

Declarer Play

Make a Plan

Strengths Count your top winners, ie, those tricks you can make without losing the lead

Weakness Work out how many tricks you are short of your target

Opportunities Inspect each suit in turn looking for opportunities to make extra tricks

Threats Think about what can go wrong with your contract and how you can counter it.

Playing in NT

- Count your top winners
- Think about how you will move from hand to hand before you start to play
- When playing in a no trump contract always play the suit in which you need to establish extra tricks before cashing top winners in the other suits
- When cashing top winners or establishing winners start by playing a high card from the hand with the fewer cards
- If, to make a no trump contract, you need to lose the lead to establish tricks, it is usually right, with only one top winner (and sometimes with two) in the suit led, to hold off winning the first round

Playing in a Suit Contract

- In a suit contract, it is particularly important to count the number of tricks that you might lose (losers) as well as those you can win. You may see a way of reducing your losers by ruffing

Managing Trumps

- Unless you have a reason not to, it is wise to draw the opposition's trumps early in the play
- If a side suit needs to be established, it is often right to play it before drawing all the missing trumps
- An established suit needs an entry to cash the winners. Sometimes this entry is in the trump suit
- Ruffing in the short trump suit hand makes extra tricks
- If you run out of trumps, you may be in trouble

Sources of Tricks

FTB Yellow Book pp 6&7

- Top Winners
- Knocking out high cards
- Length tricks

FTB Yellow Book pp 39 & 40

- Lead towards high cards
- The Finesse
 - With AQxx in one hand you may be able to make both the ace and the queen if you lead towards them and the intervening player has the king
 - This is an example of a finesse
 - Usually a finesse has a 50-50 chance of working
 - Leading the queen towards the ace is not a finesse unless you have the jack as well
 - The finesse is a vital tool used to increase the chances of an extra trick but look for other sources first