BEGINNERS' LESSONS
Welcome

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Summary from Last Week

- Open 1NT if you have **12-14 points** and a **balanced hand**.

- A balanced hand has one of only 3 possible shapes: 4333, 4432 or 5332 **if the 5-card suit is a minor.**

- **Responder is the boss**.

- With a **balanced hand**, Responder **passes with 0-10 points**, **invites game by bidding 2NT with 11-12 points**, or **bids game, ie 3NT, with 13+ points**.

- With an **unbalanced hand**, Responder makes a **weakness takeout to 2 of a suit** of 5+ cards with 0-10 points; Opener *MUST* than pass. With 12+ points, Responder forces to game by bidding **3 of a 5-card suit** or **bidding game in his/her suit directly with a 6+ card suit**. After the sequence 1NT – 3♥ or 3♠, **the 1NT bidder chooses 3NT if s/he has a doubleton in that suit, or 4 of Responder's suit.**

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The Play of the Hand in No Trump Contracts

- The **Declarer** is the person who plays the hand
- The **opening lead** is made by the person on Declarer's left
- **Dummy** lays their cards out on the table
- The cards laid on the table are also known as the **Dummy**

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The Play of the Hand in No Trump Contracts

- Declarer plays their own cards AND Dummy's cards; each of the 4 players plays a card, proceeding clockwise around the table

- A **trick** is a collection of 4 cards – one from each player

- A player **must follow suit** where possible – otherwise may discard any card from their hand

- The **highest card of the suit led wins the trick**

- If you win the trick, **you lead to the next trick**

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How the Cards are Placed

- Each player keeps their own cards in front of them
- If your partnership **wins the trick, the card is placed vertically** in front of you
- If your partnership **loses the trick, the card is placed horizontally** in front of you

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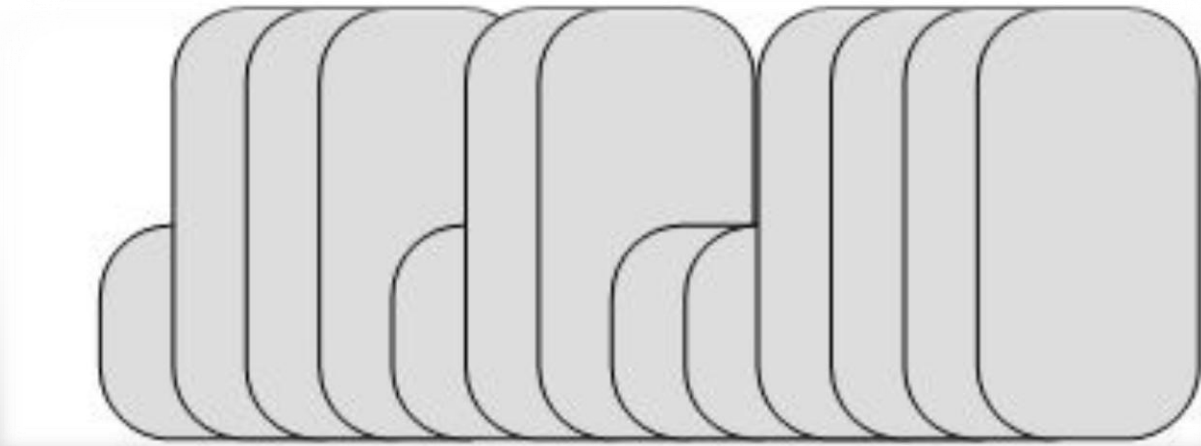
The aim of the play

- Declarer aims to take enough tricks, using both his own and Dummy's cards, to fulfil his contract – eg, 9 tricks in a contract of 3NT. The fact that Declarer can see all 26 of his side's cards can make this task a little easier.

- On the other hand, the Defenders aim to use their combined assets to defeat the contract, eg to take 5 or more tricks against Declarer's contract of 3NT.

- Very rarely, Declarer will have enough top high cards to make his contract without doing anything fancy; the play is then simply a matter of playing out these high cards (known as **cashing tricks**).

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The aim of the play

♠ (A K) 8   ♠ (Q) 7 3
♥ (A) 8 7   ♥ (K) 10 5
♦ 8 6 5   ♦ (A) 7 4 3 2
♣ (A K) 4 2   ♣ 8 6

- Let's suppose that West is Declarer in the contract of 2NT; s/he therefore needs 8 tricks to fulfil the contract.

