

Maximise Your Possibilities

No hand to discuss this week, but a look at a fairly common suit combination. The Encyclopaedia of Bridge has every combination possible and the best line to make a certain number of tricks.

A not uncommon suit combination which comes up at the table is

AJxxx opposite K92

To make your contract you must make four tricks in the suit or put another way avoid two losers.

How would you play the suit assuming entries back and forth are not a problem.

OPTIONS

Play K then plan to finesse the J – will make all five tricks if the suit is 3/2 and the finesse works, four if the Q wins

Play the top two honours – will make all five tricks if the doubleton Q falls, four if the suit breaks 3/2

As we can see as long as the suit breaks 3/2 avoiding two losers is not a problem.

Good bridge considers what can go wrong and take a safety play if possible.

A 5/0 break cannot be coped with, but what if the suit breaks 4/1? Well you can guarantee four tricks no matter which defender holds four cards.

You must start with the Ace, then play low to the K9. Cover whatever card is played by the defender, if the next hand shows out then either the nine wins or the king takes the ten leaving the nine to force the queen and Jx as winners.

Alternatively if the hand shows out on the second card, win the king and you then play the nine towards Jxx, the defender with QT can do nothing but take his queen.

Take a pack of cards and work it out for yourself.

Every extra edge helps.