BRIDGE TECHNIQUE SERIES

PLANNING IN SUIT CONTRACTS

David Bird • Marc Smith

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CHAPTER • 1

How to Plan a Trump Contract

The first step in planning the play in any bridge contract is to assess how many tricks you have for certain and therefore how many more you need to establish. In a notrump contract, it is normal to count winning tricks. If you are in 3NT you might say, 'I have seven top tricks, so I need to establish two more.' You can use the same approach in trump contracts, but it is usually easier to count 'losing tricks' instead. What do we mean by that? It will be easiest to explain with the aid of a sample deal.

♠ Q 10 5
♥ A K Q 3
♦ A Q 7 6
♣ 9 3

♠ A K J 7 6
♥ 10 8 2
♦ 8 5
♣ A K 6

Suppose you are in 7♠ and a trump is led. To count the possible 'losing tricks', you look at the hand with the longer trump holding, here South. You then consider each suit in turn and determine how many tricks you could possibly lose. Here there are no losers in spades or hearts because in both suits you hold the ace, king and queen. In