- Each of the Declarer's A and K of ♠ and Dummy's Q of ♠ can win one trick (but be careful not to play both the A and the Q on the same trick!).

- Similarly, the A and K of ♥ will win one trick each, and the A of ♦ and the A and K of ♣ will each win one trick.

- This brings the total to the required 8; contract made!

Contract = 3NT,   Lead = ♠K

♠=1, ♥=2, ♦=1, ♣=4 ... Total = 8

How many certain tricks?

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Contract = 3NT,   Lead = ♠K

♠	♠	♠	♥	♥	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♦	♦	♦
8	3	2	9	3	A	K	J	4	3	8	6	5

♠	♠	♠	♥	♥	♥	♥	♣	♣	♦	♦	♦	♦
A	7	6	A	K	7	2	Q	2	A	10	9	7

♣ is our best suit – there are only 6 out so our 5th club should come good … BUT we have to play the ♣Q first or we will be cut off from Dummy

How many certain tricks?

Declarer's task - make a plan!

As declarer, you need a certain number of tricks to make your contract. When dummy goes down, you must **STOP** for a moment before playing a card and make a plan as to how you are going to make those tricks.

The plan will only come into being by careful, logical thought on your part; it will not appear outside the window or on the ceiling - although that's where most people seem to look for it!
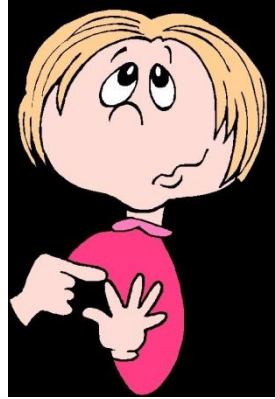
Declarer's task - make a plan!

A good, logical way to plan a hand is to consider it in the following way:
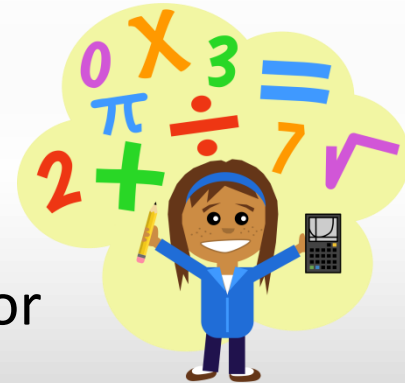
Tricks

First count your top winners. These are the tricks that you can make straight away without losing the lead.

How many more do I need?

Next, work out how many tricks you are short of the number needed to make the contract. If you are lucky, the number of tricks you can make already will equal (or exceed) the number needed for the contract, and all you need to do is cash them.

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Declarer's task - make a plan!

Where will the extra tricks come from?

Inspect each suit in turn looking for opportunities to make extra tricks. Some opportunities are not as good as others, and you will need to choose the best.

Remember:

If you need ten tricks for your contract, they do not have to be the first ten tricks. Executing a plan may involve losing the lead once or even twice!

Establishing a long suit for extra winners

♠ A K 8
♥ A 8 7
♦ (8 6 5)
♣ A K 4 2

♠ Q 7 3
♥ K 10 5
♦ (A 7 4 3 2)
♣ 8 6

- Most experienced players will be in the game contract of 3NT on these two hands (two balanced hands with 27 points between them). So how can we make the 9 tricks required now?

- One place that we might look for the extra tricks that we need is **a long suit** (ie, a suit with more cards than the opponents). The only such suit here is the ♦ suit, so we'll turn our attention there.

- The opponents have some very good cards in this suit, namely the K, Q, J, 10 and 9, so it may not look like a good bet at first sight. However, with just 5 cards missing, it is quite likely that one opponent has 3 of them and the other the remaining 2.

Establishing a long suit for extra winners

♠ A K 8
♥ A 8 7
♦ 8 6 5
♣ A K 4 2

♠ Q 7 3
♥ K 10 5
♦ A 7 4 3 2
♣ 8 6

- Thus we aim to lose two tricks in the ♦ suit, but in the process we shall set up two extra tricks in the suit for our side. Now let's look at the entire sequence of play.

