

Lesson 4

Pre-emptive Bids

Strong 2 Club Opening

Blackwood

Entries

Establishing a suit at No Trump

Preemptive Openings

- Sometimes it will score better to take a small penalty for not making a part-score contract than to allow opponents to make their contract
- If you have weak hand (6-10 HCPs) and a long suit (6 cards), you can open at the 2 level
- Long ago an opening at this level showed a very strong hand, but the modern trend is to show a strong hand in other ways, and reserve 2-level openings for weak hands
- Such describes your hand well for partner and takes away a lot of bidding room from opponents

Guidelines

- 6 cards, 6-10 points, some honors in the suit
- No outside 4 card major (why?)
- More aggressive in third seat, not used in 4th seat
- More aggressive when “green versus red”
- Spades are particularly obnoxious
- Can also take the form of a “weak preemptive overcall”
- Preemptor has told his story and doesn’t bid again*
- Don’t pre-empt a pre-empt

Examples

- ♠ KQJ1082 ♥ 2 ♦ J108 ♣ 32
- ♠ J98542 ♥ A2 ♦ J108 ♣ J32
- ♠ KJ9852 ♥ K23 ♦ J18 ♣ J32

Responding when partner pre-empt

- Raise with support (3 cards)
- Double-raise with 4 cards, etc.
- Raise to game using “Rule of 17”: # of trumps plus HCPs
- Bid 2NT to “ask for a feature” (Ace or King) if considering game

Bidding Against a Pre-empt

- Do not pre-empt a pre-empt
- Bid if you are strong
- Double is for take-out

Practice Hand

North Deals ♠ K Q 7 5 4 2

None Vul ♥ 10

♦ 9 8 7

♣ 8 7 6

♠ —

♥ A 6 5 4 3 2

♦ A K Q

♣ A K Q J



♠ A 6 3

♥ K Q J

♦ J 10 6 2

♣ 4 3 2

♠ J 10 9 8

♥ 9 8 7

♦ 5 4 3

♣ 10 9 5

5
23 11
1

EW 7N; EW 7♥; EW 7♦; EW 7♣; EW 2♠

Par -1520

Blackwood

- Recall that 1 of a suit promised 12-21 points
- What do we do with 22+ High Card Points?
- Blackwood. Open 2♣
- Shows 22+ HCPs, any distribution, says nothing about clubs
- Does not have to be alerted as it is very common
- Gives up weak pre-emptive opening with 6♣s
- With 25-26 points balanced, open 3NT (other agreements are possible)

Responses

- Partner must not pass, even with zero points: partner is unlimited and may have no ♣s!
- Most common response is 2♦ “waiting”
- Says nothing about ♦s. Says “I have 13 cards and a pulse. Tell me more about your hand”
- If responder has 8+ points and he can bid 2NT or 2 of a Major (with a good 5-card Major) instead of 2♦
- You will see opponents using “step responses”. These are old-fashioned and no longer considered good. They tend to wrong-side the contract and make finding a fit more difficult

Opener's Rebid

- 2NT: balanced and 22-24 points (too strong to have opened 2NT)
- 3NT: balanced and 27-28 points (too strong to have opened 3NT)
- A suit: shows 5+ cards in that suit (too strong to have opened one of that suit)
- Stayman or Jacoby transfers if responder bid 2NT

Responder's Rebid

- Proceeds with the same priorities as if partner had made a 'normal' opening
- Raise partner's major suit if a fit is present
- Use Stayman or Jacoby Transfers to find a Major Suit fit if partner rebid NT
- Show a 4 card major (attempting to find a major suit fit)
- Bid no-trump if balanced
- Raise partner's minor suit
- Bid no-trump even if unbalanced
- Bid another minor suit
- Bid 3♣ "second negative" with 0-3 points

Examples:

Opener

♠KQJ5

♥AKQ

♦AJT9

♣K96

2♣

2NT²

3♠

Responder

♠A642

♥J87

♦87

♣T752

2♦¹

3♣³

4♠

1. Artificial, "negative" or "waiting". 0-7 points.
2. 23-24 points, balanced. Non-forcing.
3. Stayman.

Opener

♠KQ5

♥AKQ87

♦AJ

♣KJ6

2♣

3♦²

3NT

Responder

♠A642

♥T5

♦Q75

♣A752

2NT¹

3♥

6NT

1. Natural, balanced, 8+ points.
2. Jacoby Transfer to hearts.

Slow Shows

You have learned to raise more with a stronger hand.

