

BRIDGE FUNDAMENTALS By Maritha Pottenger

Every time a higher honor is played, a lower honor moves up one rank.

K72

Q54 A986 Declarer plays the Jack. LHO “covers an honor with an honor”
 J103 playing the Queen. Declarer plays the King & RHO plays Ace.
 Declarer’s 10 now takes the second round of this suit,
 whereas it originally would take only the 5th round.

Notice that RHO’s 9 and 8 become very significant cards. They will take the 3rd & 4th rounds of this suit.

The more cards you hold in a suit, the more quickly you can usually develop tricks.

987

QJ AK Declarer gives up **two** spade tricks and gets **four** in return!
 1065432

With finesse positions, you want to play 3rd hand, NOT 1st.

xxx

xxx KJxx If you lead this suit from your hand (below) you will win only the Ace.
 AQ10 If you lead from North (above) toward your AQ10 (twice), you
 can get all 3 tricks.

When you hold tenace positions (honors that are NOT a solid sequence), **you want to lead toward them,** NOT away from them, e.g., KJx AQx AJ109 A1098 AQJx AKJx, etc.

Control in a suit is held by the top cards (Ace, then King, etc.) **Do NOT relinquish control in a suit until you must.** Particularly in No Trump, it is vital to establish your long suit(s) and extra tricks before you give up control in your short suits (which are the long suits of your opponents).

Qxx AKx AQx Q976 Jxxx 987x 1076 A2 AK4 Qxx Kxx KJ10x	xx QJxx KQJxx xx Q10xx 109x xx Jxxxx AKxx AKx 109x AKx	Preserve Necessary Entries! J9x xxx Axx Q10xx
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Contract: 6NT.

If you cash 3 spade tricks, 3 heart tricks, & 3 diamond tricks BEFORE you attack clubs, you will go down (losing Ace of clubs, Jack of Spades & 9 of hearts). If you attack clubs first,

Contract 6 NT. Spade Lead

If you take the first spade and cash 4 heart tricks without planning out the hand, you will go down. You must attack diamonds first, driving out the Ace. RHO holds up until the third round of diamonds & knocks out your 2nd spade stopper, but now you have 2 more good diamonds in dummy (for a total of 4 diamond tricks) and you have an ENTRY to dummy in the heart suit. Making 6!

You will make 12 tricks.

Do not relinquish control in a suit until you must!

Establish your long suits first!

When establishing a suit, go after the suit which offers the greatest number of tricks.

A6
A4
QJ98
QJ743
QJ10xx xxxx
J98 10xxx
Axx xx
Ax xxx
Kx
KQxx
K10xx
K10x

KJ982
Q10x
Q10
KJ9652

If the above suits
are diamonds & clubs, you
should go after clubs, because
that suit offers 5 tricks after
you force out the Ace.
Diamonds offer only 4 tricks
After you knock out the Ace.

Contract: 3NT. Lead Q Spades.
Count tricks: 3 hearts & 2 spades.
Need to develop 4 tricks. You can
force out Ace or Clubs or Ace of
Diamonds. Diamonds offer 3 tricks
after removal of Ace; Clubs offer 4
tricks. You must attack Clubs to
make your contract. (As soon as you
lose to one minor Ace, the opponents
will remove your last Spade stopper.)

If you don't have time to establish your longest suit, go after whatever suit(s) offer a chance to make your contract.

xx
KQxx
AKxx
xxx
QJ10xxx xxx
Xx J10xxx
109x Jxx
AK xx
AK
A7
Qxx
QJ10xxx

Contract: 3NT. Lead: Queen of Spades.
The opponents have knocked out one of your spade controls
(stoppers) with their opening lead. You would like to attack
the club suit (your longest) to develop tricks, but **you do not
have the time!** If you give up one club (to the Ace), the
opponents will return a spade (knocking out your 2nd--and
last--spade stopper). Then, if you let them in with the other
high club (the King), they will take 4 spade tricks along with
their Ace & King of clubs. You will be down 2.

On this hand, you must hope that the diamonds do
break 3/3. If so, you get 2 spade tricks, 3 heart tricks, and 4
diamond tricks and just make 3NT.

Count your tricks before you start

Playing the hand.

xx
KQxx
AKxx
xxx
J1098x xxx
xx J10xxx
109xx Jx
AK xxx
AKQ
Ax
Qxx
QJ10xx

Contract: 3NT. Lead: Sp Jack
Count your tricks: 3 spades,
3 hearts, 3 diamonds. If
diamonds break 3/3, you can
get a 4th diamond trick, but if
they break 4/2, you will lose
a diamond. Best bet is to go
after clubs. Lose to Ace and
LHO knocks out your 2nd
spade stopper. Lose to King
Of Clubs & LHO knocks out your 3rd (last) Spade stopper.
However, you now have 11 tricks! Making 5.

Sometimes you must establish a suit by finessing, e.g., AQ10xx opposite xxx. Finesse to the 10. If it loses to the Jack, come back to your hand and finesse to the Queen next time.

Sometimes you must establish a suit by ducking (giving up tricks early to get more later). If your long suit is: A9654 opposite 832, you should lead the 2 and play the 4. When you have the lead again, lead the 3 and play the 5. When you get the lead again, lead the 8 to the Ace. (If the suit breaks 3/2, you will lose 2 tricks and get 3 tricks.) If the hand with Axxxx has no other entries (except for the Ace), it becomes vital to play the suit that way. Otherwise, you will never get back to that hand to cash the last 3 tricks you deserve!