Lesson 5

Opening Third and Fourth Hands Light
Competitive Bidding and the Law of Total Tricks
Balancing
Hold-up play, ducking, unblocking

Opening 3rd Hand Light

- When bidding goes pass-pass to you, it is common to open with a King less than usual (9-10 HCPs)

- Partner must take this into account

- The idea is you know (although partner doesn't) that game is not likely for your side. By opening, you hope to obstruct opponents and possibly find a good part-score

- Also lets partner know what to lead if your side is on defense (thus suit quality is important)

Example

- After 2 passes, you hold

- ♠ KQ1098 ♥ 2 ♦ KJ1072 ♣ 54

Example

- After 2 passes, you hold

- ♠ 107654 ♥ AJ6 ♦ AJ6 ♣ J2

Opening 4ᵗʰ hand light

- When you are in the passout seat (pass-pass-pass-?), it is common to use the "Rule of 15" to decide whether to bid.

- Rule of 15: if High Card Points + number of ♠s ≥ 15, then open, otherwise Pass.

- If this is your partnership agreement, partner should be aware of this possibility and not get carried away

- Since a part-score is all that is sought, any response from partner is NOT forcing

Example

- After 3 passes, you hold

- ♠ 4 ♥ KJ54 ♦ KJ87 ♣ K987

Example

- After 2 passes, you hold

- ♠KQ1092 ♥AJ4 ♦876 ♣53

Drury

- There is a convention called "Drury", by which partner can enquire as to whether 3rd or 4th seat opener has a full opening or not

- Invented by a Toronto Bridge player, Eric Murray

- Optional, not taught here

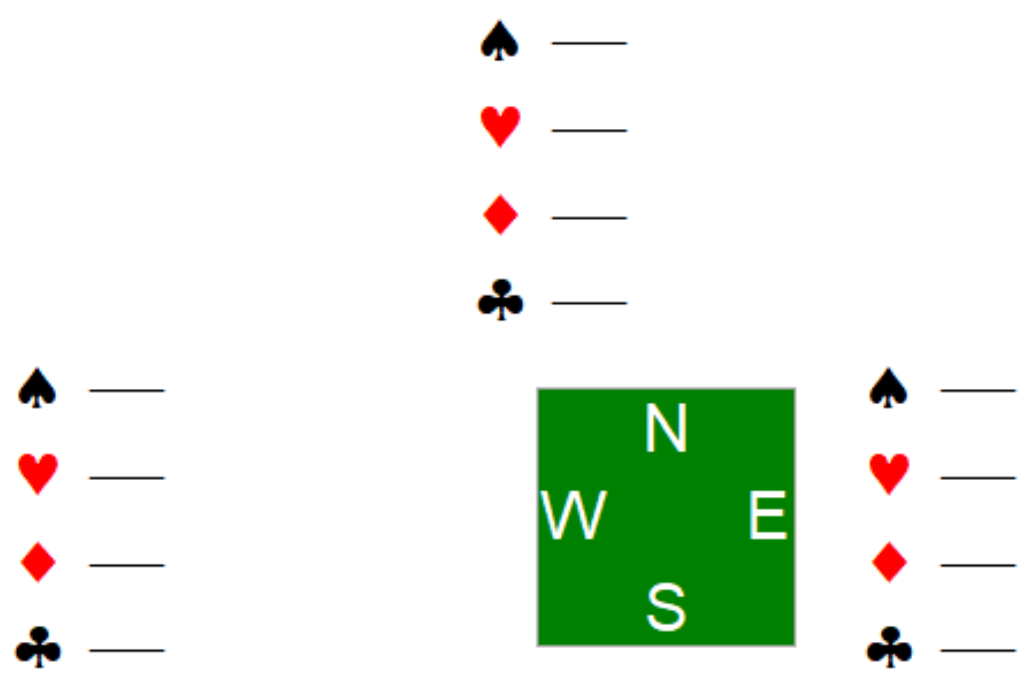# Competitive Bidding and the Law of Total Tricks

- Not a law, but a guideline to <u>competitive</u> bidding when HCPs are approximately evenly divided

- Implies for shapely hands (where each side has a trump fit and are <u>competing</u> for the contract), the number of combined trumps are more important than the exact number of HCPs

- Tells us:

- *Bid to a number of tricks equal to the number of trumps you and your partner hold (and no higher) <u>in a competitive auction</u>.*

- Thus, if with an eight-card fit, a pair is safe to bid to the two level but are unsafe to go to the three level. But, with a nine-card fit, the three level will be safe. With a 10-card fit, the 4 level will be safe.

