

# Play of the Hand Declarer Plan

## The **ABC's**

- A - Assess** The Situation
- B - Browse** Declarer Checklist  
(to develop extra tricks)
- C - Consider** The Order

# **Play of the Hand - Declarer Plan**

**Factors to Consider:**

**The Opening Lead**

**The Bidding**

# Declarer Checklist – The ABC's

## **A**ssess the Situation

**G**oal

**T**ricks – Sure or Losing

**E**xtra Tricks Needed / Possible

# Declarer Checklist – The ABC's

## Assess the Situation

**Goal** – number of tricks required to make the contract.

# Declarer Checklist – The ABC's

## Assess the Situation

### Count your tricks

**In No Trump** – Count those that can be taken without giving up the lead

### Sure Tricks

**In a Suited contract** – Count your losing tricks.

**Extra Tricks Needed** – **Goal minus Sure/ Losing Tricks**

# Declarer Checklist – The ABC's

**B**rowse Declarer's Checklist  
to Develop Extra Tricks

**Promotion**  
**Length**  
**The Finesse**  
**Trumping In Dummy**

# Browse Declarer's Checklist To Develop Extra Tricks

## Promotion

By driving out the high cards, you are promoting cards within your hand.

Example 1:	Dummy	Declarer
	♦ 9 7 3	♦ K Q J 10 8

Declarer has four possible tricks in the diamond suit once the Ace has been driven out. This is called “promoting” the diamond suit / winners.

# **Browse Declarer's Checklist to Develop Extra Tricks**

## **Length**

**Long Suits** in the combined hands can be a potential source of tricks.

**Sometimes you need to lose a trick or two to make tricks!**

# Consider this hand

**West – Dummy**

**♦ Q 9**

**East - Declarer**

**♦ J 10 8 4 3 2**

**In a NT contract, how many tricks are you going to take in Diamonds?**

# The Finesse

Lead towards the card you wish to take a trick hoping the higher honor is located in a favorable position.

Examples:

	Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4
<b>Dummy</b>	♠ A Q	♠ A 4 3	♠ K 3	♠ 9 4 5
<b>Declarer</b>	♠ 9 8	♠ Q 5 2	♠ 7 6	♠ A J 10 3

How do I maximize the number or tricks?

# The Finesse

Lead towards the card you wish to take a trick hoping the higher honor is located in a favorable position.

## Examples:

	Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4
Dummy	♠ A Q	♠ A 4 3	♠ K 3	♠ 9 4 5
Declarer	♠ 9 8	♠ Q 5 2	♠ 7 6	♠ A J 10 3

Hand 1 – lead the 9 of spades towards the queen. Lead towards the card you wish to take a trick.

Hand 2 – Win the Ace of spades, then lead a low spade towards the Queen.

Hand 3 – Lead a low card towards the King from declarer's hand.

Hand 4 – the 75% Finesse. You are missing the King and Queen of this suit. Lead from Dummy towards the Declarer **twice**, play low if RHO does not cover. 75% of the time, this finesse will work and you will lose only one trick to the opponents. 25% of the time you will lose two tricks.

# How many tricks do I make here?

<b>Example 1:</b>	<b>Dummy</b>	<b>Declarer</b>
	♠ 9 7 3	♠ A K Q J 10
	♥ 2	♥ A 3

**The trump suit is Spades.**

# Trumping Losers in Dummy

<b>Example 1:</b>	<b>Dummy</b>	<b>Declarer</b>
	♠ 9 7 3	♠ A K Q J 10
	♥ 2	♥ A 3

The trump suit is Spades. If declarer takes all five spade tricks and then the Ace of Hearts, declarer gets **6** tricks.

However, if declarer plays the Ace of hearts, then trumps The 3 of hearts in Dummy, declarer gets **7** tricks.

**Declarer gains a trick by ruffing in dummy!**

# How many tricks do I make here?

**Example 2:**

**Dummy**

♠ 9 7 3

♥ A 3

**Declarer**

♠ A K Q J 10

♥ 2

**The trump suit is Spades.**

# Trumping Losers in Dummy

If Declarer has the greater length in the trump suit, which is usually the case, there is **no advantage to ruffing in declarer's hand.**

<b>Example 2:</b>	<b>Dummy</b>	<b>Declarer</b>
	♠ 9 7 3	♠ A K Q J 10
	♥ A 3	♥ 2

The trump suit is Spades.

Declarer has **6** winners, 5 spades and the Ace of Hearts

If declarer were to play the Ace of Hearts and then lead The three of hearts to trump in his hand, he will still only have **6** winners.

# Trumping Losers in Dummy

To recognize the opportunity to ruff in dummy, look for side suits (non trump suits) that have more cards in declarer's hand than in the dummy:

<b>Example 3:</b>	<b>Dummy</b>	<b>Declarer</b>
	♦ 7 3	♦ A K 4

**Declarer has 2 winners in the Diamond suit. After winning the Ace and King of diamonds, declarer can get a third trick by trumping the 4 of diamonds in dummy.**

# Trumping Losers in Dummy

Look for side suits that have more cards in declarer's hand than in the dummy:

<b>Example 4:</b>	<b>Dummy</b>	<b>Declarer</b>
	♣ 8	♣ 7 2

Declarer has no winners in the club suit. If declarer leads a club and gives up a trick to defenders, dummy will now be void of clubs. On regaining the lead, declarer can lead the remaining club and ruff in dummy to get a trick.