1 ♠ - 2 ♠ (6-9/10 points)

1 ♠ - 3 ♠ (10/11-12 points)

Sometimes however, a better agreement is with a stronger hand you “go slow”, and with a weaker hand you raise more right away!

When you already know that a game-level contract, at a minimum, is a certainty, and you are interested in whether slam is possible, go slow. When you don't think slam is a possibility, jump right to game to let partner know your feelings.

Recall if partner opened 1 of a Major and you had a fit and you were very strong (13+ points), you were suggested to bid a different suit to “temporize” rather than bidding 4 ♠ right away. You knew (but partner didn’t) that you would end up in at least a ♠ contract at the game level, but by forcing partner to bid again, you have a chance to learn more about his hand in case a slam might be possible

There is a similar concept here when raising partner’s suit with a fit. Assuming you have 4+ points (in which case you bid 3 ♣ 2nd negative), a game-level contract is a certainty. If slam is a possibility, you want to “go slow” (raise only one level). This allows more room to explore. If slam is not a possibility, you jump to game immediately.

Many pairs will use this room to “bid controls”

Opener

♠KQ5

♥AKQ87

♦AJ

♣KJ6

2♣

2♥

Responder

♠A642

♥T952

♦Q543

♣5

2♦¹

3♥²

1. Negative.

2. A maximum hand (at the top of the 0-7 range) with slam interest in hearts. In practice, 6♥ is a reasonable contract.

Opener

♠KQ5

♥AKQ87

♦AJ

♣KJ6

2♣

2♥

Responder

♠T642

♥T952

♦Q543

♣5

2♦¹

4♥²

1. Negative.

2. A weak hand (at the bottom of the 0-7 range) with heart support but no slam interest.

Dealing with interference

- If 2 ♣ is doubled, responder can redouble with 4+ good clubs, or simply make his conventional response.
- If 2 ♣ is overcalled, responders bids are natural. Double is for penalty, new suits are natural, no trump responses promise a stopper in the enemy suit. There is no longer a 2 ♦ negative/waiting bid—pass with a bad hand.

Summary

- 2♣ opening shows 22+ HCP
- 2♦ is the usual response, to allow opener to further describe his hand
- 3♣ is the ‘second negative’ response, warning partner of a bad hand (0-2/3 points)
- Bidding thereafter is similar to ‘basic bidding’—note that ‘slow shows’: jumping right to game shows a weaker hand, while raising only one level gives more room and shows slam interest

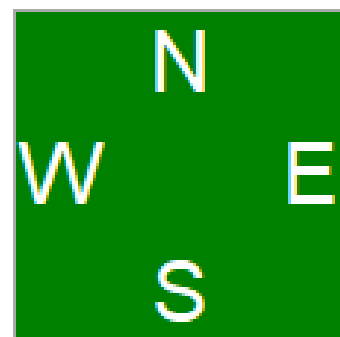
Practice Board 2

North Deals

None Vul

♠ A J
♥ A Q 10 7 6
♦ A Q 7
♣ A J 4

♠ K Q 6 2
♥ K J 2
♦ 9 8 4 2
♣ Q 5



♠ 10 9 8 7 4
♥ 9 5
♦ K 10
♣ K 9 6 2

22
11 6
1

♠ 5 3
♥ 8 4 3
♦ J 6 5 3
♣ 10 8 7 3

Blackwood

- Blackwood is a convention which asks “How many Aces do you have?”
- Its purpose is NOT to bid slam, as is commonly thought
- Its purpose is to **PREVENT** bidding slams!
- Specifically, to avoid bidding slam when missing 2 Aces
- If you know that you are not missing 2 Aces, or that it doesn't matter if you are (void), do not bid Blackwood. It is prone to error and allows opponents to “double for the lead”
- The bid is 4NT, AFTER a trump suit has been agreed upon.
- 4NT after a NT bid is NOT Blackwood, it is “quantitative”, meaning “bid slam if you are at the top of your range, pass otherwise”.

