

Your Focus as Declarer in Playing NT versus Suit Contracts

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Board #7

Friday P.M. "Shark" game, 9/11/20

**This Board is an excellent reminder of where you
must focus your plan for your line of play when you are
Declarer in a Suit contract.**

Dealer: SOUTH

Vul: BOTH

	NORTH (8)	
	S: K Q 8 5 2	
	H: J T 9 3	
	D: Q 3 2	
	C: T	
WEST (9)		EAST (13)
S: T 4 3		S: A J 9 6
H: Q 8 6 4		H: A K 5 2
D:		D: J T 7 4
C: A Q J 8 4 3		C: 7
	SOUTH (10)	
	S: 7	
	H: 7	
	D: A K 9 8 6 5	
	C: K 9 6 5 2	

Note. Given Marty Bergin's "Rule of 20", SOUTH will almost certainly open 1**D**.

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¹ Esther Klinktoast-Houstonhousen actually is a fictitious person invented by Bruce Thompson, and not a real person. The present "Esther Bridge Lesson" was actually written by Bruce Thompson, and not Esther!

S: 1 D	W: DBL	N: 1 S	E: 2 H
S: 3 C	W: 3 H	N: PASS	E: 4 H
S: PASS	W: PASS	N: PASS	

SOUTH expects (1) the Opponents to be 4-4 in Hearts, and (2) Partner to have 4 Heart trumps. SOUTH's lead: 7 of Hearts.

Once the Dummy comes down, what is YOUR PLAN for making your Contract? What is the FIRST QUESTION you must always ask yourself when you are planning your line of play? What MUST be the focus of your plan for this Board?

Comments

One of the first thing that players learn is that when playing as Declarer, *you must draw your trump as soon as possible, when you are playing a suit contract, except when (1) it is early in play, so that Opponents are unlikely to be able to trump, and (2) you can trump early out of Dummy, thus creating new tricks and (b) spending 1 trump card to draw 2 trump cards from Opponents, rather than spending 2 trump cards to draw 2 trump cards from Opponents. But drawing trump should **not** be your primary focus when creating your planned line of play as Declarer.*

Primary Focus as Declarer in a NT Contract

When playing as Declarer in a **NT** contract, once the lead has been made, and the Dummy comes down, first count your ****sure** WINNERS** (e.g., top honors, honors sequences). Determine if your contract is certain to make. Determine whether the contract is at grave risk of Opponents running a suit if you lose the lead. If you have all suits stopped, it may be advantageous to take losers early by leading the suit in which your partnership has the most cards. This may enable you to "promote" winners in the long suit that you believe you can later access either (1) by leading that suit to the other hand still containing length, and now winners, or (2) by leading to a different suit winner for transportation purposes. *The focus is on WINNERS.*

Primary Focus as Declarer in a Suit Contract

When playing as Declarer in a Suit contract, first count your **LOSERS**. Your primary focus **MUST** be on "**dumping**" losers, either (1) by trumping your losers from the other hand, or (2)

by sloughing losers on winners from the other hand. If you can draw trump and then dump your losers later, all to the good. Otherwise, it may be necessary to focus on dumping your losers before you focus on drawing trump, if that is what you must do to make your contract. *The focus is on LOSERS.*

Comments on this "Interesting" Board

1. You could play this Board repeatedly by printing several copies of the Board, and "crossing out" cards as you play through various Lines of Play. Probably a very good learning opportunity.
2. On this Board, it helps you to know that South holds Clubs, so you can *run a Club finesse through South*. This is called "**listen to the auction.**"
3. Your BIG problem is Diamond losers. You can probably slough one on a Club from the Board, and trump others from the Board, if you do so before drawing trump. **Focus on dumping losers!**