

PLAY OF THE HAND – LESSON # 3

ELIMINATING LOSERS

TRUMPING AND THE DISCARDING OF LOSERS: - There are two specific ways of eliminating losers when playing in Trump contracts. They are: (A) the **trumping** (“**ruffing**”) **of losing tricks** in any side suit, and (B), the **discarding of losers** upon extra winners in any outside suits other than trump.

A. TRUMPING LOSERS: - Several conditions and patterns of card placement must exist for this procedure to work to its fullest potential yielding the most number of additional tricks. They are as follows:

1. The side suit desirous of being trumped must be unevenly divided with there being **fewer** cards in Dummy’s hand than in Declarer’s hand; i.e., **it is usually beneficial to trump ONLY in the hand with the shorter trump suit, not the longer.** (Remember: When counting losers, you must focus on Declarer’s hand for losers to be ruffed in Dummy, **not** upon losers in Dummy’s hand, because **it rarely pays to trump in Declarer’s hand; i.e., the hand with the longer trump suit.**)

EXERCISE 1:

How many Losers, if any, can be trumped in the Dummy in the following side suits as shown?

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|-------|----|-------|-----|
| <u>DUMMY:</u> | 8 | 10987 | 42 | ---- | AK6 |
| <u>DECLARER:</u> | A42 | AK | QJ | 965 | 5 |
| | Yes-2 | No | No | Yes-3 | No |

Side suits that are equally divided between your hand and the Dummy do not provide an opportunity to trump losers. The exception to this would be either for a **CROSS-RUFF** scenario and/or for **DUMMY REVERSAL** situations.

2. The management of the trump suit is critical. There is always a dilemma; i.e., it is generally a good idea to draw the Opponent’s trumps because they might otherwise be used to turn some of your winners into unexpected losers, but, on the other hand, Dummy’s trumps must be preserved for necessary ruffing power to eliminate tricks that would otherwise be lost.

EXERCISE 2:

In the following hands, how many trumps are needed in Dummy to take care of Declarer’s losers in the side suit shown?

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| <u>DUMMY:</u> | K4 | --- | A | Q2 | QJ |
| <u>DECLARER:</u> | A85 | 1053 | 753 | AK7 | 853 |
| | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 |

When Declarer decides that the best way to get rid of a loser from his/her hand is to trump it in the Dummy, Declarer must calculate how many trumps will be necessary to do the job. Trumps can be drawn as long as Declarer makes certain to leave enough trumps in the Dummy to accomplish the desired number of ruffing tricks in the Dummy hand.

3. Sometimes Declarer can start to trump losing tricks in the Dummy without giving up the lead to the Opponents. However, it is sometimes necessary to relinquish the lead once, or even several times, before the condition is right to trump a loser in the Dummy.

EXERCISE 3:

In each of the following examples, how many times must one forfeit the lead before losers in Declarer's hand can be trumped in the Dummy hand?

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| <u>DUMMY :</u> | A5 | Q | 65 | ---- | 7 |
| <u>DECLARER :</u> | 986 | 1098 | 1072 | J78 | A92 |
| | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

At times, the only way to promote an extra trick in order to make a contract is to give up the lead to the Opponents before Declarer has the ability to trump a loser in the Dummy's hand.

B. DISCARDING LOSERS: - An alternative to trumping a loser in Dummy is to throw away a loser from Declarer's hand upon one of Dummy's extra winners. The pattern of card distribution that is effective in accomplishing this goal, this time, is that Dummy has more cards in the side suit than does Declarer.

EXERCISE 4:

In the following exercise, how many losers can be discarded on extra winners in the Dummy, and what does Declarer have to do in order to prepare the side suit shown for discarding losers?

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <u>DUMMY :</u> | AKQ | KQJ | AKXXX | AQJ | QJ109 |
| <u>DECLARER :</u> | 98 | 64 | 932 | 74 | 86 |
| | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| | <u>Nothing</u> | <u>Promote</u> | <u>Duck 1 Trick</u> | <u>Finesse Twice</u> | <u>Promote</u> |

When searching for alternative ways of disposing of losers in a trump contract, look to see if Dummy has additional winners in a side suit (other than the trump suit) on which to throw your losers.