- In this context, "safe" does not necessarily mean that the contract will be made. But if not, it means that it is a worthwhile sacrifice against the opponents' contract.

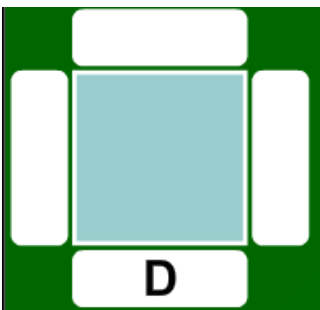- Only use when you aren't interested in game or slam

	♠ —	
	♥ —	
	♦ —	
	♣ —	

♠ —		♠ —
♥ —	N	♥ —
♦ —	W E	♦ —
♣ —	S	♣ —
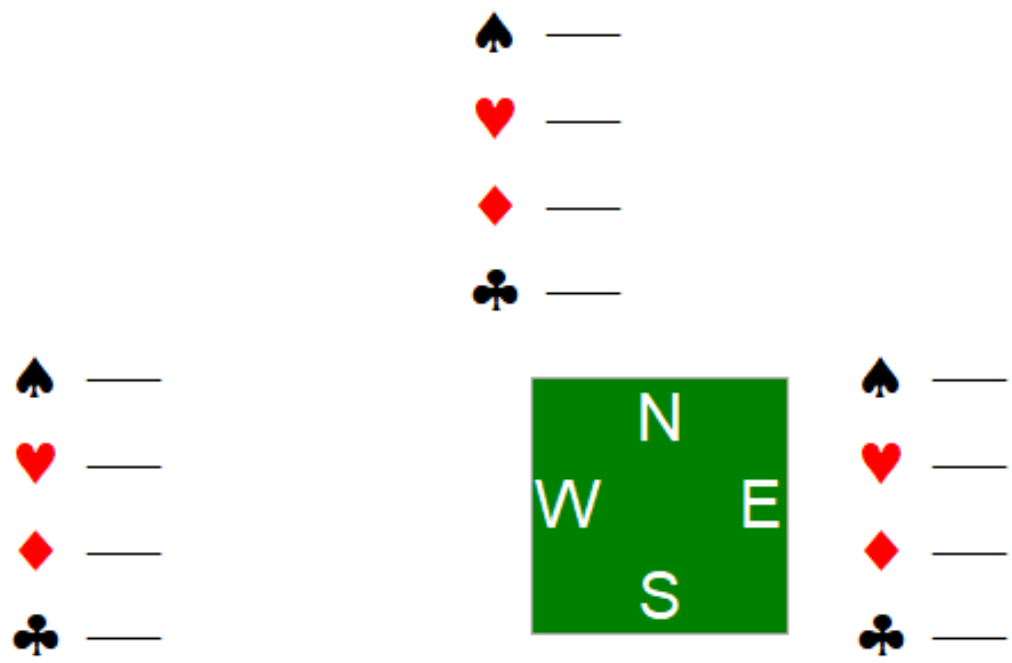
♠ Q 7 2
♥ 5 4
♦ 10 8 7 6 5
♣ 6 5 3

West	North	East	South
	1 ♠	Pass	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	Pass	2 ♠
All pass			

```
              ♠ —
              ♥ —
              ♦ —
              ♣ —

♠ —                        ♠ —
♥ —          N             ♥ —
♦ —       W     E          ♦ —
♣ —          S             ♣ —

              ♠ K J 8 7 6
              ♥ 5
              ♦ 8 4 3 2
              ♣ Q 3 2
```

