

## §5. Developing tricks.

**General Approach:** Almost all deals played in any forms of bridge contain *top tricks* that can be *cached* immediately and suits that must be developed into tricks. Most times in declarer play there is a need to develop tricks before *cashing winners*.

Here is a hand where declarer (South) can see ten *top tricks* having nominated Hearts as trumps. West leads the ♣K (top of a sequence):

	♠ Q 3		
	♥ 9 8 7 6 4		
	♦ 10 8 7		
	♣ A 4 2		
♠ 10 8 6 5	Dummy	♠ A J 9 7 2	
♥ 5 3	W	♥ 2	
♦ 9 5 3	E	♦ 6 4 2	
♣ K Q J 10	Declarer	♣ 9 8 6 5	
	♠ K 4		
	♥ A K Q J 10		
	♦ A K Q J		
	♣ 7 3		

In this example South can win the ♣A in the dummy and can *cash* his *winners*. After the ♣A declarer has five Heart tricks and four Diamond tricks. That gives South ten tricks in all. Can he do better?

Well, yes – he can make **eleven** tricks by making a trick in Spades. Best play is to do this *early*. If he waits to the very end he may not make a Spade trick at all. In fact, the best play of the whole hand is to win the ♣A, play some Hearts (but not all, just enough to ensure that East-West have none left) and then play a Spade to *knock out* the ♠A.

There are two ways that declarer might choose to do this – he might lead the ♠K (and contribute dummy's ♠3) or he might lead the ♠4 and play dummy's ♠Q. Either way, when East takes his ♠A the other Spade honour (the ♠Q or the ♠K) is now the top Spade and is a *winner*. As far as declarer is concerned the ♠K and ♠Q are *equals* on this deal. Either may be used to *knock out* the ♠A, leaving the other honour as the boss card in Spades. Can you see why it would be poor play to cash all five Hearts before leading a Spade?

This theme (that of knocking out high cards, is very important and forms the basis of most hands at Minibridge (and whist, and bridge). Note that West on the last hand also did some *knocking out* – the opening lead of the ♣K knocked out declarer's ♣A. This, in turn, set up the ♣Q (or the ♣J or the ♣10) as winners in the suit. On this deal the Club sequence ♣K Q J 10 were all *equals*. West could equally well have led the ♣K, the ♣Q, the ♣J or the ♣10 as his opening shot. It is customary, however, to lead the top card from a sequence so that your partner knows what is going on.

Put yourself at the helm in the next deal by sitting in the South seat as declarer. Spades are trumps, West leads the ♣K. How would you play the hand?

♠ 9 8 7 6 5  
 ♥ 10 9 7  
 ♦ 5 4 2  
 ♣ 5 3

♣K	Dummy W            E Declarer
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♠ A K Q J 10  
 ♥ K Q J  
 ♦ K Q J  
 ♣ A 6

South should make **ten** tricks. He has five *top tricks* in Spades, and one *top trick* in Clubs. As well as that he can *set up* two tricks in Hearts and two tricks in Diamonds by *knocking out* the Ace of each red suit. As on the last hand it is best to do this early. Can you see why?

Let's go through the play. South should win the ♣A, play off sufficient trumps so that East-West have no more and then turn his attention to a red suit (it doesn't matter which – say Hearts). South can lead any of his Hearts (they are all *equals*) to force the ♥A. That *sets up* two Heart *winners* in declarer's hand. If the opponents take a Club trick they may play back a Heart. South wins that and switches his attention to Diamonds, leading any of his equal cards. That forces the ♦A, setting up two Diamond winners.

You will note that declarer is always in control. Whatever East-West do declarer can regain the lead fairly quickly – had he played off all of his trump winners then that would not be the case.

It is worth noting that it is possible to count *losers*. Here, South must lose the ♥A, the ♦A and a Club trick. That means declarer has three losers (and, therefore, you might expect ten winners).

Try this one, where the relevant high cards are split between declarer and dummy. South is declarer with Spades as trumps. West leads the ♦K.

♠ Q J 10 3 2  
 ♥ K 4 2  
 ♦ 6 4 3  
 ♣ Q 3

♦K	Dummy W            E Declarer
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♠ A K 6 5 4  
 ♥ Q J 3  
 ♦ A 5 2  
 ♣ K 6

- 1) How many *top tricks* are there?
- 2) What suits should South *set up*?
- 3) How many losers does declarer have?
- 4) How many tricks should declarer make?

Let's answer these questions in turn.

- 1) There are six *top tricks*. Five in Spades (even though the top Spades are in different hands) and the  $\diamond A$ .
- 2) Declarer should *knock out* the  $\heartsuit A$  and the  $\clubsuit A$  to *set up* two tricks in Hearts and one in Clubs.
- 3) Declarer should lose the  $\heartsuit A$ , two Diamond tricks (as the  $\diamond A$  has been knocked out at trick one) and the  $\clubsuit A$ .
- 4) Declarer has four losers and nine *winners* (five Spades, two Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club). The Heart winners and the Club winner are *slow tricks*.

The eight hands that follow in this section require declarer to set up suits by driving out (or *knocking out*) the opponents' high cards.

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