

Beginners' Lesson 3 - Declarer Play in a Suit Contract ♠♥♦♣ (Focus on the Play not the Bidding)


Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ A K 4
♥ Q J 10 3 2
♦ K J 4 2
♣ 6

♠ Q J 9 7 5
♥ 9
♦ A 10 9
♣ J 7 3 2

♠ 10 8
♥ 8 7 6
♦ 8 7 6
♣ K Q 10 8 5

♠ 6 3 2
♥ A K 5 4
♦ Q 5 3
♣ A 9 4



North plays in 4♥

Theme: Draw trumps, Force out Aces

Lead: ♠K (top of seq.)

Losers: 1♠ 1 maybe 2♦

Winners: 2♠ 5♥ 1♣

Play: Win lead, draw trumps (have all the top ♥s), all gone after 3 rounds. Later play a ♦ &, after ♦A has been played, 2♦ winners are promoted & a length trick. North ruffs any ♣ continuance by E/W.


Board 2
East Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 8 6 2
♥ A Q 10
♦ J 10 9 7 2
♣ —

♠ 3
♥ K 5 4 3
♦ A K 5 4 3
♣ K Q 3

♠ A K
♥ 9 8 7 6 2
♦ Q 6
♣ A J 8 2

♠ 10 9 7 5 4
♥ J
♦ 8
♣ 10 9 7 6 5 4



East plays in 4♥

Theme: Draw trumps, length

Lead: ♦8 (singleton) hoping for a ruff

Losers: Possibly 4♥

Winners: 2♠ 3♦ 4♣ = 9

Play: Even with a poor ♥ holding draw trumps (E/W have good holdings in all the other suits). Play low ♥ from East & cover ♥J. End up losing 3♥ tricks - South no longer has a trump to ruff a 2nd round of ♦s


Board 3
South Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 7 4 2
♥ K Q J
♦ K Q
♣ A 8 7 6

♠ J 6
♥ A 10 5 4
♦ J 10 9 7 6
♣ 10 3

♠ 10 3
♥ 7 6 3 2
♦ 8 5 4 3
♣ K Q J

♠ A K Q 9 5
♥ 9 8
♦ A 2
♣ 9 5 4 2



South plays in 4♣

Theme: Draw trumps, force out A, discard loser on winner

Lead: ♦J - (top of seq.)

Losers: 1♥ 3♣

Winners: 5♠ (unless 4-0 split) 2♦ 1♣ - need to force out ♥A

Play: Win lead & draw trumps immediately (split 2:2). Then play a ♥ &, once ♥A is forced out, have 2♥ winners - discard ♣ on 3rd round of ♥s


Board 4
West Deals
None Vul

♠ A 7 5 3
♥ 6 3
♦ Q J 10 5 4 2
♣ A

♠ Q 10
♥ A J 9 4 2
♦ A 7
♣ J 10 9 8

♠ J
♥ K Q 8 7
♦ K 9 8 6
♣ K Q 5 2

♠ K 9 8 6 4 2
♥ 10 5
♦ 3
♣ 7 6 4 3



West plays in 4♥

Theme: Ruff in short hand, forceout ♣A

Lead: ♦Q - (top of seq.)

Losers: 1♠ 1♣

Winners: 5♥ 2♦

Play: Win lead & draw trumps (counting they split 2:2). Lose the 1st round of ♠s but can ruff 2nd round in East. Once ♣A is forced out have 3♣ winners so making 10 tricks

Board 5
North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 9 6 3
♥ A K 9 4 2
♦ K J 3
♣ 3

♠ Q 7
♥ 8 7
♦ A 6 5 4
♣ Q J 9 8 7

♠ 10 8 5
♥ Q J 3
♦ 10 8 7
♣ 10 6 5 4

♠ K J 4 2
♥ 10 6 5
♦ Q 9 2
♣ A K 2

North plays in 4♥

Theme: leave last trump out, force out ♦A

Lead: ♣4 (4th highest)

Losers: 2♠ 1 maybe 2♥ 1♦

Winners: 2♠ 2♥ 2♣

Play: Win lead & draw 2 rounds of trumps leaving ♥Q in East. Look to force out ♦A & now have 2 extra ♦ tricks &, later 2 extra ♥ tricks

Board 6
East Deals
None Vul

♠ 10
♥ 7 5 4
♦ A Q J 9 6
♣ Q J 10 8

♠ A Q 7 4
♥ 8 2
♦ K 5 3
♣ A 6 4 2

♠ K 6 5 3 2
♥ A K 6 3
♦ 8 4
♣ K 5

♠ J 9 8
♥ Q J 10 9
♦ 10 7 2
♣ 9 7 3

East plays in 4♠

Theme: Draw trumps, ruff in short side

Lead: ♥Q (top of seq.)

