



Planning the Play in Suit Contracts

When to draw trumps, when to stop drawing trumps, and when not to draw trumps at all. Handling bad breaks, and taking advantage of good breaks.

Deciding which suit to play first and how to play that suit.



An Online Workshop
run by
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Board: 1

♠ T95
♥ AKQ6
♦ J953
♣ A4

4♠ by South
Lead: ♣ Q



♠ QJ764
♥ 43
♦ AKQ8
♣ 98

Board: 2

♠ K94
♥ K932
♦ 3
♣ K8653

4♠ by South
Lead: ♥ Q



♠ AQJT7
♥ A6
♦ A875
♣ 74

Board: 3

♠ 76
♥ A73
♦ 764
♣ KQJT9

4♥ by South
Lead: ♦ K



♠ A83
♥ KQJT98
♦ A93
♣ 3

Board: 4

♠ JT7654
♥ J4
♦ Q86
♣ 82

2♠ by South
Lead: ♣ K



♠ 832
♥ AKQ
♦ AK54
♣ J54

Board 1

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

Which Spade do you lead first when you draw trumps?

When do you play the Diamonds?

Board 2

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

Which suit do you lead first once you are on lead?

What are the possible problems you might have?

Board 3

You are the Declarer in 4♥.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

Are there any problems in the play?

When do you plan to lead the Clubs?

Board 4

You are the Declarer in 2♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

When do you play the Diamonds?

Board: 5

♠ JT
 ♥ 97
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ 876542

4♥ by South
 Lead: ♣ A



♠ AK2
 ♥ AKQJT8
 ♦ 543
 ♣ 3

Board: 6

♠ J862
 ♥ KQT
 ♦ 86432
 ♣ 5

4♠ by South
 Lead: ♦ A



♠ AKQ97
 ♥ AJ3
 ♦ 7
 ♣ A432

Board: 7

♠ K32
 ♥ A6543
 ♦ 43
 ♣ 543

4♠ by South
 Lead: ♣ A



♠ AQJT9
 ♥ KQ2
 ♦ A2
 ♣ JT9

Board: 8

♠ 987
 ♥ A632
 ♦ 65
 ♣ K432

4♠ by South
 Lead: ♣ Q



♠ AKQJT
 ♥ K54
 ♦ 432
 ♣ A5

Board 5

You are the Declarer in 4♥.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

How many tricks do you think you should make here?

What is the best play in the Spade suit?

Board 6

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

Do you want to trump Diamonds?

Do you want to trump Clubs?

Board 7

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

Is there a way to avoid losing the Diamond?

What are you hoping for?

Board 8

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

How many Diamonds will you lose?

Can your Heart loser be dealt with (trumped or thrown away)?

Board: 9

♠ T76
 ♥ 83
 ♦ A832
 ♣ AKJ5

4♠ by South
 Lead: ♥ Q



♠ AQJ98
 ♥ AK2
 ♦ 65
 ♣ 432

Board: 10

♠ Q9753
 ♥ JT4
 ♦ A65
 ♣ 32

4♥ by South
 Lead: ♦ K



♠ 6
 ♥ AK9865
 ♦ 432
 ♣ AKQ

Board: 11

♠ 874
 ♥ AJ92
 ♦ KJ84
 ♣ K3

4♥ by South
 Lead: ♠ K



♠ A32
 ♥ KT875
 ♦ T9
 ♣ AQJ

Board: 12

♠ KQJ
 ♥ 43
 ♦ 54
 ♣ AQJT96

4♠ by South
 Lead: ♥ A



♠ A9876
 ♥ 765
 ♦ KQ73
 ♣ K

Board 9

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

Which Spade do you play first when it is time to draw trumps?

When do you tackle the Clubs?

Can you avoid losing a Diamond?

Can you avoid losing a Heart?

Board 10

You are the Declarer in 4♥.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

How many Diamonds will you lose?

Board 11

You are the Declarer in 4♥.

