

# Spot Cards

Cards ranking below the jack, from the ten down to the two.

Of the thirteen tricks which are won on each deal, approximately eight are won with aces, kings, queens, and jacks; the remaining five tricks are won with the lower cards - the tens, nines, eights, sevens, etc. Generally speaking, a fraction more than five tricks is won by the lower cards in trump contracts, since the low trumps win tricks, which are not available in no trump contracts.

Through the years, all the emphasis on winning tricks has been on aces, kings, queens, and jacks (Honor Tricks, Point-Count) and quite naturally so, since these cards are the leaders in the area of winning tricks. However, as can be observed from the above, the lower cards are not merely pawns in the trick-taking field.

Here are two examples of the power of the spot cards. The South declarer in the first deal was Richard L. Frey.

	North	
	♠ 1092	
	♥ K1075	
	♦ AQ	
	♣ A1052	
West		East
♠ 87		♠ QJ53
♥ J64		♥ 9
♦ J762		♦ K10943
♣ Q964		♣ J73
	South	
	♠ AK64	
	♥ AQ832	
	♦ 85	
	♣ K8	

Against the sound six heart contract, West opened the eight of spades, dummy's nine was put up, East covered with the jack, and declarer's king captured the trick. Three rounds of trumps were then drawn, ending up in dummy. The ten of spades was then led, East played the queen, and declarer took the trick with his ace. On this trick West followed with the seven of spades.

It was now clear to declarer that East had the five and three of spades remaining, for surely if West had either of these cards he would not have dropped the seven-spot, which was the highest-ranking spade left.

Dummy was then re-entered via the club ace, and the deuce of spades was led. When East followed with the three-spot, declarer's four-spot was played, successfully finessing against East's five-spot.

The six of spades was now played, and on it dummy's queen of diamonds was discarded. All in all, thirteen tricks were taken, declarer ruffing out his losing diamond.

The following deal arose in the National Men's Pairs Championship of 1949. Keep your eye on West's singleton six of spades, because it is going to be promoted into a winning trick!

North	
♠ A1087	
♥	
♦ A763	
♣ A10985	
West	East
♠ 6	♠ Q5
♥ AJ63	♥ KQ1094
♦ K104	♦ Q92
♣ K7432	♣ QJ6
South	
♠ KJ9432	
♥ 8752	
♦ J85	
♣	

The records do not indicate how South arrived at a five spade contract, but he did.

West opened the three of clubs, dummy's ace winning, with South discarding a diamond. A club was then ruffed, after which a heart was ruffed in the closed hand, and another heart ruffed on the board. A fourth club was then led, and East ruffed with his queen, South over-ruffing with the king. A third heart was ruffed in dummy, and the ace of diamonds was cashed next. On this trick, West unblocked with the king of diamonds.

Now came the fifth club, East ruffing with the five-spot, and South over-ruffing with the nine. Declarer's remaining heart was then ruffed with the board's last trump, the ace. A diamond was now led, and East climbed up with his queen. East then returned his fifth heart, the king, and declarer, with the jack-4 of trumps left, was fixed, for there was no way of preventing West from making his singleton six of spades. The two uppercuts by East really kayoed declarer (who did make eleven tricks, for a very poor score, since virtually every other North-South pair made twelve tricks).

The above deal demonstrates how important the spot cards can be in bridge; of the thirteen tricks played, seven were won by cards, which ranking below the jack.

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