



Creating Winners via Promotion and Developing Long Suits

We know how many tricks are needed to “make” a contract. For example:

- To make a contract of 3NT, Declarer must win 9 tricks
- To make a contract of 4♥, Declarer must win 10 tricks
- To make a contract of 1♦, Declarer must win 7 tricks

We also know how to count “sure winners” in our suits:

- Look at the combined holding (between Declarer & Dummy hands) for each suit, starting with Spades (then repeat the process for Hearts, Diamonds, and Clubs)
- In each suit, make an initial count of sure winners as follows:
 - If you do not have the Ace you have 0 (zero) sure winners
 - If you have the Ace but not the King you have 1 sure winner
 - If you have the Ace and King but not the Queen, you have 2 sure winners
 - If you have the Ace, King, and Queen but not the Jack, you have 3 sure winners
 - If you have the Ace, King, Queen, and Jack but not the Ten, you have 4 sure winners
- Check the length of the suit in both hands:
 - You cannot have more sure winners than the number of cards in the longest holding in the suit... for example holding AK opposite QJ, you have only 2 sure winners even though you have AKQJ in the suit
 - If your initial count of high-card sure winners will draw all of the opponents’ cards in the suit then the remaining small cards are also sure winners... for example holding AKQ54 opposite 87632, all of the opponents’ cards will fall on your AKQ... making your remaining 2 cards also sure winners

Often, we will not have enough sure winners to make the contract... so we need some tools to create winners.

We will study **three tools for creating winners**:

- **Promotion** – win tricks after opponents play their high cards
- **Developing Long Suits** – win tricks with small cards
- **The Finesse** – take advantage of the favorable placement of a high card you do not hold

This week and next, we'll work with Promotion and Developing Long Suits. After that, we'll learn about the Finesse and we'll add more tools later.

Remember that we can't lead from a hand unless we have just won a trick in that hand. So we may need to be careful about how we're going to "enter" the hand we want to lead from.

Promotion – Win tricks after they play their high cards

Consider this holding:

(You, on lead) ♦ 8763		(Dummy) ♦ KQJT	You are Declarer, sitting West. Your partner has the Dummy hand in the East seat.
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You are missing the ♦A... but once it has been played, you can win 3 Diamond tricks with the next-highest cards.

This is the idea of Promotion – **give up one or more of your high cards** to promote another of your high cards into a winner.

We like to **drive out their honor with the highest of our cards** that will do the job.

More examples:

(You) ♣ JT98		(Dummy) ♣ 5432	Give up three club tricks to the AKQ, then your remaining Club is the highest Club. You have lost 3 tricks to win 1 trick by promotion.
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(You) ♥ K3		(Dummy) ♥ Q7	Play the King to drive out the Ace, promoting the ♥Q to be a winner.
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(You) ♠ QT3		(Dummy) ♠ J72	Play the Queen to drive out the Ace or King; later play the Jack to drive out the other high honor. This promotes the ♠T to be a winner.
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(You) ♥ KJT983		(Dummy) ♥ Q4	Play the Queen to drive out the Ace, promoting the ♥ KJT98 to sure winners.
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For every tool you learn, there are times you will be able to use it and times you will not be able to use it.

Use Promotion when...

- You're missing the highest card(s) in a suit
- You hold a sequence of the next-highest cards in that suit
- You hold enough cards in the suit that you still have some left after driving out their high cards

Developing Long Suits – Win tricks with small cards

Consider this holding:

(You) ♥ AKQJ32		(Dummy) ♥ 654	You are Declarer, sitting West. Your partner has the Dummy hand in the East seat.
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The opponents have only 4 Hearts. They will all fall on your top Hearts. After that, your low-ranking Hearts are the highest remaining Hearts.

We've seen this idea before when counting sure winners in long suits. This is also related to the idea of Promotion, except in this case we don't have to lose any tricks first.

Now try this one:

(You) ♦ AKQ2		(Dummy) ♦ 6543	The opponents hold 5 cards. If they are “split” 3-2, they will all fall on your top Diamonds, “developing” one more trick in this suit.
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When deciding whether to develop a long suit, we want to think about how the outstanding cards are “split” or “divided” between the opponents’ hands. If one opponent has too many cards in the suit, we won’t be able to develop it.

How will we know how their suit is divided? In general:

- An **even number** of outstanding cards is most likely to **divide unevenly**
 - Most common: 4 outstanding cards split 3-1
 - Second most common: 6 outstanding cards split 4-2
- An **odd number** of outstanding cards is most likely to **divide as evenly as possible**
 - Most common: 5 outstanding cards split 3-2
- This “**even-odd**” rule helps you decide whether a suit is worth developing

Is a suit worth developing? Usually it depends on how many cards the opponents have in the suit, and how they are likely to be split.

You hold	They hold	Likely split	Worth developing?
10 cards	3 cards	2-1	Always
9 cards	4 cards	3-1	Always
8 cards	5 cards	3-2	Almost always
7 cards	6 cards	4-2	Sometimes

Develop a long suit when...

- You need to create winners in the suit
- You have some non-top cards in the suit
- The split is likely to be in your favor
- Your suit is long enough that you will still have some after the opponents have played all their cards in the suit
- You have an entry to the long cards

You can develop a long suit by...

- **Cashing Winners** – play out the top cards; if the split is favorable, all the opponents’ cards are gone and your remaining cards are high
- **Losing Tricks** – playing out your low cards until all the opponents’ high cards are gone and your remaining cards are high (this is really very much like Promotion)
- **Ducking Tricks** – let the opponents win a trick you could have won, so you can win tricks in that suit later

Here’s one example of each method:

(You) ♥ AK32	Cashing Winners	(Dummy) ♥ Q654	The opponents hold 5 cards. If they are “split” 3-2, they will all fall on your top Hearts, “developing” one more trick in this suit.
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(You) ♣ 7532	Losing Tricks	(Dummy) ♣ 9864	The opponents hold 5 cards. Lead Clubs every time you gain the lead. If the Clubs are split 3-2, eventually you will develop a club as a winner.
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(You) ♠ AK432	Ducking Tricks	(Dummy) ♠ 765	The opponents hold 5 cards. If you cash the Ace & King first, the opponents will win a Spade trick and you might not get the lead again. Instead, play a small Spade from each hand to lose a trick right away, then win later Spade tricks. If the Spades are split 3-2, you will win 4 Spade tricks.
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Developing a Long Suit:

- When developing a long suit, you **often** must lose one or more tricks.
- You may need a favorable split of the outstanding cards
- You can:
 - Cash winners
 - Lose tricks
 - Duck tricks