West bids 2♠ (6♠, 6-10 points) along the way.

How are the Spades likely to be split?

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

Who is more likely to have the ♥Q?

Board 12

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

When do you play the Clubs?

Board: 13

♠ AQ74
 ♥ KJ3
 ♦ 6543
 ♣ AT



4♠ by South
 Lead: ♣ K

♠ JT986
 ♥ AQ2
 ♦ KQ2
 ♣ 32

Board: 14

♠ AK43
 ♥ 32
 ♦ 952
 ♣ AK98



4♠ by South
 Lead: ♣ Q

♠ JT98
 ♥ AK
 ♦ AQJ
 ♣ 7632

Board: 15

♠ 432
 ♥ AK73
 ♦ 432
 ♣ AK4



4♥ by South
 Lead: ♠ Q

♠ AK5
 ♥ J654
 ♦ AKQ5
 ♣ 32

Board: 16

♠ KQ43
 ♥ 42
 ♦ 5432
 ♣ AKQ



4♠ by South
 Lead: ♣ J

♠ 87652
 ♥ A3
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ 432

Board 13

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

How do you want to tackle the Spade suit?

How do you want to play the Diamonds?

Board 14

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

How do you play the Spade suit?

How do you play the Diamonds?

Board 15

You are the Declarer in 4♥.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

How do you tackle the Heart suit?

How many Diamond tricks will you get on a good day?

Board 16

You are the Declarer in 4♠.

How do you plan the play?

Do you draw trumps?

How do you tackle the Spade suit?

How many Diamond tricks will you get on a good day?

Board: 1

♠ T95
♥ AKQ6
♦ J953
♣ A4

♠ K82
♥ 75
♦ T762
♣ QJT6

♠ A3
♥ JT982
♦ 4
♣ K7532

♠ QJ764
♥ 43
♦ AKQ8
♣ 98



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1♠
P	2♦	P	3♦
P	4♠	//	

West leads the ♣Q against 4♠ by South. You have plenty of winners in the outside suits (3 Hearts, 4 Diamonds, the ♣A). You don't have too many losers in the outside suits, **You should draw trumps.** Having a weak trump suit is no excuse!

Board: 2

♠ K94
♥ K932
♦ 3
♣ K8653

♠ 8632
♥ QJT
♦ J2
♣ AJT2

♠ 5
♥ 8754
♦ KQT964
♣ Q9

♠ AQJT7
♥ A6
♦ A875
♣ 74



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
//			

West leads the ♥Q against 4♠ by South. You only have 3 sure tricks outside the trumps (♥AK and ♦A). Dummy has a singleton, and three trumps, which you can use to ruff Clubs **before you draw the trumps.**

Board: 3

♠ 76
♥ A73
♦ 764
♣ KQJT9

♠ JT4
♥ 642
♦ KQJ2
♣ 862

♠ KQ952
♥ 5
♦ T85
♣ A754

♠ A83
♥ KQJT98
♦ A93
♣ 3



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1♥
P	3♥	P	4♥
//			

West leads the ♦K against 4♥ by South. You will have plenty of tricks eventually, but the Clubs are not winners yet. The Clubs can be established (by losing the ♣A), but if you notice that there are no entries to the South hand. You can draw up to two rounds of trumps, but must save the ♥A as an entry to the Clubs.

Board: 4

♠ JT7654
♥ J4
♦ Q86
♣ 82

♠ K9
♥ 987532
♦ 7
♣ KQT3

♠ AQ
♥ T6
♦ JT932
♣ A976

♠ 832
♥ AKQ
♦ AK54
♣ J54



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1NT
P	2♥*	P	2♠
P	P	P	2♥: Tfr to Spades

West leads the ♣K against 2♠ by South. You have plenty of tricks outside the Spades. You should draw trumps before the opponents manage to trump you too many times!

