

## Notes for Week No. 1

### Planning the Play at Trick One to Guarantee an Entry to a Long Suit

When you are declaring a no-trump contract, it is customary to count your top winners. You should then decide how you are going to win the additional tricks required. It might be by a finesse or by promotion of honours. This plan should be made before a card is played to trick one. Consider the hand below.

1		♠ K 6 4			
		♥ A K 7 2			
		♦ A 8 3			
		♣ 8 4 3			
	West		East		South plays in 3 NT and west leads the Q♠.
♠	Q J 10 5 2		♠ 8 7 3		
♥	8 6 5		♥ Q J 10 9		
♦	K J 7 6		♦ Q 10 9		
♣	5		♣ A 9 2		
		♠ A 9			
		♥ 4 3			
		♦ 5 4 2			
		♣ K Q J 10 7 6			

You have two top tricks in spades, two in hearts and one in diamonds. The club suit should provide an additional five tricks. But first the A♣ must be dislodged. Suppose that you win A♠ at trick one and lead K♣. Do you think that east will play A♣? Dream on. When west shows out on the second club lead, east knows to hold off the ace until the third round. Now you have no way of getting to your hand and you go down two on a contract that was ice cold.

Of course, this is just a bad dream. In real life you would realize that the A♠ must be retained as an entry to your hand after the A♣ has been played. You would win the first trick with K♠ because you paused long enough to make a plan.

## Notes for Weeks No. 2 & 3

As in the previous example, we emphasize the importance of making your plan before playing a card at trick one. This time you must stick to your plan and avoid the trap of winning a cheap trick that seems to be there for the taking. Consider the hand shown below. What card do you play at trick one?

2

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

South plays in 3 NT and west leads the 4♣.

If you won the first trick with J♣, you will have won the first battle and lost the war. In order to make nine tricks, you need to get four tricks from that beautiful diamond suit. That means knocking out the A♦ while you still have an entry to your hand. If you play a small club from dummy at trick one, you no longer have a small club to lead to the king. Sometimes small cards are important.

Can you see the correct play? You must win the first trick with A♣ and attack the diamonds immediately by leading the 10♦. After the A♦ has been played, you will enter your hand by leading 7♣ to the king and cash the diamond winners.

3

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

South plays in 3 NT and west leads the 4♠.

In hand no. 3, success depends on cashing that powerful diamond suit. How will you gain entry to the dummy after the diamond king has been dislodged? The only possible entry is in spades. Two small spades must be retained in your hand. You must realize this at trick one, playing a small spade from dummy and winning the ace. After the diamond king is dislodged, you will lead twice toward dummy's Q J of spades. West can win only one trick with his king and you have your entry to dummy.

### Notes for Week No. 4

#### Ducking

Sometimes it is advantageous to play a small card, and surrender a trick which could otherwise be won, with the object of preserving an entry. This is called "ducking".

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

South plays in 3NT and west leads the 5♠.

Declarer has seven top tricks in aces and kings. Additional tricks can come from the club suit. How can declarer enter the dummy to cash the club tricks? The A♠ is used up at trick one. As you can see, you have a club loser. It is necessary to duck the first trick in clubs. Lead the 2♣ from dummy and play low from your hand. The opponents will win the trick, but now you have the tempo to cash your club honours and run the club suit. A club honour provides an entry to dummy.

# Notes for Week No. 5

## Promoting Honours (Finesse-aholics Beware)

Eddie Kanter is a popular bridge player and teacher. He has coined the term finesse-aholic, to describe someone who takes a finesse every time that one is possible. Very often there is a better strategy available. Consider the hand below.

5	♠ J 10 8			
	♥ 8 7 4			
	♦ A K J 4			
	♣ 9 8 7			
♠ Q 6 4		♠ A 9 7 6 3		South plays in 4♥ and west leads the Q♣.
♥ Q J 9		♥ 10		
♦ 9 8 6		♦ Q 10 3		
♣ Q J 10 3		♣ 6 5 4 2		
	♠ K 3			
	♥ A K 6 5 3 2			
	♦ 7 5 2			
	♣ A K			

When declaring a suit contract, it is customary to count your losers. Here you have two spade losers, a possible heart loser and a diamond loser. You start with A and K of hearts, revealing a heart loser. How can a loser be eliminated? The finesse-aholic thinks about going to dummy and trying a spade finesse or starting with a diamond finesse.

In fact the contract is guaranteed by promoting a spade honour. Ironically, it would be easier to see this if the spade king were the queen. You can promote the 10 of spades by giving away two spade tricks. However you must start right away while you have two entries to dummy. Play K♠, and, on regaining the lead, play J♠. You can then enter dummy with a diamond and sluff a diamond on the 10♠. “Elementary, my dear Watson”.

How would you play this hand?

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

South plays in 3NT and west leads the J♠.

You have seven quick winners in aces and kings. Two tricks will have to come from the diamond suit. You have two entries to dummy. It would be a mistake to use one of those entries to try a diamond finesse. Success is a sure thing if you promote winners in the diamond suit. Win A♠ and play K♦. Upon regaining the lead, play J♦. When you gain the lead again, you cash 10♦, enter dummy with whichever honour remains and cash 9♦.