♣ K Q 5

The defence leads ♥K. In 6♠ we have potentially a diamond and a club loser. We can always ruff the club loser so the contract always makes. We might make 13 tricks if the diamond finesse works (and we can repeat it).

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♠ K Q 9 8 2	♠ A J 10 4 3
♥ A	♥ 2
♦ 7 6 4	♦ A Q J 10
♣ A 4 3 2	♣ K Q 5

In 6N we have to look at the problem differently.

Counting losers tells us **we have no heart losers** but we know that if the diamond finesse fails **we'll be on the receiving end of an avalanche of heart winners.**

These statements are contradictory.

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No – in no trumps we must switch to **counting winners** – 5 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 3 clubs as sure tricks.

We'll pray the diamond finesse works (and we'll repeat it) to find our extra 2 tricks.

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Let's look at a couple of examples where the defensive cards have a bearing on what we do

Board 1 (Talk)

Board 2 (Talk)

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Two common mistakes when playing in no trumps

1 Playing too quickly at trick 1

Declarers call for a card without having started to make a plan. That plan, no matter how good later, could be scuppered by **trick one inattentiveness**.

2 Cashing sure winners too early

THEY ARE NOT GOING TO GO AWAY – A WINNER IS A WINNER

The result of doing this is to promote needless tricks for the defence.

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So in summary

Count (your winners)

Develop (extra tricks)

Give up (the lead to make more tricks)

Establish (extra winners before cashing sure tricks)

Plan (your entries)

Make up a **mnemonic** by which to remember the stages

(**Charles de Gaulle, Executive President?**)

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Next week

**A few more examples of
no trump play followed
by the usual supervised
play session of 14
boards**

**... and in today's examples you'll find
types of play and technique that we've
looked at before**