Losers: 2♥ 2♦

Winners: 5♠ 2♥ 2♣

Play: Win lead with ♥A & draw trumps (split 3:1). Play ♥K & then lead ♥3 & ruff in West with the remaining trump. Can also try the ♦ K finesse but it fails this time. **Note: ruffing in East does not make extra tricks**

Board 7
South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 8 3 2
♥ —
♦ Q 7 6 3 2
♣ Q 7 5 2

♠ 6 5 4
♥ A Q 9 6 5
♦ J 10 4
♣ K 8

♠ 7
♥ J 10 8 4
♦ K 9 8 5
♣ J 10 9 6

♠ A K J 10 9
♥ K 7 3 2
♦ A
♣ A 4 3

North shows support & 6-9HCP, South 19HCP (+North's 6=25) bids game

Theme: don't draw trumps, ruff in short hand

Lead: ♦J - (top of seq.)

Losers: 4♥ (but ruff) 2♣

Winners: 5♠ 0♥ 1♦ 1♣

Play: Note: North's ♠Q & ♠8 are higher than E/W ♠s. Need to ruff 3 of South's losing ♥s in Dummy so cannot afford to draw trumps. Win lead & immediately play a ♥ & ruff in Dummy. Back to South with ♣A & ruff another ♥; back to hand with a trump & ruff 3rd ♥

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ K 9 8 5 2
♥ —
♦ Q 6
♣ K Q 10 9 8 7

♠ A Q 3
♥ Q J 10 5 4
♦ K 10 8 3
♣ 4

♠ 6 4
♥ A K 3 2
♦ A 9 2
♣ A 6 3 2

♠ J 10 7
♥ 9 8 7 6
♦ J 7 5 4
♣ J 5

West plays in 4♥

Theme: Ruff in short hand, finesse, don't draw trumps

Lead: ♣K (top of seq.)

Losers: 2♠ 0♥ 2♦ (but ruff) 0♣

Winners: 1♠ 5♥ 2♦ 1♣

Play: Win lead & try the ♠Q finesse - lead low from Dummy & play ♠Q. It fails! When regain lead, play ♠A & then a 3rd round of ♠s & ruff with ♥K - we can afford to ruff high as hold top honours. Now draw trumps & make 10 tricks

Hands to Illustrate Declarer Play Techniques

Board 9
 North Deals
 None Vul

♠ 5 3
 ♥ Q J 10 9 2
 ♦ J 8
 ♣ K Q 9 8

♠ 10 9 8
 ♥ A 7 4
 ♦ A K 6
 ♣ A 6 5 2

♠ A K Q 7 6
 ♥ 6 3
 ♦ Q 5 3 2
 ♣ J 3

♠ J 4 2
 ♥ K 8 5
 ♦ 10 9 7 4
 ♣ 10 7 4

West North East South
 Pass 4 ♠ All pass

Lead: ♥ K

Draw Trumps

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.

Board 11
 North Deals
 None Vul

♠ 10 5
 ♥ Q J 8 4
 ♦ 9
 ♣ K Q 10 9 7 4

♠ 9 8 4 2
 ♥ A 7
 ♦ A K 6
 ♣ A 6 5 2

♠ A K Q 7 6
 ♥ 6 3
 ♦ Q J 3 2
 ♣ J 3

♠ J 3
 ♥ K 10 9 5 2
 ♦ 10 8 7 5 4
 ♣ 8

West North East South
 Pass 4 ♠ All pass

Lead: ♥ K

Discard losers on winners

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 in 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.

Board 10
 North Deals
 None Vul

♠ 5 3
 ♥ Q J 10 9 2
 ♦ Q 8 2
 ♣ K J 8

♠ 10 9 8
 ♥ A 7
 ♦ A K 6
 ♣ A 9 6 5 2

♠ A K Q 7 6
 ♥ 6 4 3
 ♦ J 5 3
 ♣ Q 3

♠ J 4 2
 ♥ K 8 5
 ♦ 10 9 7 4
 ♣ 10 7 4

West North East South
 Pass 4 ♠ All pass

Lead: ♥ K

Take ruffs before drawing trumps

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.