

MAKING TRICKS IN NO TRUMPS

When playing in no trumps you ask yourself:

- How many tricks do I need?
- How many tricks do I have on top? Count your winners.
- How many more tricks do I need?
- How can I create these extra tricks?

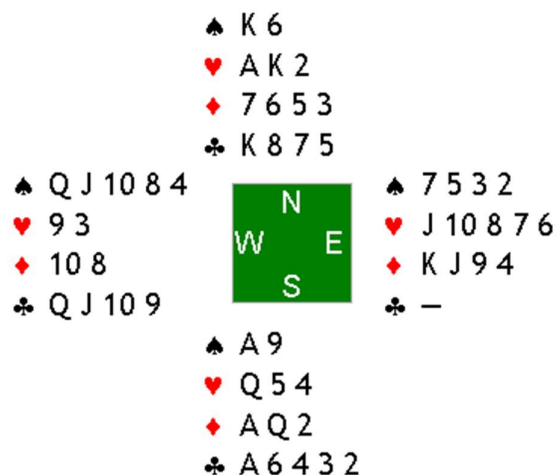
Creating Extra Tricks

Extra tricks can be created by

- Establishing low cards by playing a long suit.
- Establishing high cards (for example by driving out the opponents' ace when holding KQJ of a suit).
- Various declarer play techniques (finessing, endplays etc.)

Playing Your Longest Suit

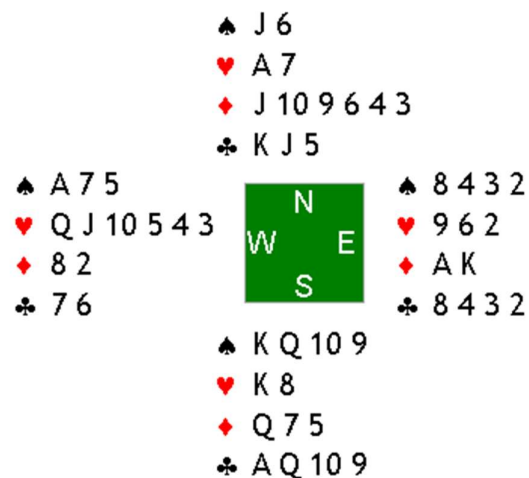
It is often a good move to establish tricks by playing your longest suit, but you need to consider the hand as a whole before embarking on this course. Count your winners and think carefully about how to make any extra tricks required to fulfil your contract.



South is declarer in 3NT, and West leads the queen of spades. South has eight top tricks (2 in spades, 3 in hearts, 1 in diamonds, and 2 in clubs). Clubs looks like a good source of the extra trick required, but

East shows out on the first club. If South persists in clubs, West will gain the lead twice before the long club is established. West will remove declarer's remaining spade when they first gain the lead and cash their long spades the second time they gain the lead – the defence will win two club tricks and 3 spade tricks. Time for a new plan. Declarer should take the diamond finesse, leading a low diamond from dummy. They will make the contract if East has the king.

West leads their top heart against South's 3NT contract.



Declarer counts six top tricks – two hearts and four clubs. Where should they look for the three extra tricks they require to succeed? Diamonds is the longest suit, but declarer must lose two tricks to establish the suit. If declarer attacks diamonds, the defence will prevail; they can clear the heart suit and later get in to cash their heart winners. If declarer attacks spades, they can establish the three extra tricks required while losing the lead only once.