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

North: ♠ K Q 3 ♥ J 10 3 ♣ 8 6 2 ♦ 8 5 4 3

West: ♠ 10 8 ♥ K 6 4 2 ♣ A J 10 4 ♦ A Q J

East: ♠ 6 4 ♥ 9 7 5 ♣ K Q 7 3 ♦ K 10 6 2

South: ♠ A J 9 7 5 2 ♥ A Q 8 ♣ 9 5 ♦ 9 7

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Dbl	2♠	3♣	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	2♥	Dbl	

N North

W West

**E** East

S You

♠ A 6 4 ♥ 9 7 6 4 ♣ A 6 3 2 ♦ 8 4
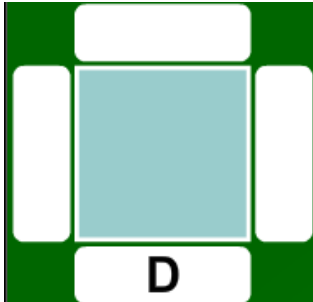
Balancing

- When bidding goes 1 of a suit, pass, pass, ?
- You want to compete for the part score and not let opponents off with a 1-level contract.
- You may bid with a King less than usual
- Partner must take this into account when responding
- Called "Protecting" in Britain. Partner may have an opening count or more but no suitable bid. Balancing gives him a chance to bid

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 of a suit	Pass	Pass	Overcall = 6 + HCP, 5+ card suit

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 of a suit	Pass	Pass	Double = Takeout with approximately 10+ points counting distribution

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 of a suit	Pass	Pass	1NT=12-15 balanced (and a stopper(s) in the suit opened)
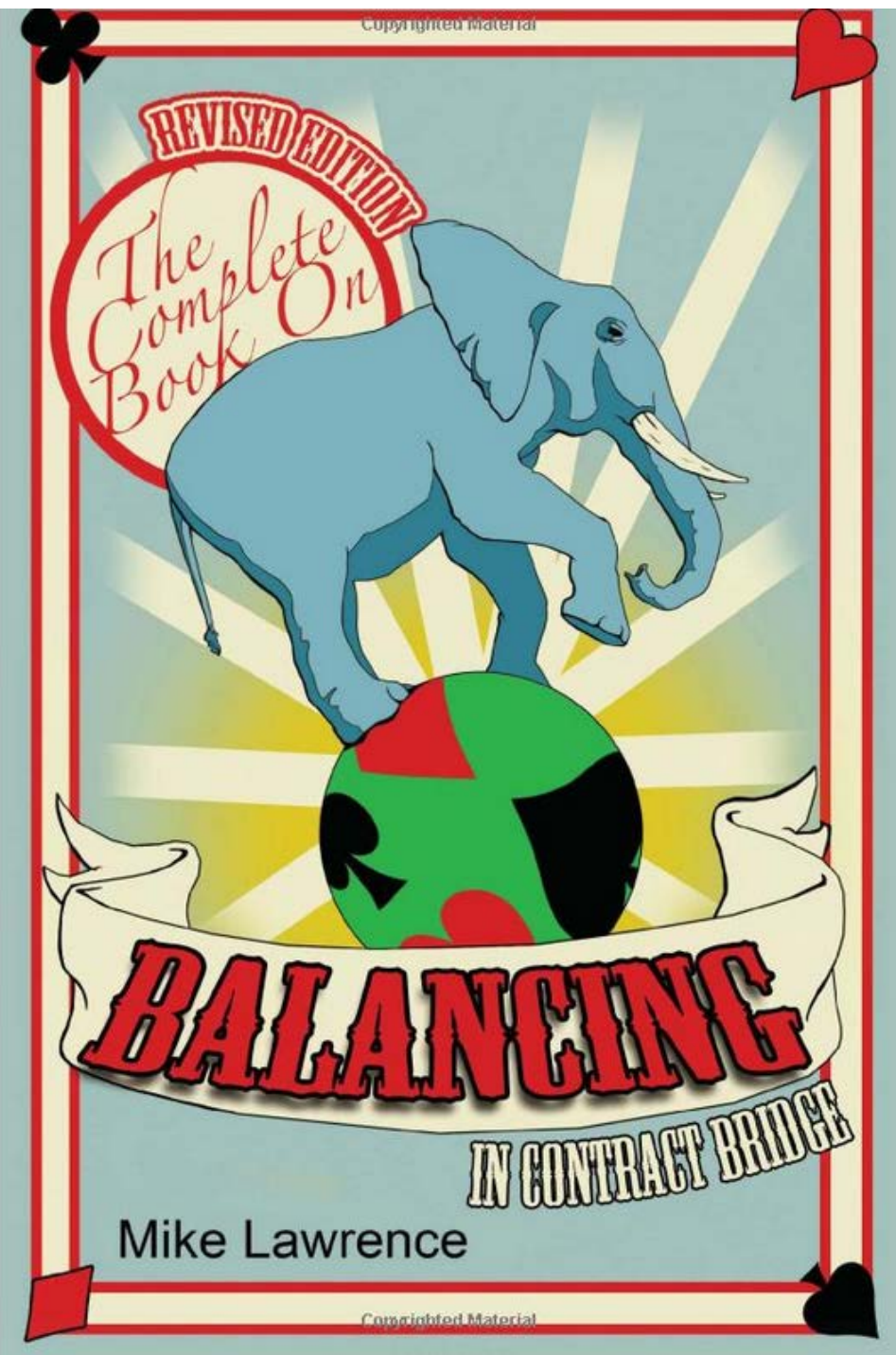
REVISED EDITION

