

5 Minute Contract Bridge Puzzles

For Novices and Advancing Players

Bruce W. Blakely



Lesson 5: Holding Up in a No Trump Contract

A No Trump contract is a race. If you are in 3 No Trump, your goal is to take nine tricks before your opponents take five. You don't have a trump suit to protect you from the opponents running their long suit. You count the winners you have "off the top," that is, without giving up the lead, then see if there is a way to develop enough additional tricks to make your contract.

Hold Up strategy employ as declarer to try to keep your opponents from running their long suit on you. The idea is, when the defenders lead your weakest suit, you refuse to win enough times so RHO does not have any more cards in the opening leader's long suit. This severs the opponents' communications. RHO no longer can use the opening leader's suit to get his or her partner back on lead.

A key to this strategy is the Rule of Seven. When the defenders lead your weakest suit, you add the number of cards you have in that suit in hand with the number of cards your dummy has in the suit, and subtract this number from seven. The answer is the number of times you should hold up before winning the lead. Keep in mind, you should only hold up when the defenders lead your weakest suit and there may be other considerations which take priority over this Rule of Seven.

When Opening a minor REVIEW

- What do you open if you have 13 points

XX

X

XXXXXX

XXXXXX

When Opening a minor REVIEW

- What do you open if you have 13 points

XX

X

XXXXXX

XXXXXX

1D

When Opening a minor

- What do you open if you have 13 points

XXX

X

XXXX

XXXXXX

When Opening a minor

- What do you open if you have 13 points

XXX

X

XXXX

XXXXXX

1D

When Opening a minor

- If you have 13 points

XXX X XXXX XXXXX **1D** 1H 2C

Your partner now knows you are 2 suited with Clubs and Diamonds, and 12-16 points. Other **poor** options than bidding 2C:

Pass: New suit from an unpassed hand, forcing, don't pass.

1S: Must have 4-card Spade suit

1N: 1N denies 4 Spades and shows 2-3 Hearts

2D: Rebidding your suit shows 6-card Diamond suit

2H: Must have 4-card Heart suit

If the bidding had gone: 1C 1H **2D**

Bidding **2D** is a Reverse. Forcing your partner to the 3 level. For a Reverse, must have 17+ points, 1st suit longer than the 2nd suit. This is why we open 1D and not 1C, to avoid Reversing.

When Opening a minor

- What do you open if you have 13 points

XXXX

XXX

XXX

XXX

1C

When you are 3/3 in the minors, now you open 1C. You have a 4-card major and can bid up the line at the 1 level.

When Opening a minor

- What do you open if you have 17 points

XX

XX

XXXX

XXXXXX

When Opening a minor

- What do you open if you have 17 points

XX

XX

XXXX

1C 1S **2D**

XXXXX

Now you can bid a higher-ranking suit at the 2 level.

Partner now knows you are 2 suited, Clubs are longer than Diamonds and you have 17+ points, a **Reverse!**

Hand Number 21

Bidding Questions

How many points do you have?

What is your opening bid?

South

♠ AK5

♥ J7

♦ A74

♣ J10743

South

♠ AK5

♥ J7

♦ A74

♣ J10743

Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
		1C	P
1H	P	?	

North

♠ J32
♥ AK42
♦ 102
♣ KQ98

Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
		1C	P
1H	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

South

♠ AK5
♥ J7
♦ A74
♣ J10743

Contract: 3 No Trump

Opening Lead: King of Diamonds

How many sure tricks do you have?

North

♠ J32
♥ AK42
♦ 102
♣ KQ98

Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
		1C	P
1H	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

South

♠ AK5
♥ J7
♦ A74
♣ J10743

Contract: 3 No Trump

Opening Lead: King of Diamonds

How many sure tricks do you have? **5**

Did your opponents lead your weakest suit?

North

♠ J32
♥ AK42
♦ 102
♣ KQ98

Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
		1C	P
1H	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

South

♠ AK5
♥ J7
♦ A74
♣ J10743

Contract: 3 No Trump

Opening Lead: King of Diamonds

How many sure tricks do you have? **5**

Did your opponents lead your weakest suit? **Yes, 5 diamonds & 1 stopper.**

Do you hold up, and if so, how many times do you hold up?

North

♠ J32
♥ AK42
♦ 102
♣ KQ98

Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
		1C	P
1H	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

South

♠ AK5
♥ J7
♦ A74
♣ J10743

Contract: 3 No Trump

Opening Lead: King of Diamonds

How many sure tricks do you have? **5**

Did your opponents lead your weakest suit? **Yes, 5 diamonds & 1 stopper.**

Do you hold up, and if so, how many times do you hold up? **Yes: 7-5 = 2**

What suit do you work on first when you get on lead?

North

♠ J32
♥ AK42
♦ 102
♣ KQ98

Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
		1C	P
1H	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

South

♠ AK5
♥ J7
♦ A74
♣ J10743

Contract: 3 No Trump

Opening Lead: King of Diamonds

How many sure tricks do you have? **5**

Did your opponents lead your weakest suit? **Yes, 5 diamonds & 1 stopper.**

Do you hold up, and if so, how many times do you hold up? **Yes: $7 - (2 + 3) = 2$**

What suit do you work on first when you get on lead? **Clubs**

	North	
	♠ J32	
	♥ AK42	
	♦ 102	
	♣ KQ98	
West		East
♠ Q84		♠ 10976
♥ 9853		♥ Q106
♦ K QJ53		♦ 986
♣ 6	South	♣ A52
	♠ AK5	
	♥ J7	
	♦ A74	
	♣ J10743	

Hold Up: $7 - (3 + 2) = 2$

Contract: 3 No Trump
Opening Lead: King of Diamonds

West
♠ Q84
♥ 9853
♦ ~~KQ~~~~J~~53
♣ ~~6~~

North
♠ J32
♥ AK42
♦ ~~10~~2
♣ KQ98

South
♠ AK5
♥ J7
♦ ~~A~~~~7~~4
♣ J10743

East
♠ 10976
♥ Q106
♦ ~~9~~~~8~~6
♣ ~~A~~52

Hold Up: $7 - (3 + 2) = 2$

Contract: 3 No Trump
Opening Lead: King of Diamonds

When East wins the lead with their Ace of Clubs, they are unable to return a Diamond to West. Whatever East plays, South will get in and run Clubs. South makes a minimum of 9 tricks, maybe 10 if opponents do not defend properly.

If South did not hold up twice, East gets in with the Ace of Clubs and returns a Diamond to partner. West will run Diamonds and contract down one instead of making game.

		North		
West	♠	J32	East	♠ 10976
	♥	AK42		♥ Q106
	♦	102		♦ 986
	♣	KQ98		♣ A52
		South		
West	♠	Q84	East	♠ 10976
	♥	9853		♥ Q106
	♦	KQJ53		♦ 986
	♣	6		♣ A52
		South		
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