

## Bridge Strategy

### **At a No Trump Contract:**

- Your “**high card**” tricks are not usually enough. You need “**long suit**” tricks too. Set up your long suit tricks early, while you still have stoppers in the other suits.
- Illustration: you hold **AK AK AK AK65432**:  
If you start with your 4 Aces & 4 Kings: you will make only 8 tricks. The opponents will take the last 5. If you start with A, K & 6 in your long suit, you will usually make 12-13 tricks.

### **At a Suit Contract:**

- Trump cards in the opponent hands are dangerous. They might trump your high cards.
- Play trump first, to remove all of the opponent trump cards.
- Do this unless you need to trump some losers in dummy first, and then pull trump.

### **Opening Leads (the lead at the very first trick):**

- **Use the opening lead to tell partner something useful.** Don't just lead a random card.
- **Top of touching (consecutive) honours:** Honour cards are A,K,Q,J, and Ten. If you lead an Ace, partner will know you have the King in that suit. If you lead a King, you should also have the Queen. Etc. Don't lead an honour if you don't have the next touching honour.
- **BOSTON:** If you do not have any touching honours, lead the **Bottom Of Something** or the **Top Of Nothing**. The 2, 3, 4 and 5 are low spot cards. The 6, 7, 8 and 9 are high spot cards. If you lead a low spot card, partner can expect you to have an honour in that suit. If you lead a high spot card, you are telling partner that you have NO honour card in that suit.
  - **Versus No Trump:** Top of 3 touching honors or low from your longest & strongest suit.
  - **Versus a suit contract:** Top of nothing is often the best lead.

### **Defensive Signalling – Low Like; High Hate:**

- When partner leads top of touching honours: Play a low spot card (2, 3, 4 or 5) to say you have an adjacent honour. Play a high spot card (9, 8, 7 or 6) to say that you do not.
- When you cannot follow suit, discard a low spot card in a suit where you have an honour, or discard a high spot card in a suit where you have no top honour.

### **Think:**

- **On offence:** When dummy hits the table, take 10-20 seconds to think, to make a plan. How many sure tricks do you have? So how many tricks do you expect to lose? Where can extra tricks be developed? What can be done about the losers ... can they be trumped in dummy ... can they be discarded on extra good cards in dummy?
- **On defence:** You should think too, at the same time. If you need 4 tricks to defeat the contract, where will they come from? If you have only 2 tricks in your hand, then partner must take the other two. Where is partner likely to have some winning cards? Where might you develop an extra trick for the defence?

### **Count:**

- **40 HCP total:** If opener has 13, dummy 10 and you 7, how many does partner have?
- **13 cards per suit:** You think their side has 8 trump and you have 1 ... so partner has 4.