

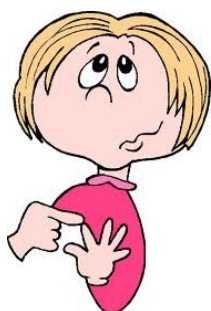
Playing in No Trumps

When the Opening Lead is Faced

Guidelines for the player who is about to become dummy.

- Lay out the cards neatly in suits.
- Ensure all cards are clearly visible.
- **Do not** talk about the bidding.

When Dummy Goes Down for a NT Contract



Count before you **Leap**

- Thank partner.
- **Count** everything.
- **L**: What can you learn from the lead?
- **E**: What are your **entries** to dummy?
- **A**: What can you learn from the **auction**?
- **P**: Make a **plan**.



Checklist for declarer

- Count the sure tricks.
- How many more tricks are needed?
- Where will the extra tricks come from?
- How many times will you need to lose the lead?
- What is the danger suit?
- How many stoppers do you have in the danger suit?
- Where will you win the first trick?
- **What is the plan?**

Sure Tricks

It is usually better to cash the honours in the shorter holding first. That prevents the suit becoming blocked.

Declarer	Dummy	Sure Tricks	Order of Play
♠ A J	♠ K Q	2	Any
♠ A Q 8	♠ K 2	3	K-8 first
♠ Q J 8 5	♠ A K 7	4	A-5, then K-8
♠ A K Q 4	♠ J 8	4	J-4 first
♠ K Q 7	♠ A J 3 2	4	K-2 then Q-3

Develop Tricks from Honour Sequences

As with sure tricks, it is generally right to play the honours from the shorter holding first.

Declarer	Dummy	Expected Tricks	Lose the Lead How Many Times	Order of Play
♠ 4 3 2	♠ K Q J	2	Once	Any
♠ Q J T	♠ 7 6 5	1	Twice	Any
♠ J 8	♠ K Q T 2	3	Once	J-2, then K-8
♠ T 6 2	♠ Q J 9 3	2	Twice	T-3, then Q-2
♠ Q 7	♠ J T 9 2	2	Twice	Q-2 then J-7

Distribution Probabilities

When an **even** number of cards are missing, it is **unlikely** that they will break equally. When an **odd** number of cards are missing, it is **likely** that they will break as evenly as possible.

With Six Cards Missing			With Five Cards Missing		
Distribution	Odds	Percent	Distribution	Odds	Percent
3-3	1 in 3	36	3-2	2 in 3	68
4-2	1 in 2	48	4-1	1 in 4	28
5-1	1 in 7	15	5-0	1 in 25	4
6-0	1 in 100	1			

Develop Tricks from Long Suits

Sometimes, tricks will be lost when setting up a long suit. When that is the case, it is usually best to lose them as soon as possible. That way, you retain control of the suit.

Declarer	Dummy	Possible Tricks	Lose the Lead	Chance of Success	Order of Play	Notes
♠ A Q 3 2	♠ K 5 4	4	None	1 in 3	K-2, A-4, Q-5	
♠ A Q 4 3 2	♠ K 6 5	5 4	None Once	2 in 3 1 in 4	K-2, A-5, Q-6	It is almost certain (96%) to make at least four tricks.
♠ A 6 4 2	♠ K 7 5 3	3	Once	2 in 3	Start with 3-2. On regaining the lead, A-5 and K-4.	Lose one trick early to keep control.
♠ A 7 6 3 2	♠ 9 8 5	3 2	Twice Three times	2 in 3 1 in 4	Start with 5-2. On regaining the lead, play the 8 and 3. On regaining the lead again, play ace and 9.	It is almost certain (96%) to make at least two tricks.

Example 1

	North	
	♠ A 6 4 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A K 3 2 ♣ A T 5 2	
West		East
♠ 9 7 ♥ 9 4 2 ♦ Q J 7 6 ♣ K J 9 4		♠ Q J T 5 2 ♥ A 8 6 ♦ T 8 ♣ 7 6 3
	South	
	♠ K 8 3 ♥ K J T 7 3 ♦ 9 5 4 ♣ Q 8	

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

East leads the ♠Q.

