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PLAYING IN A SUIT CONTRACT VS. PLAYING IN A NO TRUMP CONTRACT

Playing in a Suit Contract: As soon as the dummy lays down, declarer makes her plan. She counts the number of potential losers she has. If she still counts enough tricks to make her contract, no problem. But that is not usually the case. Declarer must try to convert a loser into a winner (or more than one).

The way to do that is often by discarding losing cards on winning cards and making yourself void in that suit so you can trump that suit if your opponents play it. Getting rid of cards in that suit is also important so you are not forced to lead that card if you must play from that hand.

NOTE: Transportation (getting from one hand to the other) is crucial. Save yourself entries in each hand, meaning keep winners in both hands as a way to get from one hand to the other. Opponents will try to foil that plan by playing suits to force you to play your winners and take away your entries.

Playing in No Trump: As soon as the dummy lays down, declarer makes her plan. She counts the number of sure winners she has. If she has enough to make her contract, no problem. But that, again, is usually not the case. Declarer must try to promote winners (turn a card that is not initially seen as a winner into a winning card). A note on counting sure winners: The only sure winners you can count on initially are Aces. You can count Kings if you have the Aces in that suit. You can count Queens if you have the Kings and the Aces in that suit, etc.

The way to promote losers into winners is by doing the opposite of what you did in a suit contract. Instead of creating shortness in suits, you want to push the suits in which you have length. Lead the suit in which you have the most cards (you and your partner together). Force the opponents to play their high cards (which they will usually resist doing until they have no choice). Once you have pushed out all the cards that beat yours, you will now have winners in that suit. Because you have resisted playing your sure winners in other suits, as soon as the opponents play a suit in which you have a sure winner, you can now take tricks in the suits you have promoted.

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SAMPLE HAND # 1- North is the Dealer

NORTH

Spades- K 9 3

Hearts- A K 3

Diamonds- A 7 6 3

Clubs- A J 3

WEST

Spades- 8 7 6

Hearts- 10 8 6 4

Diamonds- K J 9 8

Clubs- K 4

EAST

Spades- Q J 5 4 2

Hearts- Q J

Diamonds- Q 5

Clubs- 10 7 6 2

SOUTH

Spades- A 10

Hearts- 9 7 5 2

Diamonds- 10 4 2

Clubs- Q 9 8 5

SAMPLE HAND # 2- West is the Dealer

NORTH

Spades- A J 9

Hearts- K Q 10 9 6

Diamonds- K 9 3

Clubs- J 10

WEST

Spades- 8 3

Hearts- 7 4

Diamonds- A 8 6 2

Clubs- Q 9 7 5 3

EAST

Spades- 7 5

Hearts- A 8 3 2

Diamonds- A 10 4

Clubs- A 8 6 4

SOUTH

Spades- K Q 10 6 4 2

Hearts- J 5

Diamonds- J 7 5

Clubs- K 2

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SAMPLE HAND # 3- South is the Dealer

NORTH

Spades- 9 7 4

Hearts- 8 3

Diamonds – A Q 10 8 7 2

Clubs- 7 5

WEST

Spades- Q 10

Hearts- J 9 6 4 2

Diamonds- K 9 3

Clubs- Q J 6

EAST

Spades- K 8 5 2

Hearts- K 10 7 5

Diamonds – J 4

Clubs- 10 8 4

SOUTH

Spades-A J 6 3

Hearts- A Q

Diamonds- 6 5

Clubs- A K 9 3 2

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1. Bid this hand until you have a final contract. Before you start, remember the priority is always major suit contract first, then no trump if major suit is not possible, then minor suit contract if no trump is not possible. Remember, we do not count dummy points in no trump.
 2. What would you lead?
 3. Use what you know about finesses to make the maximum number of tricks you can.