- Let's suppose that the opponent on lead (North in this case) leads the J♠. We win this with the ace, say, and immediately play a ♦ from our hand (remember, the hand that won the trick leads to the next one). We win this with the ace of ♦, and play a second ♦ from dummy. An opponent will win this with one of the missing high cards, but no worries!

- We next win whatever card they play, let's say the 10 ♠, and play a 3rd diamond. An opponent will win, but that is the last enemy card in the suit.

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Establishing a long suit for extra winners

♠ 8
♥ A 8 7
♦ -
♣ A K 4 2

♠ Q
♥ K 10 5
♦ (3 2)
♣ 8 6

- After these first 5 tricks have gone (two rounds of ♠ and three of ♦), the two hands look as above. The big point is that the tiny 3 and 2 of ♦ are now winners, because the opponents have not got any!

- So now we win whatever the opponents return, if necessary play a little card from our hand to get to one of dummy's remaining big cards, and cash those wonderful winning little ♦.

- Now count how many tricks we have made (or shall make). We win tricks with the A, K and Q of ♠; the A and K of ♥; the A, 3 and 2 of ♦; and the A and K of ♣ - not just 9, but 10 tricks! The process of turning little cards in a long suit into winners is called **establishing** or **setting up the suit**.

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Establishing a long suit for extra winners

- We have spent a considerable time on this one example, because establishing a suit for extra winners is one of the most important play techniques in the game. To summarise:

- If we need extra tricks to make our contract, **look to the suit with the most cards in it** (between both hands).

- You will almost certainly have to lose a trick or two in the process of establishing the suit, but more tricks will come back later – however, do remember that there are no extra prizes for winning your tricks first!

- **Do not play out your winners in your other (shorter) suits** before establishing your long suit. If you do this **(a)** you will set up extra tricks for the defence to win when they win the lead (in other words, you will have established the defenders' suit for them), and/or **(b)** you may need the high cards in your short suits as entries to cash the established winners.

Establishing a long suit for extra winners

♠ A K 8   ♠ Q 7 3
♥ A 8 7   ♥ K 10 5
♦ 8 6 5   ♦ A 7 4 3 2
♣ A K 4 2   ♣ 8 6

- Another comment on the play of this hand. We said that we would win the first trick, play a ♦ to the ace, and then continue playing the ♦ suit. In this way, we would win the first ♦ trick, then lose the 2nd and 3rd, and later win the 4th and 5th.

- However, sometimes it is convenient, and even necessary, to lose the 1st, and even 2nd, trick, and then win the 3rd, 4th and 5th. In this example, that would mean playing a small ♦ from **both** hands at trick 2, even though we could have won it with the ace. We shall still eventually win 3 tricks and lose 2 tricks in the suit, as before, but in a different order. This process of losing a trick deliberately when you could have won it is called **ducking the trick**. We shall see examples of this later on.

Taking a finesse for extra winners

- The **FINESSE** is an attempt to gain a trick with a card that would normally be beaten by a higher card.

- Generally you should play a low card **TOWARDS** honour cards, hoping that the second player has the missing honour card.

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Taking a finesse for extra winners

Dummy   A Q 3

You   9 7 4

How can we make 2 tricks in this suit?

Play a low card <u>TOWARDS</u> the Dummy, and play the Queen if 2nd player does not play the King

We are hoping that the 2nd player has the missing KING

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Taking a finesse for extra winners

Dummy   **A 9 8**

You   **Q J 10**

How can we make 2 tricks in this suit?

Play the Queen. If 2nd player does not play the King, play a low card

We are hoping that the 2nd player has the missing KING

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Taking a finesse for extra winners

Dummy K 9 8

You   9 7 4

How can we make 1 trick in this suit?

Play a low card <u>TOWARDS</u> the King if 2nd player does not play the Ace

We are hoping that the 2nd player has the missing ACE

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Taking a finesse for extra winners

Dummy   K Q 8

You   4 3 2

How can we make 2 tricks in this suit?

Play a low card <u>TOWARDS</u> the King if 2nd player does not play the Ace … then repeat playing <u>TOWARDS</u> the Queen

We are hoping that the 2nd player has the missing ACE

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Taking a finesse for extra winners

As a **GENERAL** rule

When you have missing honours, keep an eye out for an opportunity to **FINESSE** hoping that the **second player** has the missing honours

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