

## LESSON 3: TEACHER NOTES

# Declarer Play in a Suit Contract

### What is in this Lesson

After reinforcing the concept of how trumps work and when declarer/a defender can ruff, you can introduce ideas about counting winners and losers, as well as ruffing losers. Then you can discuss how this relates to whether/when to draw the opponents' trumps.

There is a lot to cover here so it's best to take it slowly and work through the example deals step by step.

It might be a good idea to add an extra session to reinforce what has been covered in lessons 2 and 3 before moving on to the lessons on bidding. You will note that there are twice as many lessons on bidding as there are on card play and defence – that certainly doesn't mean that bidding is twice as important as the other two combined!

### Preparation

- Note: Technique examples lead themselves to Cards on the Table Method – prepare first eg cards for winners/losers, ruffing etc! (Can use Hands 9,10 & 11.)
- Need to prepare Winners & Losers examples
- If using MiniBridge approach all hands except Hand 7 should be in game, so walkthrough HCP & do they have a fit? (*These notes advocate 1major 4major as a weak bid. The Teacher can choose to teach this as a strong bid so bidding goes 1major 4major for all hands except 7*)
- Discarding a Loser on a Winner maybe too much for the class – use your judgement

### Introduction / Revision

Questions from last week or homework; anyone watch videos &/or try Bridge-Training?

- Making a plan
- Counting Top (Sure) Tricks
- Three ways to establish extra tricks in a suit.
  - a. Force out defenders' high cards (promotion)
  - b. Use the power of the Length of a suit
  - c. Use the position of a defender's high card(s) via a Finesse
- Additional technique: High from Short Hand for Hands

### Lesson Terminology

- Winners and Losers
- Draw Trumps
- Ruff in the Short Hand
- Discarding Loser on a Winner

## Main Points to Emphasise

- A player who has no cards in that suit can play a trump to win trick (aka ruffing)
- Plan – count winners and losers then decide which techniques to use for extra tricks
- **Ruffing in long hand does not create extra tricks**

## At the End of the Lesson be able to:

- Assess the hand – **Count winners and losers**
- Choose good opening leads in a suit contract
- **Draw trumps** as soon as it is safe to do so
- **Count** the trump suit (and how)
- Look for **ruffs in the short hand**
- It may be necessary to take the ruffs in the short hand **BEFORE** drawing trumps
- Look for **Discarding Loser on a Winner**

## Explain

### Counting winners and losers

- Are there enough winners (top tricks) for you to fulfill the contract? If not you need to set about establishing extra tricks.
- Are there too many losers – if so then do you need to deal with those losers straight away or can you/should you wait?
- Why count losers? We count losers as our top tricks may be ruffed (here we draw trumps first) or we may need to delay drawing trumps if we need ruffs.

**Count winners:** In a ♠ contract, how many winners between these two hands?

♠ KJT832	♠ AQ7
♥ A53	♥ K42
♦ K53	♦ A62
♣ 5	♣ JT98
Declarer (West)	Dummy (East)

<b>spades</b>	6
<b>hearts</b>	2, the ace and king
<b>diamonds</b>	2, the ace and king
<b>clubs</b>	0
<b>Total</b>	10

**Count losers:** In a spade contract, how many losers are there here?

♠ KQJ98	♠ T765
♥ 985	♥ KQJ
♦ K	♦ 983
♣ K832	♣ AQ5
Declarer (West)	Dummy (East)

<b>spades</b>	1, the ace
<b>hearts</b>	1, the ace
<b>diamonds</b>	1, because while there are 3 low cards in the East hand, West can ruff the second & third rounds
<b>clubs</b>	1, unless still have a trump in East to ruff 4th round
<b>Total =</b>	4

### Playing to maximise the number of tricks

<< Suggest run through Quiz questions 1 to 5 to test understanding >>

a) **Draw trumps** (Hand 9) - this is the normal play unless have good reason not to.

