

MARY ANN DUFRESNE

PLAYING A BRIDGE HAND

Just the Basics

TEACHER'S MANUAL



AN HONORS EBOOK FROM MASTER POINT PRESS

Text © 2013 Mary Ann Dufresne

All rights reserved.

Honors eBooks is an imprint of Master Point Press. All contents, editing and design (excluding cover design) are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Master Point Press
331 Douglas Ave.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5M 1H2
(416) 781-0351

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Websites: www.masterpointpress.com

www.bridgeblogging.com

www.teachbridge.com

www.ebooksbridge.com

ISBN: 978-1-55494-548-1

Layout and Editing: Mary Ann Dufresne

Cover Design: Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

Contents

Introduction

Using the Lesson Plans

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Suit Contract Basics

Lesson Two: When to Draw Trumps

Lesson Three: Establishing Long Suits

Lesson Four: Planning a Notrump Contract

Hand Records

Introduction

Thanks for being a bridge teacher! It's a tough job, isn't it? I hope this Teacher Manual will make it just a little bit easier.

The Manual consists of four lesson plans for an introductory course on declarer play. The target audience is the 0-50 crowd but my experience shows that more experienced players will learn a lot from the course, too.

Let's start with a little advice on how best to use these lesson plans.

Using the Lesson Plans

The course consists of four two-hour lessons. The first hour is a presentation—with lots of student participation, of course—and the second hour is a supervised play session. Just in case you're a new teacher, we've provided a virtual 'script' for each lesson but I'd suggest that you personalize the plans as much as you can. Your lessons will be much more interesting and spontaneous if you use your own words, add your own examples and play experience, and tailor the material to what you know about your students.

To assist you, all the lesson plans have certain common features:

- **Just for Teachers:** Introducing each plan is a section which defines lesson objectives and provides a little advice.
- **Key Ideas:** Though many concepts are presented in the lesson, the most important ones are noted in the right-hand margin. If time presses and you're unable to cover all the material, always be sure to cover and stress the Key Ideas. For example...
- **Questions:** Interspersed throughout the lesson plans—in *italics*—are questions to ask the students. These aren't rhetorical. To keep students alert and participating always pause and wait for student reaction when you ask a question. For example... *How many losers does declarer have?*
- **Auctions:** Beside each declarer play problem, you'll find a possible auction. We don't recommend discussion—or even mention—of the auctions unless students question how the contract was reached. Discussion of bidding—every student's favorite subject!—will fritter away too much class time. And to be perfectly honest, I've allowed our theoretical bidders some license to mis-bid in order to create challenging declarer play problems.
- **Card Manipulation Instructions:** In the interest of time it's important to be consistent and orderly about manipulation of cards to assemble lesson problems

Key idea:
**Don't play a single card
until you have a plan!**

and practice deals. To help with that, you'll find card handling procedures all in capital letters. For example: CLEAR ALL CARDS, RETURNING SPADES TO ONE STUDENT, HEARTS TO ANOTHER, ETC.

- **Modification of Examples:** Often I'll suggest modifying a table top example rather than creating a new example. When that happens, an asterisk (*) will always mark any suit modified to create the new example.
- **Practice Deals:** If you have a small class it's best to duplicate the Practice Deals before the lesson. If that isn't practical, use the Hand Records at the end of the Manual. Students should be able to assemble deals fairly quickly using the Hand Records.

A fair warning about the Practice Deals: Expect the unexpected! Student players won't always reach the expected contract or make the expected lead. What's more student declarers will sometimes make their contracts even when they choose a losing line of play. That's because student defenders make mistakes and give declarer tricks he doesn't deserve. Some gratuitous advice:

- Simply bypass the auction and tell students the final contract and the opening lead.
- If students make contracts they shouldn't make, congratulate them on success and then summarize the more foolproof line of play they might have used.

Let's get started!

Lesson One: Suit Contract Basics

Just for Teachers

The objective for this lesson is to introduce students to all suit planning basics:

- The concept of declarer planning.
- How to count losers.
- Three simple techniques to eliminate losers (finesse, ruff, discard).
- Drawing trumps.
- Entry concerns.

That's a lot to cover in one lesson but most of it will be familiar to all but very inexperienced students. Keep things moving. Remember that this is just an introduction. All concepts will be repeated and reinforced many times throughout the course. If absolutely necessary you may omit the last few lesson segments and let reading and homework compensate.

If you are using this lesson as the first of a multi-week course, you'll want to spend time at the very beginning for teacher/student introductions and ice-breaking and for summarizing course logistics (times, dates, breaks, etc).

Lesson Introduction: *Talking Points*

Today we'll be talking exclusively about suit contracts and exclusively about basics.

Much of today's material will be familiar to you but we have some new ideas, too.

Let's start with the most important part of good declarer play—a good plan.

What's a Declarer Plan? Talking Points

The most important thing you'll ever learn about good declarer play is: Don't play a single card until you have a plan!

What is a plan? An answer to the question: How will I make this contract?

To make a plan you need to answer some even more basic questions:

- How many losing tricks do I have?
- How will I eliminate my losing tricks?
- How will I get to the hand I want to lead from – the problem of entries?
- What should I do first, second and so on – the timing of the hand?

Always begin planning by counting the tricks you might lose.

How Do We Count Losers? An Exercise

ASK STUDENTS TO TAKE OUT THE SPADE SUIT FROM THE DECK OF CARDS AT THE TABLE.

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES, CALL OUT THE SPADE CARDS FOR THE STUDENT TO PLACE AT NORTH-SOUTH.

Example 1

North: ♠ K x x

South: ♠ x x x

Look at the honor cards on both sides of the table.

Always be a pessimist; if a card isn't a sure winner, count it as a loser.

Key idea:

**Don't play a single card
until you have a plan!**

Key Idea:

**When you count
losers, be a pessimist!**

A FOUR-LESSON COURSE ON DECLARER PLAY — DESIGNED FOR TRUE BEGINNERS

If your students are ready to get more serious about their declarer play, this course is the perfect ‘how to’ guide. Students will find that it is surprisingly easy to:

- Count winning and losing tricks.
- Master three basic techniques for eliminating losers.
- Manage entries.
- Set priorities. What to do first, second, and so on?
- Plan the play.

This Teacher’s Manual will make your job easy. It’s a virtual script for the four lessons found in *Playing a Bridge Hand: Just the Basics*, and includes table-top examples and practice deals for students.



MARY ANN DUFRESNE (Florida) is a retired U.S. government project manager. She lives in Weeki Wachee — mermaid country — with her beloved menagerie of furry dependents.