

LESSON 2: TEACHER NOTES

Declarer Play in a Notrump Contract

What is in this Lesson

This lesson is an opportunity to introduce several important concepts relating to how tricks are won, including forcing out higher cards, taking advantage of combined suit length and taking advantage of the position of the opponents' cards. Discussing these concepts in this lesson, without the complication of a trump suit, is useful.

You should emphasise the importance of counting the high card points and top tricks between the two hands. Importantly, this is the first of several opportunities to hammer home the idea that as declarer, success depends on making a plan at the very beginning of the play of the hand.

Obviously at this stage the defender on lead is unlikely to choose what's best for her/his side. If you are teaching a beginners course followed by an improvers course, you can mention that opening leads will be discussed later.

Preparation - Note: Technique examples lead themselves to Cards on the Table Method - practice first! Prepare cards for force out high cards (promotion) (Hand 9), length (Hand 10), top tricks, finesse & high from the short side or run through examples in slides.

- Print out copies of Quiz (at the bottom of this lesson) and Handout
- NOTE: If suggesting Bridge-Training to students we strongly recommend a Zoom session, or similar, to run through how it works and how they access Game Review for tips on how to play the hand.

Introduction / Revision

Questions from last week, from homework, anyone watch videos (relevant to this week)

- The Auction, Dealer, N/S & E/W are partners
- The mechanics of play - tricks, trumps, notrumps, dealer, declarer, dummy, who leads. (Terminology trumping or ruffing)
- Suit ranking, High Card Points, HCP, Finding a fit
- Part score vs Game (25+HCP)
- Basic Etiquette

Lesson Terminology

- Top tricks, stopper
- Techniques - Length, force out (promotion), finesse

Main Points to Emphasise

- Declarer must make a plan
- The importance of counting the high card points and top (sure) tricks between the two hands
- It's OK to lose the lead if it helps promote extra tricks – **this is difficult for many students**

At the End of the Lesson be able to:

- Assess the hand – Count Top Ticks (aka Sure Winners)
- Making a Plan in a NT Contract
- Choose good opening leads in an NT contract
- Learn three techniques to win extra tricks (length, promotion, finesse)
- Learn how to play a suit from the short side first
- Learn Second Hand plays Low & Third Hand plays High

Explain

Making a Plan in Notrumps

- Count how many **top (sure) tricks** you have available between the two hands:

♠ K752

♥ K73

♦ AQ

♣ KJ5

Declarer (West)

♠ 984

♥ Q1082

♦ KJ

♣ AQ65

Dummy (East)

0 spades, 0 hearts, 2 diamonds and 4 clubs for a total of only **6 top tricks**

- Work out if one of these following techniques will help make extra tricks

a) Force out the defenders' high cards (Hand 9)

- Count how many cards in a suit have been played & which high cards
- Often **a race** with your opponents to **establish** your long suit before they can

Example (in 3NT):

♠ A6

♥ K42

♦ Q97

♣ AJ842

Declarer

(West)

♠ K53

♥ A53

♦ KJ1083

♣ 53

Dummy

(East)

Play diamonds immediately. Do not cash your top tricks in outside suits until you have established the extra tricks you need.

b) Establish tricks using the power of length in a suit (Hand 10)

Example: (in 1NT)

♠ 97	♠ AJ53
♥ J65	♥ Q43
♦ AK6	♦ 943
♣ A7532	♣ K86
Declarer	Dummy
(West)	(East)

If clubs divide 3-2 you can generate 4 winners in that suit. Either play ♣K, ♣A and a third club or (better) first play a small club from both hands.

<< Suggest run through Basic NT Bidding, Leading against NT & then play Boards 1 & 2 - theme is length >>

c) Finesse

- Here are some examples of finesse positions:

♥ A Q 5 (West)	♥ 7 4 3 (East) - where do we want ♥ K to be?
♥ K 8 5 (West)	♥ 7 4 3 (East) - where do we want ♥ A to be?
♥ A K J 8 (West)	♥ 7 4 3 (East) - where do we want ♥ Q to be?
♥ A 8 7 (West)	♥ Q J 3 (East) - where do we want ♥ K to be?

d) High from the Short Side

♥ A Q J 10 6 (West) ♥ K 4 (East) - play ♥ K then ♥ 4 from East first

<< Suggest run through basic Defence Carding ("Info Required to Play Hands" below) then play Boards 3 & 4 covering Finesse & High from the Short Side >>

Summary

Declarer: Make a **plan** before you play any cards:
Count **top tricks** in a No Trump contract
How many tricks do you need? How many from top tricks?
How many more tricks do you need for your contract?
Choose suit most likely to get you extra tricks
Do your work before cashing top tricks in other suits.
Play high cards from the **short hand first**
Where possible play a **Finesse**
Lead **towards** high cards

Handouts (Bridge-Training / Videos)

- Potential to show students how bridge-training works & refer them to the practice hands in the handout.
- Suggest the videos in the handout

<< Play the rest of the boards >>

Information Required to Play Hands

Bidding

- Brief review of a void, singleton & doubleton; discuss balanced
- If using MiniBridge approach then encourage Declarer to choose NT, else
- Opening 1NT is balanced & 15-17. Responder bids 3NT if 10+ HCP otherwise, today, Passes

Defence Tips

Opening leads against NT are covered later but here are some tips.

- Top of three touching honours
- High for Hate - top of nothing
- Lead Low for Like - promising at least one honour
- 4th highest leads

Defence carding

- Second hand plays Low
- Third hand as high as necessary

LESSON 2: Declarer Play in NT Quiz

Q1: Declarer (West) is in a NT contract. How many top tricks are there?

Declarer (West)	Dummy (East)
♠ K 5 3	♠ A 6
♥ A 5 3	♥ K 4 2
♦ K J T 8 3	♦ Q 9 7
♣ 5 3	♣ A J 8 4 2

Q2: In the hand above, which suit is likely to give Declarer the most extra tricks?

Q3 You are declarer (West) & hold this suit. How should you play the cards?

♣ K 3	♣ A Q 8 4 2
West, Declarer	East, Dummy

Q4 You, West, are Declarer – how should you play the suit below?

♥ 7 6 3	♥ A Q 9 4 2
West	East (Dummy)

Q5 You, West, are Declarer – how should you play the suit below?

♥ 7 6 3	♥ K Q 5 4 2
West	East (Dummy)