Responses

- 4NT (once a suit is agreed upon) says nothing about 4NT, and rather commands partner to say how many Aces he has
- 0 or 4: 5 ♣
- 1 Ace: 5 ♦
- 2 Aces: 5 ♥
- 3 Aces: 5 ♠

- How do we know if 5 ♣ means 0 or 4?
- After the response, the asker now knows how many Aces the partnership is missing. If missing one, he bids slam, if 2, he signs off at the 5 level.

- Note that if the pair has “bid controls”, they will have more information going into Blackwood (and may not need it at all)
- 3014 Roman Keycard Variation (or 1430):
 - This variation considers the King of Trump to be a “keycard” and the 4 Aces to be keycards. Thus there are 5 “keycards”
 - Responses are:
 - 5 ♣ 3 or 0 keycards
 - 5 ♦ 1 or 4 keycards
 - 5 ♥ 2 keycards without the Queen of trump
 - 5 ♠ 2 keycards with the Queen of trump

If all 4 Aces are present,
5NT asks for Kings, with
similar responses to regular
Blackwood

When to bid Blackwood?

- Slam usually requires 31-33 HCPs
- Very distributional hands may require less
- Blackwood applies only after there is an agreed suit. An agreed suit can be implied.
- It does not apply when No Trump is the agreed strain. A similar convention, Gerber, can be used instead. Or after 3NT, 4NT “quantitative” asks partner to bid slam with a maximum or pass with a minimum

When NOT to bid Blackwood

- With a void (why?) (and do not count a void as an Ace)
 - With a worthless doubleton (why?)
 - If there is great doubt about the quality of the trump suit (why?)
-
- After Blackwood: asker signs off at the appropriate level, based on the answer.

Dealing with Interference

- DOPI and ROPI:

- X 0 Aces
- Pass 1 Ace
- Next suit 2 Aces
- 2 suits above 3 Aces
- 3 suits above 4 Aces

Or DEPO: double even, pass odd

S A K 8 5 4 2
H Q 7 6
D A 6
C A 2

S Q 7 5
H 4
D K Q J 5 3
C K Q J 3

West
1S
3S
5S
Pass

East
2D
4NT
6S

S A K 8 5 4 2
H K J 10
D A 6
C Q 2

S Q 7 5
H 4
D K Q J 5 3
C K J 10 3

West
1S
3S
5H
Pass

East
2D
4NT
5S

Summary

- If there is an agreed suit, more than 30 HCPs between the 2 hands, no void and no worthless doubleton, Blackwood (4NT) can be used to ask for Aces, in order to prevent getting into a slam missing 2 Aces
- It is not a prerequisite for bidding slam. It does not 'help' bid slam; it helps NOT bid slam