Board: 5

♠ JT
♥ 97
♦ AKQ
♣ 876542

♠ Q876
♥ 54
♦ T86
♣ AKQJ

♠ 9543
♥ 632
♦ J972
♣ T9

♠ AK2
♥ AKQJT8
♦ 543
♣ 3



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1♥
X	1NT	P	3♥
P	4♥	//	

West leads the ♣A against 4♥ by South. If you **Count Your Losers (from the long trump hands perspective)** you have no losers in Hearts, the Diamonds are taken care of with Dummy's AKQ. Your Club will lose. You have two Spade winners, and the ♠2 which is a potential loser. You can avoid this loser by trumping it in Dummy **Before you draw the trumps.**

Board: 6

♠ J862
♥ KQT
♦ 86432
♣ 5

♠ -
♥ 98742
♦ AKQ5
♣ T986

♠ T543
♥ 65
♦ JT9
♣ KQJ7

♠ AKQ97
♥ AJ3
♦ 7
♣ A432



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1♠
P	2♠	P	4♠
//			

West leads the ♦A against 4♠ by South. You have a Diamond loser, and up to three Club losers that can be trumped before drawing trumps. Try to trump as many Clubs as possible.

Board: 7

♠ K32
♥ A6543
♦ 43
♣ 543

♠ 64
♥ JT7
♦ KJT5
♣ AKQ8

♠ 875
♥ 98
♦ Q9876
♣ 762

♠ AQJT9
♥ KQ2
♦ A2
♣ JT9



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1♠
X	2♠	P	4♠
//			

West leads the ♣A against 4♠ by South. You have 3 Club losers and the ♦2 is also a loser, which can't be trumped. You need to discard the ♦2 on the Hearts, but you must draw all of the trumps first. When playing the Hearts, make sure to play the ♥KQ first then over to the Ace to be able to play the rest.

Board: 8

♠ 987
♥ A632
♦ 65
♣ K432

♠ 64
♥ QT7
♦ KJ98
♣ QJT9

♠ 532
♥ J98
♦ AQT7
♣ 876

♠ AKQJT
♥ K54
♦ 432
♣ A5



<i>W</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>S</i>
--	--	--	1♠
P	2♠	P	4♠
//			

West leads the ♣Q against 4♠ by South. You have a deep Heart loser, and up to three Diamond losers from your perspective. To avoid losing three Diamonds, you must lead Diamonds and trump one in Dummy. You can't afford to draw any trumps.

Board: 9

♠ T76
♥ 83
♦ A832
♣ AKJ5

♠ 52
♥ QJT96
♦ Q94
♣ Q98

♠ K43
♥ 754
♦ KJT7
♣ T76

♠ AQJ98
♥ AK2
♦ 65
♣ 432

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
//			

West leads the ♥Q against 4♠ by South. You need to try finessing the Spade at some stage to avoid losing the King. You have a Heart loser. You have a Diamond loser, and the Club finesse should be tried to avoid a loser there. Start by ruffing the Heart in Dummy, then lead the ♠T to finesse so that you can repeat it. If the Club finesse works after trumps are drawn, then you might be able to discard the Diamond loser.

Board: 10

♠ Q9753
♥ JT4
♦ A65
♣ 32

♠ AT8
♥ Q32
♦ KQJ7
♣ T85

♠ KJ42
♥ 7
♦ T98
♣ J9764

♠ 6
♥ AK9865
♦ 432
♣ AKQ

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1♥
X	2♥	P	4♥
//			

West leads the ♦K against 4♥ by South. You have 2 Diamond losers, and possibly the ♥Q, and a Spade. You can discard a Diamond on a Club, and then try to ruff a Diamond, but can't draw trumps yet.

Board: 11

♠ 874
♥ AJ92
♦ KJ84
♣ K3

♠ KQJT95
♥ 3
♦ Q753
♣ 74

♠ 6
♥ Q64
♦ A62
♣ T98652

♠ A32
♥ KT875
♦ T9
♣ AQJ

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1♥
2♠*	4♥	//	2♠: Weak Jump. 6♠

West leads the ♠K against 4♥ by South. You must win the ♠A immediately. The Spade pre-empt makes it more likely that suits will be breaking poorly. You should finesse East for the ♥Q. At some stage, you can discard a Spade loser on the Clubs. You have to make a guess in the Diamonds, but it is more likely that West (weaker) has the Queen, not the Ace of Diamonds.