The Complete Book On

BALANCING

IN CONTRACT BRIDGE

Mike Lawrence

Practice Hands (2)

- In 3rd seat after 2 initial passes, can open with a King less than usual
- In 4th seat after 3 initial passes, can open if # spades + HCP >= 15
- After 1 bid and 2 passes, you can "balance" (bid) with a King less than usual
- In a competitive auction, it is safe to compete to the level of your combined # of trumps

North Deals — ♠ A J 7 2
None Vul — ♥ Q 6 3
♦ 8 6
♣ K 9 4 2

West:
♠ 10 6 4
♥ K J 10 5 2
♦ Q J
♣ Q J 10

East:
♠ K 9 5
♥ A 8 7
♦ K 10 4 2
♣ 8 7 3

South:
♠ Q 8 3
♥ 9 4
♦ A 9 7 5 3
♣ A 6 5

EW 2♥; EW 1N; NS 1♠; NS 1♣; Par −100:
NS 2♠×−1

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1 ♦
1 ♥	Dbl	2 ♥	All pass

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

```
            ♠ J
            ♥ 8 7 4
            ♦ A 8 7
            ♣ A 8 7 5 4 3
♠ 7 5 3 2              ♠ A K 10 9 8 4
♥ 3 2          N       ♥ 6 5
♦ K 4 3 2   W   E      ♦ J 10 6
♣ Q 10 2       S       ♣ J 6
            ♠ Q 6
     9      ♥ A K Q J 10 9
   5   9    ♦ Q 9 5
     17     ♣ K 9
```
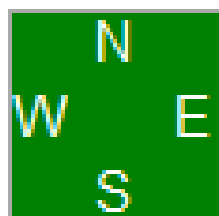
S 6♥; N 5♥; NS 4♣; NS 1N; S 2♦; EW 1♠;
N 1♦; Par +1100: EW 6♠×−5

| West	North	East	South
		2 ♠	3 ♥
4 ♠	Dbl	Pass	5 ♥
All pass			

Card Play Section

- Holdup Play
- Ducking
- Unblocking

Hold Up Play

- In No Trump, if you don't have enough tricks off the top, you may need to establish a suit before taking your other winners

- If you have enough controls of the suit(s) the opponents are attacking, you are fine

- If not, you may still thwart them with the Hold Up Play

- This involves refusing to win in the suit they are attacking until one of the opponents is out of the suit. Then when you lose the lead, you hope that opponent gains the lead and will be unable to lead the suit you fear