Practice Board 3

Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ 10 5 3

♥ Q J

♦ 10 9 7

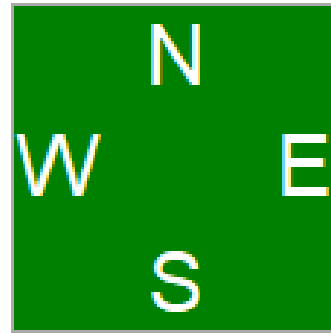
♣ A K 10 9 8

♠ 9 7 2

♥ 8 6 4 3

♦ 6 3

♣ 7 6 5 4



♠ 6 4

♥ A 10 5 2

♦ Q 5 4 2

♣ Q J 2

♠ A K Q J 8

♥ K 9 7

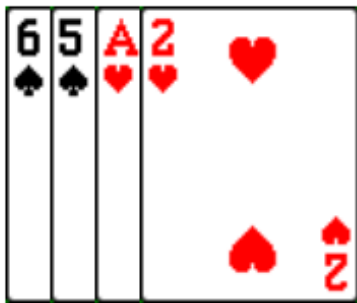
♦ A K J 8

♣ 3

10
0 9
21

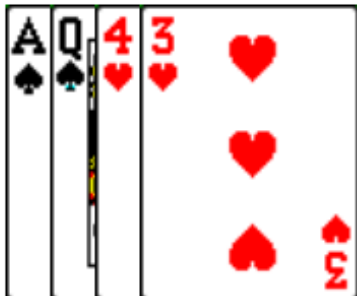
Entries

- In the previous lessons we emphasized how important it is to play from the weak hand towards the strong hand, often repeatedly
- Cards which enable a player to get at will into the hand from which he wishes to lead are called entries
- **An entry card is a winner which puts the hand containing it in the lead whenever the winner is cashed in**
- you must get in the habit of paying careful attention to the distribution of entries in your partnership hands

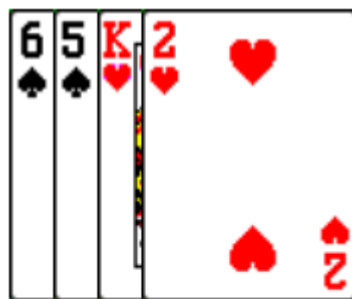


North:

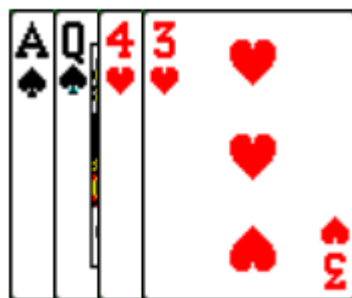
You are in your hand. How can you take 3 tricks?



South: You



North:



South: You

Developing and preserving entries

- Very often one entry is not enough, especially when it is desirable to lead from the same hand two or three times.
- Since, in finessing, you always lead from the **weaker** hand, you should develop and preserve as many entries as possible in the weaker hand, so that you will have them available when you need them



North:



North:



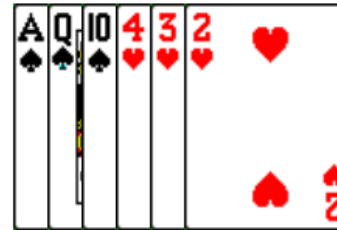
South: You



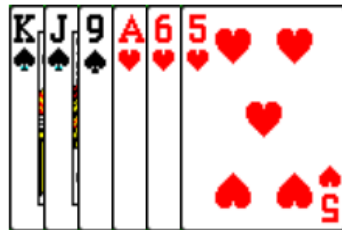
South: You

- Tenace positions very often occur in both hands. Your problem then reduces to trying to get the maximum number of tricks out of whatever combinations you hold

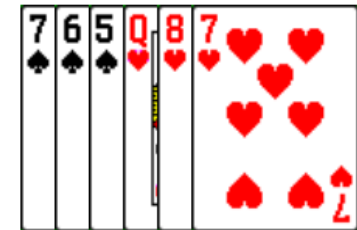
Example 5
 Dealer: South
 Vulnerable: Neither



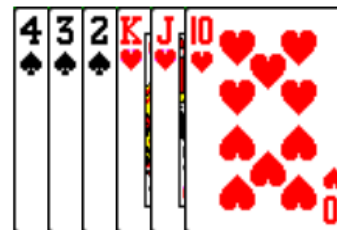
North:



West:



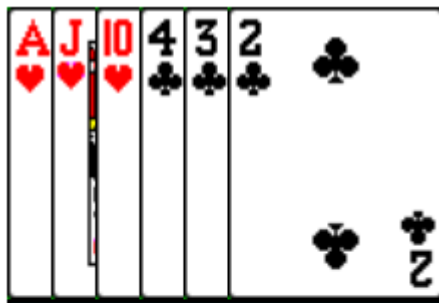
East:



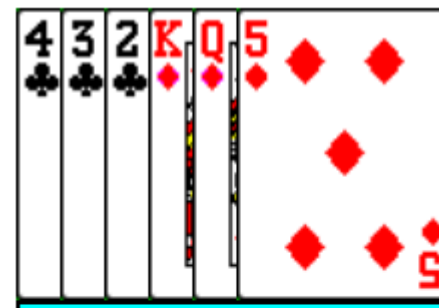
South: You



North:



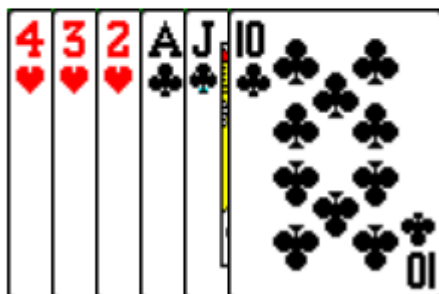
North:



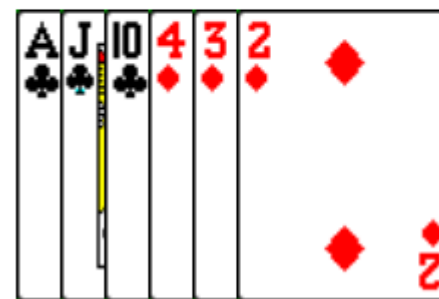
North:



South: You



South: You



South: You

Establishing a Suit at No-Trump

- There are 2 types of tricks at No Trump: high card tricks and long suit tricks
- The total tricks each side could take, combined, may be more than 13; however, only 13 tricks in total will be taken combined
- Thus it is often a race to see which side can establish and take their long suit tricks first. The other side will have to throw away their potential winners
- Anyone can win tricks with Aces and Kings, but it takes more skill and strategic foresight to win tricks with 7s and 8s!
- High cards will likely take tricks eventually, but at the start of the play they should be in service of ensuring that the little cards will win tricks

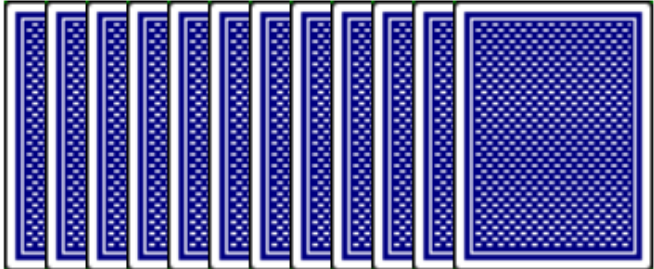
- Many beginners think they must take all their tricks as quickly as possible. They suffer under the delusion that if they do not cash in their high cards immediately, they will lose them.
- The result is that after the Declarer has taken all his high-card tricks, the Opponents swoop down like hungry birds of prey and snap up the remaining tricks with the lowly sevens and eights which the Declarer so generously established for them.
- It is not necessarily disastrous to lose the lead by letting an Opponent take a trick.
- In fact, it is often advisable. Remember that the most advantageous position for you, if you are holding certain tenaces, is for your left-hand Opponent to lead.
- However, if you concede a trick to one of the Opponents' honors, you should be planning to take tricks later with some lower cards which cannot be utilized until they are established.
- Any sacrifice of tricks must be made to secure the promotion of lower cards to positions of importance

Board 1
 Dealer: East
 Vulnerable: Neither

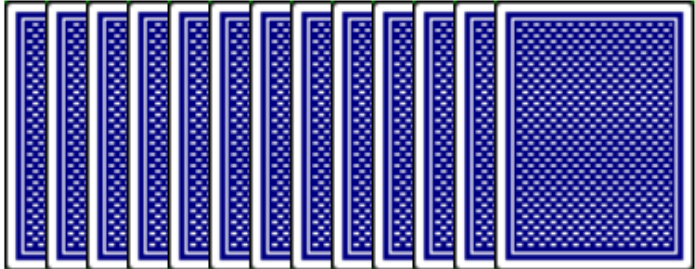


North:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	6NT



West:



East:



South: You

6NT South | NS 0 EW 0

You should, as a rule, never attempt to establish a suit in which the Opponents hold more cards than you do, and you should not play your high cards until it is absolutely necessary.

