

Playing a Hand

This is an example of what you should do as declarer when playing a hand. First, count your points. You have the following: K53 AKJT5 54 873. You have 12 total points counting the length. Next, look at vulnerability. Both sides are vulnerable. Next, listen to the bidding. The bidding is 1C by RHO you bid 1H, LHO then passes and partner bids 2H. You have a nice hand, but partner should not have enough for you to make game, so you should pass. LHO leads 7 of spades and this is the dummy: 964 Q96 KJ632 Q6. Study the dummy for a few seconds and count your losers (2 spades, 0 hearts, maybe 2 diamonds, and maybe 3 clubs). You can tell from your hands that the opponents can make a part score in clubs, which is worth 110. Therefore, if you make 2 hearts you will get a top and even going down 1 which only gives the opponents 100 should be well above average. What you need to avoid at all costs is going down 2, which is 200. That would be more than any part score the opponents could make and with the high cards your side has they do not have enough to make a game. So, you want to take at least 7 tricks to get a good score. Plan the play at trick #1.

Dummy: 964 Q96 KJ632 Q6

Lead spade 7

Declarer: K53 AKJT5 54 873

Plan 1: Win the second spade, pull trumps and lead a diamond to the king. Rating: D- (this wins only when LHO, who did not open has the diamond ace)

Plan 2: Win the second spade pull trumps and lead a diamond to the jack. Rating D (this wins when LHO, who did not bid has the diamond queen. This is a little better than the above plan)

Plan 3: Win the second spade, pull 2 rounds of trumps and lead a diamond towards dummy. Rating D+ (this wins if you guess diamonds or whenever the opponents never lead the third round of trumps)

Plan 4: Win the second round of spades and immediately lead a diamond to the jack. If it loses to the queen, win the trump shift and lead a second diamond to the king. Rating: C+ (this wins if LHO has either the ace or queen of diamonds)

Plan 5: Forget trying to guess diamonds or pulling trumps all together. Win the second spade and lead a club!! Win the trump return and lead another club. Win the second trump return in your hand (you still have 1 trump in the dummy) and trump your last club. You will win 1 spade trick, 5 hearts in your hand, and 1 club ruff in the dummy for a total of 7 tricks.

Rating: A (you are now ready for the advanced game)

When you see a side suit that is shorter than in the hand that is also shorter or equal to the number of trumps in the other hand, you get an extra trick by ruffing in the short trump hand.