North:
K♠ 6♠ 5♠ A♥ 8♥ 4♥ 5♣ 3♣ K♦ J♦ 10♦ 8♦ 3♦

4♣

East

South: You
A♠ Q♠ 4♠ K♥ 7♥ 2♥ A♣ 7♣ 6♣ Q♦ 7♦ 4♦ 2♦
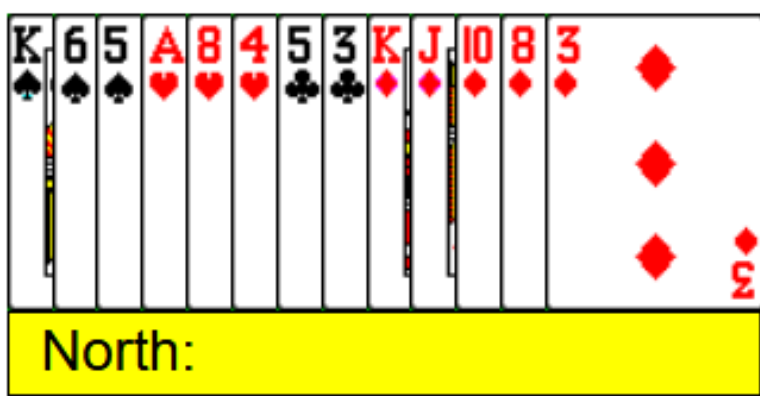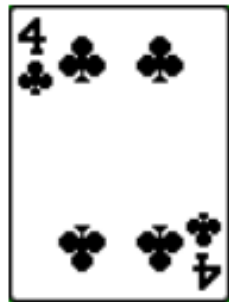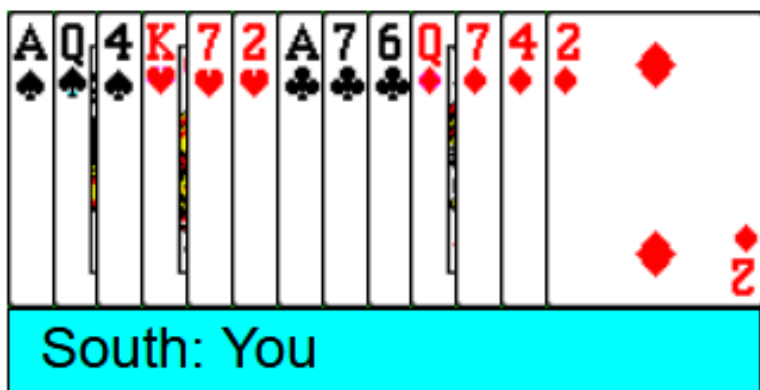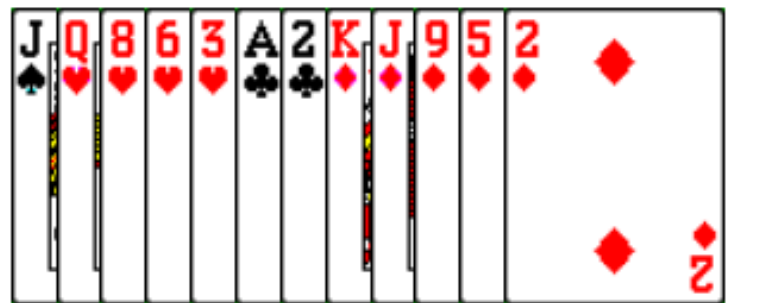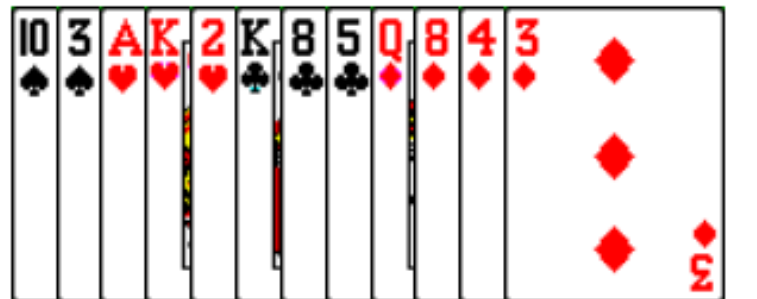
3NT

Rule of 7

- Subtract the number of cards you have (in both hands) in the enemy suit from 7. Hold up that number of times

- In previous example, you have 5 cards in the enemy suit, so you hold up 2 times (7-5) before winning the trick