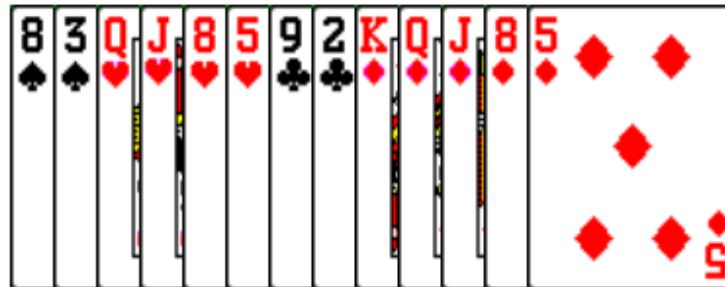
Blind leads of high cards can never be justified. You should lead out high cards only when you have a purpose, or when all the remaining tricks are clearly yours

You should try to keep track of what cards have been played in the suits you are trying to establish. For example:

Let's see now. Spades have gone around twice. I still hold two spades, and the Dummy has one. Since everybody followed suit on the two rounds, that makes eight plus three--eleven spades have been accounted for. Therefore there are two outstanding. One Opponent may have both of them, or each Opponent may have one.

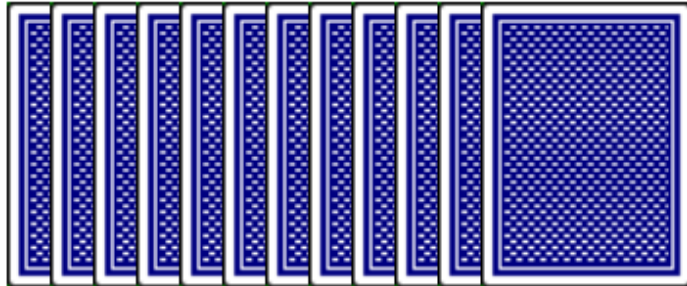
"

Board 2A
 Dealer: East
 Vulnerable: Neither

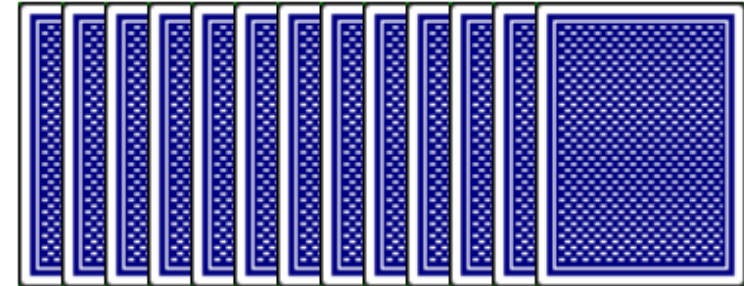


North:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	



West:



East:

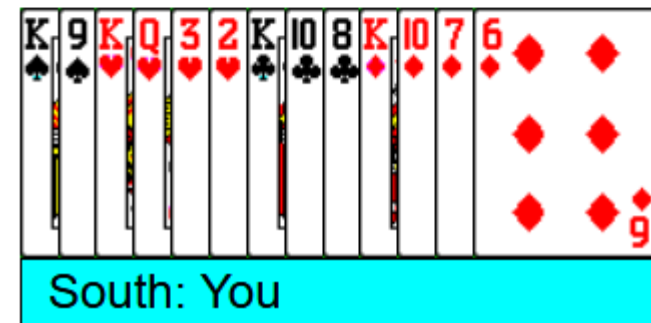
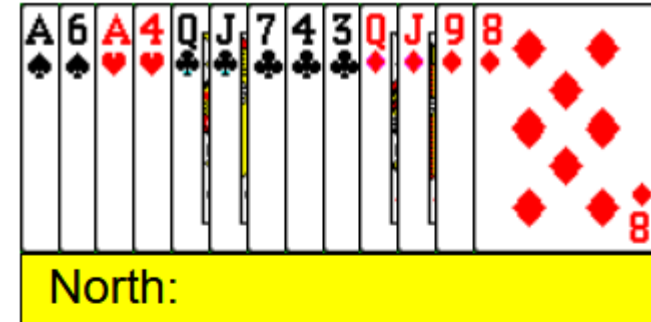