Checklist

- There are five sure tricks.
- Four more tricks are needed.
- They will come from the long suit, hearts.
- The lead will be lost once.
- The danger suit is spades and one stopper remains after trick one.

The Plan. Win the first trick with the ♠A. Play hearts starting with the queen and three. Keep playing hearts until the defence take their ace. Regain the lead and cross to the ♠K. Cash the hearts and then the rest of the top cards.

If declarer wins the first trick with the ♠K, East will not play the ♥A on the first heart. Then, there is no way for declarer to access the winning hearts in dummy.

Example 2

	North	
	♠ T 6 5 ♥ 8 6 4 2 ♦ Q 2 ♣ A 9 5 3	
West		East
♠ A Q J 2 ♥ K 5 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ Q 7 4 2		♠ K 7 4 ♥ A Q ♦ T 9 6 5 3 ♣ K J 8
	South	
	♠ 9 8 3 ♥ J T 9 7 3 ♦ K J 4 ♣ T 6	

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

South leads the ♥J.

Checklist

- There are seven sure tricks.
- Two more tricks are needed.
- They could come from either clubs or diamonds.
- The lead will be lost once in clubs but twice in diamonds.
- The danger suit is hearts. One stopper remains after trick one.

The Plan. Since declarer can't afford to lose the lead twice, the suit to tackle is clubs. Win the first trick with the ♥A. Play clubs starting with the (a) king and two then (b) jack and four. Keep playing clubs until two club tricks have been won or the defence take their ace. Regain the lead and cash the top tricks.

Example 3

	North	
	♠ A K 2 ♥ 8 6 5 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ Q J T 6	
West		East
♠ J T 9 7 5 ♥ T 4 ♦ Q T 8 3 ♣ K 4 2		♠ 6 4 ♥ Q J 9 7 ♦ 9 6 3 2 ♣ A 8 5
	South	
	♠ Q 8 3 ♥ A K 3 2 ♦ A K J ♣ 9 7 3	

West North East South
Pass 3NT All Pass 1NT

West leads the ♠J.

Checklist

- There are seven sure tricks.
- Two more tricks are needed.
- They will have to come from the club suit.
- The lead will be lost twice.
- The danger suit is spades. Two stoppers remains after trick one.

The Plan. Win the first trick with the ♠Q. Play the nine and six of clubs. If that loses, regain the lead and play another round of clubs. Keep playing clubs until the suit is established.

If declarer tries the diamond finesse before tackling clubs, the contract can go down. The defence should allow the first club to win and play spades at every opportunity. After the third round of clubs, there will be no way to dummy to cash the last club.

Example 4

	North	
	♠ J T 6 ♥ 3 2 ♦ T 9 8 2 ♣ 9 5 4 3	
West		East
♠ A 7 3 2 ♥ K Q 6 ♦ A 4 ♣ A K J 7		♠ K 8 4 ♥ A 9 5 4 ♦ K 5 3 ♣ Q 8 2
	South	
	♠ Q 9 5 ♥ J T 8 7 ♦ Q J 7 6 ♣ T 6	

West North East South
2NT Pass 6NT All Pass

North leads the ♦10.

Checklist

- There are eleven sure tricks.
- One more trick is needed.
- It may come from either hearts or spades.
- The lead will be lost once.
- There is no danger suit.

The Plan. The extra trick can come from either hearts or spades. To allow both suits to be attempted, win the first trick and give up a spade trick immediately. Regain the lead and cash three heart winners. If the suit divides evenly, cash the fourth heart. If not, cash two spade winners. If that suit divides evenly, cash the last spade. If not, curse your bad luck!

Example 5 (Board 25)

	North	
	♠ Q 8 7 ♥ 8 6 ♦ A K 3 ♣ K J 5 3 2	
West		East
♠ K T 9 2 ♥ Q 9 4 3 ♦ 9 6 2 ♣ A 8		♠ J 6 ♥ J T 5 ♦ Q J T 8 5 ♣ 9 6 4
	South	
	♠ A 5 4 3 ♥ A K 7 2 ♦ 7 4 ♣ Q T 7	

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

East leads the ♦Q.