# **Declarer Checklist – The ABC's**

## **Consider the Order**

**Be In the Right Place at the Right Time**

**Develop Extra Tricks Early**

**Take your tricks and run with enough to make the contract before something goes wrong.**

**Draw Trumps unless there is a reason not to!**

**Play the High card from the short side first**

# **C**onsider the Order

**Be In the Right Place at the Right Time**

## **Transportation**

**from declarer's hand to dummy is very important. You must consider this while planning the play.**

# Consider the Order

## Develop Extra Tricks Early

You must be willing to lose tricks to set up winning tricks. In No trump, **you must develop the extra tricks early before the opponents have time to knock out all your stoppers.**

# Consider the Order

**Take your tricks and run with enough to make the contract before something goes wrong.**

**In duplicate bridge, it is important to win as many tricks as possible. Otherwise, your opponents will score higher than you.**

**However, sometimes, when the opponents can defeat your contract by changing to another suit, it is advisable to **“Take Your Tricks and Run”****

# Consider the Order

**Draw Trumps unless there is a reason not to!**

It is usually best to **draw trumps first** to avoid the opponents from trumping your winning tricks.

There are exceptions – Example; Contract is 4 ♠ by East  
**South leads the King of Hearts**

**West - Dummy**

♠ Q 6 3

♥ 3

♦ A 8 6 5

♣ K 9 7 3 2

**East - Declarer**

♠ K J 10 9 8

♥ A 8 4

♦ K 4 3

♣ Q 10

**Plan your play! Which cards and suits are losing tricks?**

# Consider the Order

South leads the King of Hearts

**West - Dummy**

♠ Q 6 3

♥ 3

♦ A 8 6 5

♣ K 9 7 3 2

**East - Declarer**

♠ K J 10 9 8

♥ A 8 4

♦ K 4 3

♣ Q 10

Declarer counts five losers.

Declarer needs to trump twice in dummy to make this contract.

Declarer wins with the Ace of Hearts and immediately trumps a low heart in dummy.

Declarer does not lead a spade at this time as the opponents can win with the Ace and return another spade to eliminate the chance of ruffing another trick in dummy.

Declarer must return to his hand with the King of Diamonds and trump the second heart trick to secure the contract.

# Consider the Order

Play the High card from the short side first

East is Declarer in a 3 No Trump Contract  
South leads the King of Hearts

**West - Dummy**

♠ 10 6 3  
♥ Q  
♦ K Q J 9 8 7  
♣ 9 7 3

**East - Declarer**

♠ K Q J  
♥ A 8 4  
♦ A 4  
♣ A K 10 4 2

Plan Your Play – Count Sure Tricks – Be aware of what is happening at the table (ie, opening lead)

# Consider the Order

Play the High card from the short side first

East is Declarer in a 3 No Trump Contract  
South leads the King of Hearts

**West - Dummy**

♠ 10 6 3  
♥ Q  
♦ K Q J 9 8 7  
♣ 9 7 3

**East - Declarer**

♠ K Q J  
♥ A 8 4  
♦ A 4  
♣ A K 10 4 2

Declarer counts 9 sure tricks: 1 Heart, 6 diamonds, and 2 clubs. As the opponents led hearts, declarer knows they will return to the heart suit and defeat the contract once the Ace of hearts has been played. Declarer must “Take the tricks and run”.

Declarer must play the diamond suit carefully. Declarer must play the Ace from the short side, then go to declarer and take the 5 winning tricks. If declarer plays the king first, then to the Ace, there is no means to get back to the winning tricks in dummy.

# Consider this hand

## West - Dummy

♠ 9 8 7

♥ 4

♦ 9 4 3 2

♣ 9 8 7 5 2

## East - Declarer

♠ A K Q J 10 2

♥ A 3

♦ 10 8 7

♣ Q 10

**How many losers do you have?  
Name specifically the loser and the suit?  
How many tricks are you going to take?**

# Consider this hand

## West - Dummy

♠ 9 8 7

♥ 4 2

♦ 9 4 3 2

♣ 9 8 7 5

## East - Declarer

♠ A K Q J 10 2

♥ A 3

♦ 10 8 7

♣ Q 10

**How many losers do you have?  
Name specifically the loser and the suit?  
How many tricks are you going to take?**

# Consider this hand

## West - Dummy

♠ 9 8 7 6 5

♥ 4

♦ A 5 4 3 2

♣ A 4

## East - Declarer

♠ A K Q J 10 2

♥ A 9 8 6

♦ 10

♣ K 3

**How many losers do you have?  
Name specifically the loser and the suit?  
How many tricks are you going to take?**