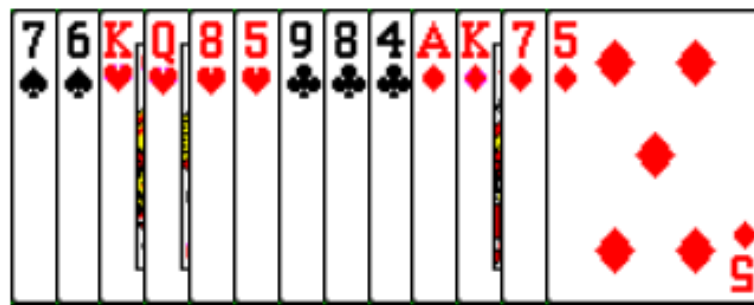
South: You

6NT South | NS 0 EW 0

Choosing between 2 Establishable Suits

- Usually choose the longer
- with 2 suits the same length, prefer the one which offers the greatest number of tricks





North:



South: You



North:



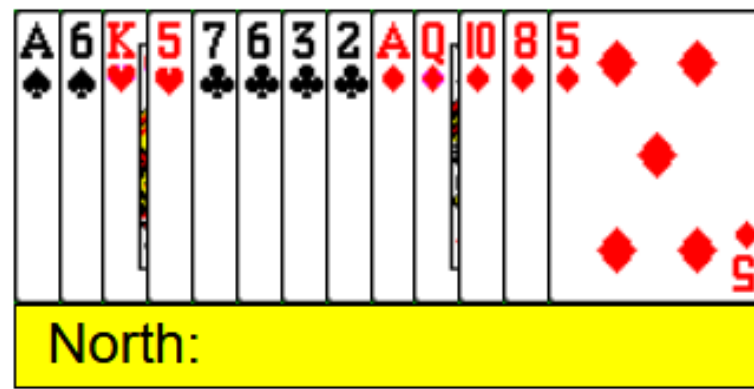
South: You

Summary

- As soon as the opening lead is made, stop to study the hand and formulate your plan
- Never attempt to establish a suit in which the Opponents hold more cards than you do.
- Do not play your high cards in suits of which you hold fewer cards than the Opponents, until absolutely necessary.
- Count the cards of any suit you are trying to establish as they are played or discarded so that you will know how many remain
- When you hold two establishable suits, always try to establish first that suit which promises the greater number of tricks by being established.
- 1) when you are not crowded for time, do not be afraid to lose the lead by letting an Opponent win tricks which are his anyway; and
- (2) when an Opponent, on obtaining the lead, may be able to cash in enough established tricks to defeat your contract, try to keep the lead while doing the best you can with whatever winners you have left.

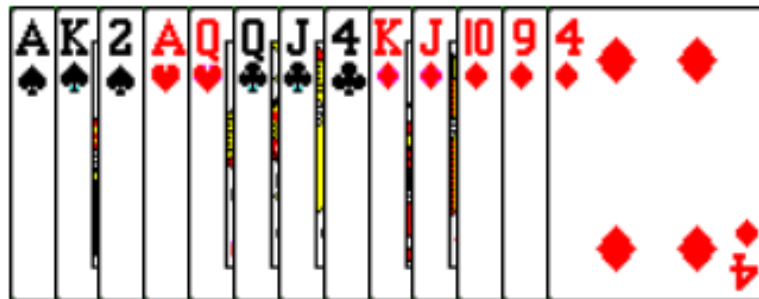
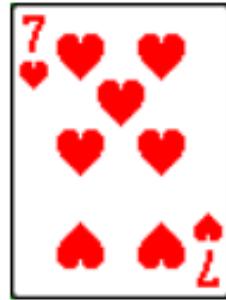
Establishing a suit with finesses

- Suit establishment does not always take place by the lead of cards of equal value in order to drive out opposing high cards. The missing high card or cards can often be eliminated by finessing. Such a finesse must be taken boldly when it gives some chance of making an otherwise impossible contract, for some chance is better than none as you recall.
- Even though, if the finesse fails, an Opponent may be given the opportunity to cash in several established low cards, this is no reason for you to get panicky and decide to take your high-card tricks in other suits at once.
- Your best procedure is always to take the chance of losing by a finesse rather than to accept the certainty of losing by foolishly abandoning your only hope of winning!





