

Trick Development

After the opening lead, ask yourself 3 questions **before** you play a card.

1. How many tricks do I need to make my contract?
2. How many sure tricks do I have (in a NT contract)? How many losers do I have (in a suit contract)?
3. How can I develop additional tricks? You can develop extra tricks by
 - promoting high cards
 - setting up a long suit in dummy or in your own hand
 - finessing
 - trumping losers in the hand with fewer trump

Promoting High Cards

Giving up one or two high cards in a suit, especially when you hold a sequence of high cards in that suit, is one of the most common methods of developing additional tricks. It's often necessary to lose those tricks as early as possible in the play -- before the opponents can knock out your outside entries.

♠ xxx

♠ KJxx

♥ Qx

♥ AKJxx

♦ KQJ10

♦ x

♣ Jxx

♣ Qxx

Setting up a long suit

Even small cards can take tricks if you knock out intermediate honors in the suit before using your high honors. Developing long suits to promote winning tricks works in NT and in trump contracts. In a NT contract, you're trying to develop extra winners. In suit contracts, you're trying to get rid of losers. "Ducking" a trick can be very useful when trying to establish a long suit.

♠ Jxxx

♠ Qxx

♥ xx

♥ AKxxxx

♦ KJxx

♦ x

♣ AKQ

♣ xxx

Finessing

A finesse is a technique for taking tricks with lower honor cards when your opponents have higher honor cards. It's based on the assumption (or hope!) that opponents' higher honors are *in front of* your lower honors.

Note: When leading toward high cards in which two honors are missing, play the lower card first.

♠ 10xx

♠ KJxx

♥ xxx

♥ AQx

♦ xxx

♦ AQ10x

♣ AKxx

♣ xx

Setting up a long suit by finessing

Extra tricks also can be developed by combining a finesse with the development of a long suit.

♠ xx

♠ KQxx

♥ xx

♥ AQx

♦ xxx

♦ Axxx

♣ AQxxxx

♣ Jx

Trumping losers

In a suit contract, before drawing trump, look to see if you might need to trump a short suit in the hand with fewer trump.

♠ AKx

♠ xx

♥ AKQxx

♥ Jxx

♦ Jxx

♦ KQx

♣ Jx

♣ xxxxx

The contract is 6 ♠ (N). East leads the K♥.

North

♠ AK10986

♥ A43

♦ 108

♣ AQ

South

♠ QJ75

♥ 1092

♦ AKJ42

♣ 3

1. How many tricks do you need to make your contract?
2. How many losers do you have?
3. How can you develop additional tricks?

The contract is 3NT (S). West leads the club 6.

North

♠ Q

♥ A10862

♦ AKQJ2

♣ KJ

South

♠ K1064

♥ 3

♦ 765

♣ A5432

1. How many tricks do you need to make your contract?
2. How many tricks can you take off the top?
3. How can you develop additional tricks?

The contract is 2♥ (W). North leads the heart 2.

West

♠ 5

♥ AKQJ108

♦ AJ87

♣ 98

East

♠ J62

♥ 654

♦ 95

♣ KJ1042

1. How many tricks do you need to make your contract?
2. How many losers do you have?
3. How can you develop additional tricks?