We do this to stop declarer's winning cards being ruffed by opponents. Do not be put off by poor quality in the trump suit

Contract 4♠ by East - Lead ♥K

♠1098	♠AKQ76	Win with ♥A and draw trumps first by playing ♠A, ♠K and ♠Q, hoping that they divide 3-2 between the opponents' hands. If you play a diamond first, an opponent might be able to ruff with a small trump. Play diamonds when you have drawn trumps.
♥A74	♥63	
♦AK6	♦Q532	
♣A652	♣J3	

Hint: Count **remaining** trumps. In the hand above, E/W have 8 trumps so 5 are remaining. If N/S both play to the first round of trumps now there will be 3 remaining. If, next round, North shows out there will be 2 remaining (& you know the split is 4:1).

<< If not using MiniBridge suggest running through basic bidding, fit & points for game then playing Boards 1 & 2 & emphasising counting of winners & losers. Take your time reviewing these hands >>

b) **Take ruffs before drawing trumps** (Hand 10)

Hint: Best to be sure that both opponents still have cards in the suit you plan to ruff

Contract 4♠ by East - Lead ♥K

♠1098	♠AKQ76	Win with ♥A and play another heart so that dummy has no more hearts. Win any return and come to hand with a top trump (assuming opponents return a minor suit). Ruff your losing heart in dummy. Only now should you draw trumps, again hoping that they divide 3-2.
♥A7	♥643	
♦AK6	♦J53	
♣A9652	♣Q3	

c) Stop drawing trumps when your opponents have none left

d) If the only trump outstanding is the best one – don't try to draw it

e) Discard losers on winners (Hand 11) << Only if time >>

Contract 4♠ by East - Lead ♥K

♠ 9842      ♠ AKQ76  
♥ A7        ♥ 63  
♦ AK6       ♦ QJ32  
♣ Q652     ♣ J3

Win with ♥A and draw trumps first by playing ♠A and ♠K (and ♠Q if they divide 3-1; life is awkward if they divide 4-0!). Then play ♦AK (starting high from the short hand) and a diamond to your queen. Now play ♦J and discard the low heart from dummy – you can then ruff your heart loser and make 11 tricks.

<< The hands below are important and maybe better played face up at the table >>

DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Ruff in the Short Hand		BV BRIDGE VICTORIA
<p>East is in 4♠ Lead ♥Q</p> <p>♠ T ♥ 754 ♦ AQJ96 ♣ QJT8</p> <p>♠ A Q 6 5 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ A 5 4 2 13 HCP</p> <p>♠ J 9 8 ♥ Q J T 9 ♦ T 7 2 ♣ 9 7 3</p> <p><b>Winners:</b> 5♠ 2♥ 0♦ 2♣ - need another trick <b>Losers:</b> 0♠ 2♥ 2♦ 0♣</p>	<p>Possible Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- try ♦K finesse (50%)</li> <li>- try ♦ruff in East (does not add a trick)</li> <li>- try ♥ ruff in West (need a trump left)</li> </ul> <p>Best Option is the last (♥ ruff in West) - if it fails we can try ♦K finesse anyway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Win lead with ♥K &amp; draw trumps (split 3:1)</li> <li>- Play ♥A &amp; then a 3rd ♥ &amp; ruff in West with the remaining trump</li> <li>- Later can try ♦K finesse but fails</li> </ul>	
DECLARER PLAY IN SUITS - Techniques		BV BRIDGE VICTORIA
<p>Draw Trumps High from Short Side Discarding a Loser on a Winner</p> <p><b>Contract - North playing in 4♠</b> East - leads ♥Q Winners: 5♠ 1♥ 3♦ 0♣ - need 10 Losers: 0♠ 0♥ 0♦ 3♣ maybe 4♣ Plan: Need to create 2 extra tricks &amp; the length of diamonds looks promising</p> <p>1 Win lead &amp; draw trumps (how did they split?) 2 Play ♦Q (high from the short side) 3 Play ♦3 to South's ♦K - how did ♦s split? 4 Play remaining ♦s &amp; discard ♣s from North (discarding loser on a winner) 5 Now only have 2 losing ♣s &amp; can make 11 tricks</p>	<p>♠ K Q T 9 8 ♥ A ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ K 9 7 5</p> <p>♠ 4 ♥ K T 5 4 3 2 ♦ J T 9 ♣ Q 8 4</p> <p>♠ 7 6 5 ♥ Q J 8 7 6 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A T 2</p> <p>♠ A J 3 2 ♥ 9 ♦ A K 6 4 2 ♣ J 6 3</p>	