North:



South: You

Summary

- You saw in the last example how entries, finesse, and establishing a suit, which keeping controls in other suits, work together

Play 2 practice hands

- Six of a suit, 6-10 points: open at the 2 level (but not 2♣)
- 2♣ means 22+ points (and 2♦ response is waiting)
- A slam requires about 31-33 points, and only one loser. If you are missing 2 Aces, that's 2 losers. Use Blackwood (4NT) once a suit is agreed upon to avoid hopeless slams missing 2 Aces
- 5♣: 0-4 Aces. 5♦: 1 Ace
- 5♥: 2 Aces 5♠: 3 Aces
- Stayman and Jacoby transfers apply after NT in a 2C sequence

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ A K Q

♥ Q 10

♦ K J 8 7

♣ A K J 9

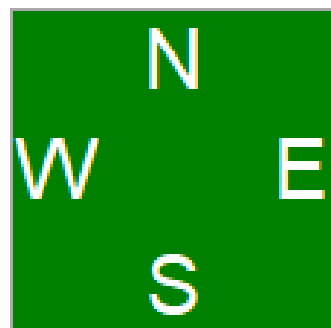
3
23 7
7

♠ J 6

♥ 7 5 3

♦ 10 9 5

♣ Q 10 8 6 4



♠ 7 5 4 3 2

♥ J 4

♦ A Q 4

♣ 7 5 3

♠ 10 9 8

♥ A K 9 8 6 2

♦ 6 3 2

♣ 2

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ J 6
 ♥ 7 5 3
 ♦ 10 9 5
 ♣ Q 10 8 6 4

♠ A K Q
 ♥ Q 10
 ♦ K J 8 7
 ♣ A K J 9



♠ 10 9 8
 ♥ A K 9 8 6 2
 ♦ 6 3 2
 ♣ 2

3
 23 7
 7

♠ 7 5 4 3 2
 ♥ J 4
 ♦ A Q 4
 ♣ 7 5 3

EW 6N; EW 6♥; EW 4♠; EW 5♦; EW 3♣;
 Par -1440

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♦ ¹	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	All pass

1. transfer

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A 6
♥ A K 9 8
♦ A 7 6
♣ J 7 4 3

♠ 4
♥ J 10 6 5 4 3 2
♦ 8 5 4
♣ 10 8



♠ 5 3 2
♥ Q 7
♦ 10 9 3 2
♣ A 9 6 5

16
1 6
17

♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7
♥ —
♦ K Q J
♣ K Q 2

NS 6N; NS 6♠; NS 5♦; NS 5♣; NS 2♥;

Par +1440

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 NT ¹	Pass	2 ♥ ²
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	6 ♠

All pass

1. 15-17
2. transfer

South knows that they have enough points for slam, and he knows ♠s will be trump. Does he need to use Blackwood? Unfortunately Blackwood doesn't apply with a void. South would like to know that they are not off 2 Aces, in other words that North has at least 2 Aces, but what if one of the 2 Aces is the Ace of ♥s? Then they would still be off 2 Aces. Missing only 8 HCPs, it would be very bad luck for the missing points to be both Aces AND for one of them to be the ♥ A. So it is worthwhile bidding the slam.

Do NOT bid Blackwood here, as it gives opponents a chance to double for the lead. There is a method of asking for Aces when you have a void, called "Exclusion Blackwood", which we are not learning today.

Summary

- You now know how to open a minor, a major, no trump, very strong hand, weak distributional hand, how to respond to find a fit, how to ask for Aces, some ways to interfere and some ways to cope with interference. These are all the conventions you need to know for a while.
- You know how to establish a suit and how to finesse, and how to use entries. There is lots more about declarer play and defense to learn, but everything else is really fancier versions of these.
- Next week: opening third and fourth hands light, Law of Total Tricks, balancing, hold-up play, ducking, unblocking
- Please RSVP on sign-up sheet or via email