Board: 12

♠ KQJ
♥ 43
♦ 54
♣ AQJT96

♠ T54
♥ AKQ98
♦ T86
♣ 32

♠ 32
♥ JT2
♦ AJ92
♣ 8754

♠ A9876
♥ 765
♦ KQ73
♣ K

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1♠
P	2♣	P	2♦
P	4♠	//	

West leads the ♥A against 4♠ by South. You have losers in Hearts and Diamonds. The Clubs will take care of all your losers, but you need to be careful to draw all the trumps first. If needed, you can overtake the ♣K with the ♣A to get to Dummy.

Board: 13

♠ AQ74
 ♥ KJ3
 ♦ 6543
 ♣ AT
 ♠ K53
 ♥ 84
 ♦ J87
 ♣ KQJ95
 ♠ 2
 ♥ T9765
 ♦ AT9
 ♣ 8764
 ♠ JT986
 ♥ AQ2
 ♦ KQ2
 ♣ 32

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1♠
P	2NT*	P	4♠
2NT:Jacoby 4♠, 13+			
//			

West leads the ♣K against 4♠ by South. You should win the first trick. You have a Club loser, and 1 or 2 Diamond losers, and possibly the ♠K. You need to start the Spade finesse from your hand, so play a Heart to get the lead over, and lead the ♠J to repeatedly finesse if it wins. The next play in Diamonds is to lead from Dummy to the King, and if it wins, cross back with a Heart to lead another Diamond towards the Queen.

Board: 14

♠ AK43
 ♥ 32
 ♦ 952
 ♣ AK98
 ♠ Q52
 ♥ J875
 ♦ 863
 ♣ QJT
 ♠ 76
 ♥ QT964
 ♦ KT74
 ♣ 54
 ♠ JT98
 ♥ AK
 ♦ AQJ
 ♣ 7632

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1NT
P	2♣*	P	2♠
2♣:Stayman			
P	4♠	//	

West leads the ♣Q against 4♠ by South. You can play one high Spade, but then should finesse. Cross to hand with a Heart and lead the ♠J. Repeat the finesse if needed.

Board: 15

♠ 432
 ♥ AK73
 ♦ 432
 ♣ AK4
 ♠ QJT76
 ♥ Q2
 ♦ J96
 ♣ QT6
 ♠ 98
 ♥ T98
 ♦ T87
 ♣ J9875
 ♠ AK5
 ♥ J654
 ♦ AKQ5
 ♣ 32

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1NT
P	2♣*	P	2♥
2♣: Stayman			
P	4♥	//	

West leads the ♠Q against 4♥ by South. This trump suit looks like the previous example, but you don't have the ♥T, so should not lead the ♥J. You should play the ♥A and ♥K and hope to drop the Queen. There is a chance that the Diamonds split 3-3 for an overtrick.

Board: 16

♠ KQ43
 ♥ 42
 ♦ 5432
 ♣ AKQ
 ♠ AJ9
 ♥ Q95
 ♦ J86
 ♣ JT98
 ♠ T
 ♥ KJT876
 ♦ T97
 ♣ 765
 ♠ 87652
 ♥ A3
 ♦ AKQ
 ♣ 432

W	N	E	S
--	--	--	1♠
P	2NT*	P	4♠
2NT:Jacoby 4♠, 13+			
//			

West leads the ♣J against 4♠ by South. You have a possible Heart loser, but plenty of trick outside. You should try to draw trumps. Cross the lead to your hand with a Diamond to lead a Spade to the King. If that wins, cross again and lead a Spade towards the Queen. Note that Diamonds might split 3-3 here again, but it is easy to overlook the extra trick.