<< After running through ruff in short hand & discard a loser on a winner hands above play Boards 3 (discard a loser - skip if not covered & play 5 instead) & 4 >>

**f) When would you not draw trumps (or not all of them)**

- When you need trumps for ruffing (typically in short hand)
- Have too many losers and if declarer will lose the lead if plays trumps (eg missing trump Ace) and the defenders can then cash their winners before you have time to discard them.
- When a bad break is discovered (eg 4:0 split)
- Stop drawing trumps if the outstanding trump/s is/are masters.

**SUMMARY**

1. In a suit contract begin by counting **winners & losers**.
2. When playing in a suit contract, declarer's first task is typically to "draw trumps" if it safe to do so
3. If drawing trumps will exhaust one hand's trumps, there will be no trumps remaining to ruff losers. The ruffs will need to be taken before trumps are drawn
4. Always count the trump suit. (Count remaining cards)
5. On top of NT techniques (Promotion, Length & Finesse), now have two extra techniques (Ruffing in the Short Hand, Discard a Loser on a Winner)

<< Play remaining Boards >>

## Information Required To Play Hands

### Bidding

- With 12+HCP and a 5 card major open 1 major
- If not using MiniBridge then, for Boards 1-6 and 8, either:
  - Just say Declarer is playing game in the opening suit, or
  - *Responder, with 12+HCP and 3+ cards in Opener' suit, bids 4 major (game)*
- Responder, with 6-10HCP and 3+ cards in Opener' suit, bid 2 major (partscore)

### Defence Tips

#### Mid Game

- Lead through strength
- Lead around to weakness

#### Opening Leads

- Only need sequence of two in a suit contract
- Do not underlead an Ace

## LESSON 3: Declarer Play in Suits Quiz

Q1 Count losers in this hand (in a Heart contract)

West- Declarer	East - Dummy
♠AK	♠984
♥AKJ73	♥QT82
♦AQ	♦95
♣KJ42	♣AQ65

Q2 a) Is it possible to make 11 tricks in Diamonds on the hand below?

b) Is it possible to make 9 tricks in NT in the hand below?

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

Q3 How many winners & losers do you have if playing in 4♠ (i.e. to make 10 tricks)?

♠ A Q J 8 4 2	♠ K T 9
♥ J 9 4	♥ 7
♦ A 9	♦ T 8 6 5 3
♣ A K	♣ J 5 3 2
You, Declarer	Dummy

Q4 In the hand above it seems obvious to count if you have enough winners to make your contract, but why bother to count losers?

Q5 You are declarer playing a 4♥ contract (i.e. to make 10 tricks) in the hands below.

A How many winners are there?

B How many losers have you?

C Plan the play. Lead is ♠Q – looks like top of a sequence.

♠ K 5 3 2	♠ A 8 4
♥ K Q J T	♥ A 4 3 2
♦ T 5	♦ K Q J 9 7 6
♣ KQ6	♣ -
West (Declarer)	East (Dummy)

**Q6 The contract is 4♠ in the hand below. The lead is ♣ K which the ace wins. Trumps are drawn in three rounds. What next?**

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

**Q7 In a suit contract, drawing the defenders' trumps is usually the first priority. How many situations can you think of when you should either delay drawing the trumps or stop doing so while defenders still hold trumps?**