



Making a Plan

- ♣ You are declarer in a NO Trumps Contract
- ♣ The lead is turned over
- ♣ Dummy is exposed on the table
- ♣ NOW STOP AND THINK.

Survey your Kingdom

Look at your holding in each suit:

- ♣ Any suit in which you have eight or more cards between the two hands is a vital source of tricks a **STRENGTH**.

You will be keen to play this suit **EARLY**, even if you have to lose a trick or two creating the **OPPORTUNITY** to win tricks.

All the statistics and the finesse techniques in the notes on playing trump suits, apply to playing these long suits.

- ♣ Any suit in which you have five or less cards is a **WEAKNESS**. Even if you hold top cards in this suit, keep away from it. You need these cards for getting the lead back when you give it away. The defence will probably lead one of these suits and will keep attacking them. The **THREAT** is that they “establish” winners in these suits.



- ♣ Suits with six or seven cards are problematic, the defence have too many of them.

Where you have seven cards, the six missing ones are likely to split 4 and 2. The THREAT is that opponents will take the last trick(s) in these suits.

However, sometimes you have to test the distribution of the defence's six cards to make your contract.

Look at the lead

- ♣ An honour usually promises the next two e.g. King promises the Queen and Jack.
- ♣ A low value card invites return, suggesting an honour, it is usually the fourth highest, so if it is a 2, that defender probably had a holding of four. If it's a 3 or above defender may have a holding of 5 or more.
- ♣ A middle order card, 7,8,9 may suggest nothing in the leading defender's hand, so missing honours may be held by his/her partner.

Did the defence bid?

- ♣ Any suit bid by the defence is likely to be a THREAT They are likely to attack this suit.



MAKE A PLAN

Managing the lead

The defence may attack a suit where you only have a single control. Consider "holding up" (refusing to play) your high cards to try and exhaust one of the defence of that suit.

The Danger Hand

Often the lead tells you that the defender on lead is a danger to you in a particular suit.

You may choose to try tactics that will put the lead into the non-danger hand.

Tempo

If you have a choice of suits for extra tricks, consider "tempo".

Compare the number of times you must lose the lead to win tricks, to the number of times you can get the lead back.

Sometimes, especially in 1NT, tempo decides your choice of line. It will take three losing rounds to establish a Jack of a suit, but perhaps only one to try a finesse. If you are short of controls, you prefer the finesse and hope to pick up the Jack winner courtesy of the defence.

Sometimes you are so disadvantaged that you decide to settle for a line of play that doesn't make the contract because you will



lose more tricks if you let the opponents have the lead.

Plan the use of your entries

Where are the cards you can use to transfer the lead from one hand to the other? Which are needed for your line of play? Can you establish more?

Carrying out the plan

Once you've chosen your line of play, take your losers early, try finesses, force out Aces. Keep checking that you still have control in each suit.

Once you have tried all the tactics you can. It's time to benefit from your work. Run your long suits

Cash in anything left – but remember not to give information to defence if you can avoid it. You may pick up more tricks in the end play.

"Exit"