- Do not hold up if you can develop another stopper in the suit and holding up would ruin this

North:

South: You

- If you need to lose the lead twice to establish your suit, it is wise to hold up once, even with 2 stoppers
- If you have a choice of which opponent to lose the lead to (e.g. 2-way finesse), lose to the one you think is out of the danger suit (avoidance play)

> **Ducking Plays at Suit Contracts Bottom Line**
> When the defenders lead Declarer's weak suit, it is often the right play to duck the first round of the suit and win the second. If either defender holds a doubleton in the led suit, Declarer has now cut the communication between the defenders. Declarer then has a "safe" hand for future finesses.

When NOT to hold up

- When you have enough top tricks to make your contract
- When you only have once chance to win any tricks in their suit
- ♠Q65
- When you fear opponents will switch to a more dangerous suit
- When you have other cards in the suit which will become a second stopper:
- ♠J5
- ♠A102

Defenders can hold up too, to ruin communications between declarer's hand and dummy

Dummy

♠Q82

♥J43

♦93

♣KQJT9

West

♠T94

♥QT6

♦QJT5

♣A76

East

♠AJ5

♥8752

♦8762

♣84

Declarer

♠K763

♥AK9

♦AK4

♣532

Count Signals

- Apply when attitude signals couldn't possibly be relevant (e.g. when declarer is playing his suit)

- Requires active thinking about what declarer is trying to do—do not give routinely

- High-low = even number of cards (e.g. top of doubleton)

- Low-high = odd number of cards

Dummy

♠Q82

♥J43

♦93

♣AQJT9

West

♠T94

♥QT6

♦QJT5

♣762

East

♠AJ5

♥8752

♦876

♣K84

Declarer

♠K763

♥AK9

♦AK42

♣53

Ducking

- Similar to hold-up play (refusing to win the trick)
- Object in hold-up play was to exhaust one defender of that suit
- Object in ducking is something else... e.g. to preserve entries once the suit is established

♥ A K 8 7 5

♥ 4 3

Deciding whether to duck

1

♥ A K 8 7 6 5

♥ 4 3

2

♥ A K 8 7 6 5

♥ 4 3 2

- Ducking may also be to keep the lead in the 'safe' hand

Note: There are two possible reasons for considering one opponent to be the Danger Hand:
1) he has enough winners to cash to defeat you
2) he can lead through your honour card

```
                    ♠ Q 3
                    ♥ K 8 3
                    ♦ A K 10 8 2
                    ♣ J 4 3

    ♠ A J 9 6 2          N          ♠ 10 7 5
    ♥ 10 5 2        W         E      ♥ J 9 7 6
    ♦ Q 3               S          ♦ J 6 5
    ♣ Q 8 7                          ♣ K 10 6

                    ♠ K 8 4
                    ♥ A Q 4
                    ♦ 9 7 4
   Lead: ♠ 6        ♣ A 9 5 2
```

- Ducking may be used as a 'safety play', deliberately giving up a trick (if this can be safely done) as insurance against bad distribution

North:

South: You
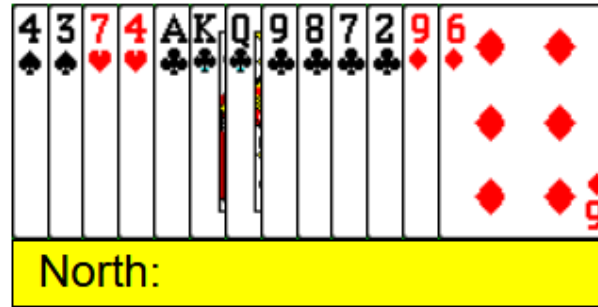
Unblocking

We must take winners first from the hand shorter in the suit, otherwise we may get stuck in the shorter hand with no way to get to the longer hand to take the rest of the winners

