

Playing Suit Contracts

When the opening lead has been made
and the dummy has been laid on the table

STOP

Now is the time to

THINK

Many hands, if not most, are won or lost
on the first several tricks.

What to Think About When Playing Suit Contracts

1. How many losers do I have?
2. Which hand will I set up, dummy's or my own?
3. Recount the losers from the point of view of setting up the hand you selected. Are you sure you are setting up the right hand?
4. How am I going to get rid of those losers?
5. Think the entire hand through as far as possible. Does it add up to the right number of winning tricks?
6. What dangers do I face?
7. Can I do anything to make myself safer?
8. Can I get any extra tricks? If so, how?
9. Call for dummy's first card.
10. Get down to business on the plan. Don't do anything else except what the plan requires.
11. If a surprise comes, think it through again.

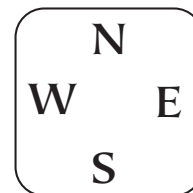
A.

NORTH

♠ A 9 2
♥ 10 7 5 3
♦ K 7 4
♣ 7 4 2

WEST

♠ Q 8 5
♥ 9 8
♦ Q J 10 9 6
♣ 9 5 3



EAST

♠ J 10 6 3
♥ 6 4
♦ A 8 3
♣ K 10 8 6

SOUTH

♠ K 7 4
♥ A K Q J 2
♦ 5 2
♣ A Q J

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	2♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

Lead is the Q of diamonds.

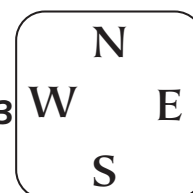
B.

NORTH

♠ 9 6 2
♥ A K 7
♦ 10 7
♣ 9 7 5 4 2

WEST

♠ Q 5
♥ 10 9 8 5 3
♦ A 9 6 5
♣ K 10



EAST

♠ J 4 3
♥ Q J
♦ K Q 4 2
♣ Q J 8 3

SOUTH

♠ A K 10 8 7
♥ 6 4 2
♦ J 8 3
♣ A 6

S	W	N	E
1♠	P	2♠	P
P	P		

Lead is the 10 of hearts.

- A.
1. The stronger South hand has two diamond losers, one spade loser, and a potential club loser, for total of 3 or 4 losers.
 2. From the point of view of setting up the stronger hand, I need to win the club finesse to make my contract.
 3. Nothing is gained from thinking about setting up the dummy. So I am sure I will set up the strong hand.
 4. The lead of the queen promises the jack and seems to deny the ace, so the ace of diamonds is in East, and my diamond king is toast, so I must lose those 2 diamonds. I also must lose a spade since I have no way to ruff it and no place to discard it.
 5. Again, since I must lose 2 diamonds and a spade, I must win the club finesse. Presuming, then, that I do, I will win 5 heart tricks, 2 spade tricks, and 3 club tricks for a total of 10 tricks.
 6. I don't face any real dangers as long as I pull trump and don't get my good tricks ruffed. But I notice that I have to take the club finesse twice, so I will need to be in dummy twice. One of my entries to dummy will be the ace of spades, and the other will have to be the 10 of hearts. To reach dummy with the 10 of hearts, I will have to preserve the 2 of hearts in my hand, since that is the only trump I have that is small enough for the 10 to overtake.
 7. There is nothing to do make myself safer.
 8. There is no way for me to make overtricks.
 9. Call for the king of diamonds from dummy.
 10. East wins the diamond ace and returns a diamond to West. West tries to cash another diamond, so I need to trump it. I remember that I must preserve the trump 2, so I trump with the ace of hearts. I cash the king of hearts, and then I lead a low heart to dummy's 10. I lead a small club and finesse the queen, winning. I lead a spade to dummy's ace and return a club, finessing the jack and winning. Now I cash my good tricks and surrender the final spade trick to the opponents, making my contract.
- B.
1. Presuming a 3-2 spade break, I have one losing spade. I can win the top two hearts, but then I have a heart loser. I must lose two diamond tricks, but I will try to ruff my 3rd diamond with one of dummy's trumps. I have a club loser. In total, I have 1 spade, 1 heart, 2 diamonds, and 1 club. So I can make the contract if I ruff a diamond in dummy.
 2. To set up dummy would require me to trump a bunch of clubs, perhaps getting overruffed.
 3. I'm sure I must set up my own hand.
 4. The only loser to get rid of is the diamond I must ruff in the dummy.
 5. I have added up the hand properly, and I can hope to make my contract.
 6. The only danger I face is if one opponent can overruff me on the 3rd round of diamonds.
 7. To protect myself I will cash 2 rounds of trump, if possible, before ruffing the diamond. But of course I will need to lose the two diamonds before I start pulling trump, or else one of the opponents might lead another trump and take away dummy's ruffer.
 8. No overtricks are available.
 9. Call for dummy's ace of hearts.
 10. Win the ace of hearts and immediately lead a diamond, losing it to West's ace. West cashes a heart, East discarding a club. West leads another diamond to East's queen, and East leads trump. I hop up with my ace of trump, cash the king of trump, and then I lead my 3rd diamond, ruffing it. Now I lead a club to my ace, surrender a spade, and claim my total of 8 tricks.