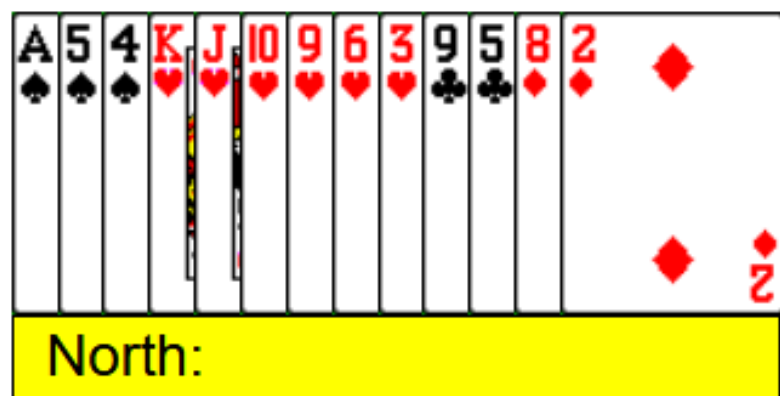♦ K Q J 10 2   ♦ A Q J 10 2   ♦ A K J 10 2
♦ A 8   ♦ K 8   ♦ Q 8

North:

South: You

North: Q J ♠ ♠ | 8 7 6 ♥ ♥ ♥ | 8 3 ♣ ♣ | K Q J 8 7 4 ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

West	North
Pass	Pass

West: 10 ♠

East:

South: You — A K 2 ♠ ♠ ♠ | A 5 3 2 ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ | K J 6 4 2 ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ | A ♦
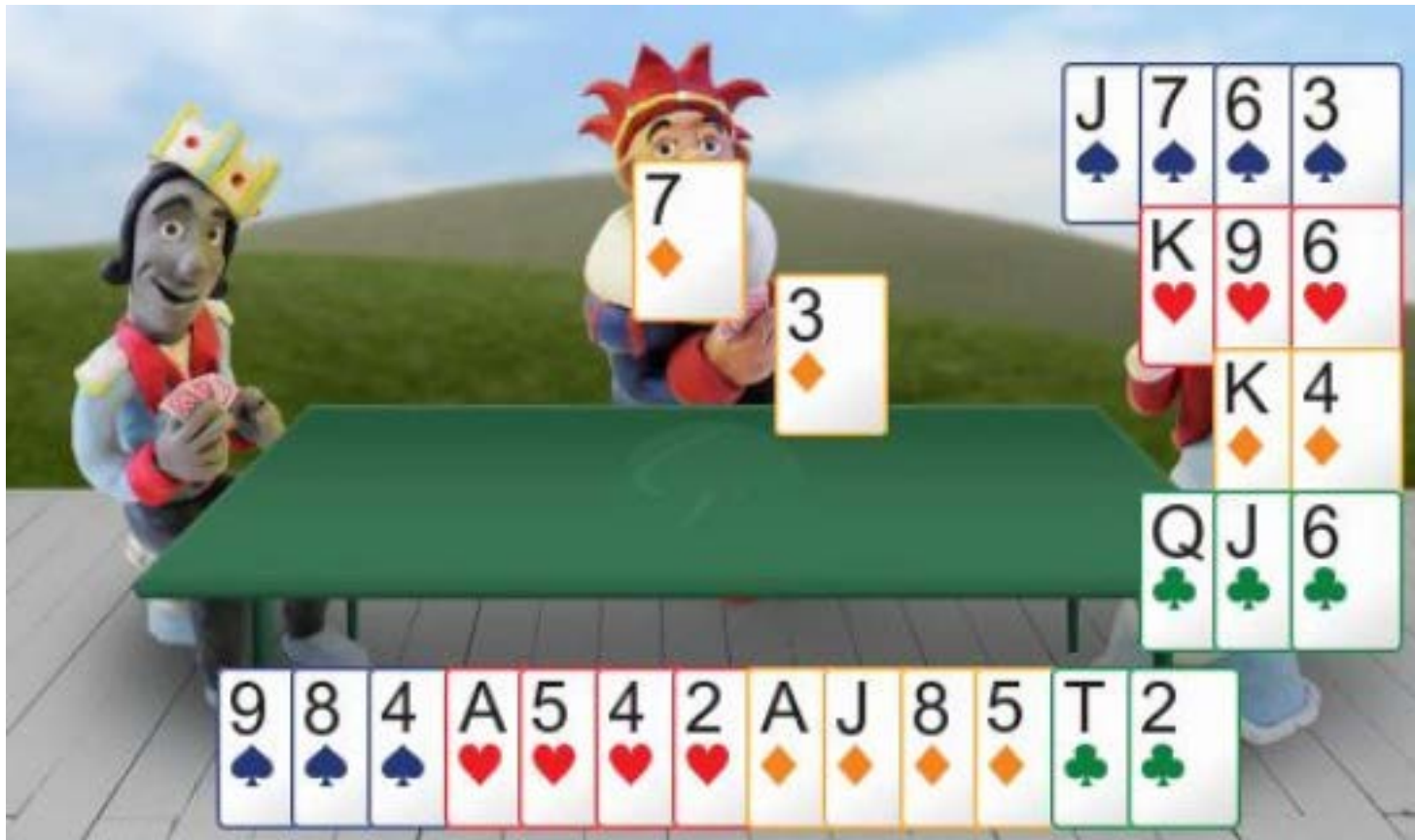
3NT South

North:

South: You

Rule of 11

- If opening lead is from 4th best, then 11-lead = number of higher cards between the other 3 hands

Summary

- There are many more examples of using these principles to be found as you practice and study

- They are some of your basic tools to combine as you make your plan

- You have learned the basic cardplay techniques in No Trump (many of which also apply in Trump). For the final lesson we will explore cardplay techniques specific to Trump contracts

- Please sign up for Lesson 6 and for Supervised play

Practice Boards (4)

-the bidding and lead can give you clues to opponent's cards

-hold up using rule of 7 (7-cards you and dummy have in opponent's suit = # of times to hold up) to exhaust one opponent of their suit. Then try only to lose the lead to that opponent

Board 3
South Deals
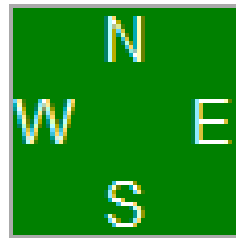E-W Vul

North:
- ♠ 7 6 2
- ♥ A 4 3
- ♦ A K Q J
- ♣ 10 5 4

West:
- ♠ 10 5
- ♥ Q 8 7 5
- ♦ 10 4 2
- ♣ Q J 6 2

East:
- ♠ K Q J 4 3
- ♥ J 10 9
- ♦ 9 7 6
- ♣ K 3

South:
- ♠ A 9 8
- ♥ K 6 2
- ♦ 8 5 3
- ♣ A 9 8 7

```
        N
        14
   W  5    10  E
        11
        S
```

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	1 ♠
2 ♣	Pass	3 ♣	3 NT
All pass			

Board 4
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ K 7 5 2
♥ A 10 6 3
♦ 2
♣ J 10 8 4

♠ 8 6
♥ J 5 2
♦ A K Q 4 3
♣ 9 7 6

	N	
W		E
	S	
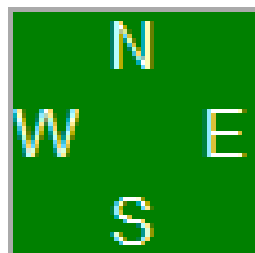
♠ A Q 4
♥ K Q 4
♦ 10 9 8 7
♣ A Q 2

```
      8
  10      17
      5
```

♠ J 10 9 3
♥ 9 8 7
♦ J 6 5
♣ K 5 3

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 NT	All pass

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

North:
♠ A Q J 3
♥ A J 8 5
♦ A J 4
♣ Q 8

West:
♠ 9 6 4
♥ 7 4 3
♦ Q 8 6
♣ K 10 3 2
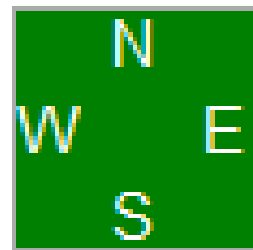
East:
♠ 8 7 2
♥ K 6 2
♦ K 10 7 5 3
♣ 6 4

South:
♠ K 10 5
♥ Q 10 9
♦ 9 2
♣ A J 9 7 5

```
    19
  5    6
    10
```

West	North	East	South
	1 ♦	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	