Checklist

- There are five sure tricks.
- Four more tricks are needed.
- They will come from clubs.
- The lead will be lost once.
- The danger suit is diamonds.
- After the first trick, one stopper remains.

The Plan. Win the opening lead in hand and play a low club to the queen. Continue with the ten and three and keep playing clubs until the defence play the ace. Regain the lead and cash the winners.

Example 6 (Board 30)

	North	
	♠ A T 8 6 5 ♥ 8 7 5 ♦ J 7 ♣ Q J 6	
West		East
♠ Q 3 ♥ 6 4 ♦ 8 5 3 ♣ A K T 9 5 3		♠ K 7 4 2 ♥ A K 2 ♦ A K 9 2 ♣ 8 7
	South	
	♠ J 9 ♥ Q J T 9 3 ♦ Q T 6 4 ♣ 4 2	

West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

South leads the ♥Q.

Checklist

- There are six sure tricks.
- Three more tricks are needed.
- They will come from clubs.
- The lead will be lost once.
- The danger suit is hearts.
- After the first trick, one stopper remains.

The Plan. Dummy's clubs offer a lot of tricks but there is no entry to dummy outside clubs. Win the opening lead in hand and play the eight and three of clubs. Regain the lead and play another club to the ace. When both opponents follow suit, the clubs are established. Cash all the winners. If either defender has four clubs, it is not your lucky day.

Example 7 (Board 31)

	North	
	♠ K T 4 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ J 4 ♣ K J T 5 4	
West		East
♠ 9 8 5 ♥ K J 7 4 ♦ 9 8 2 ♣ 9 3 2		♠ A J 6 ♥ Q 6 5 ♦ Q T 6 3 ♣ 8 7 6
	South	
	♠ Q 7 2 ♥ A T 9 2 ♦ A K 7 5 ♣ A Q	

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
West leads the ♥4.			

Checklist

- There are eight sure tricks.
- One more trick is needed.
- It will come from spades.
- The lead will be lost once.
- The danger suit is hearts.
- After the first trick, one stopper remains (10-9-8).

The Plan. Win the opening lead and play the queen of spades. If it wins, that is the ninth trick. Cash the ♣A. Play the ♣Q **overtaking** with dummy's king. Cash the clubs and take all the remaining winners.

If the queen of spades loses, regain the lead and cash the ace and queen of clubs. Cross to the king of spades, take the rest of the clubs and then, all the other winners.

Example 8 (Board 28)

	North	
	♠ Q 9 8 ♥ Q J T 8 ♦ T 7 ♣ J T 7 2	
West		East
♠ A 6 5 2 ♥ A 9 3 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ A K Q		♠ K 7 3 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ A 9 6 5 3 ♣ 9 5
	South	
	♠ J T 4 ♥ 7 6 5 ♦ K Q J ♣ 8 6 4 3	

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

North leads the ♥Q.

Checklist

- There are eight sure tricks.
- One more trick is needed.
- It will come from diamonds.
- The lead will be lost twice.
- The danger suit is hearts.
- After the first trick, one stopper remains.

The Plan. Some luck is needed as there are insufficient heart stoppers. The diamonds and hearts need to break kindly. If the hearts are 5-2, the hope is that whoever wins the second diamond has no more hearts to lead.

Win the opening lead with the ace and play two low diamonds. Win the next heart and play two more low diamonds. After the defence take two heart tricks, regain the lead, cash the diamonds and the rest of the winners.

Example 9 (Board 21)

	North	
	♠ A 5 4 ♥ A Q 9 7 ♦ K T ♣ K 6 3 2	
West		East
♠ 8 7 6 ♥ 8 4 3 2 ♦ A 5 4 3 ♣ J 8		♠ Q J T 3 2 ♥ K J 5 ♦ 7 6 ♣ Q T 9
	South	
	♠ K 9 ♥ T 6 ♦ Q J 9 8 2 ♣ A 7 5 4	

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

East leads the ♠Q.

Checklist

- There are five sure tricks.
- Four more tricks are needed.
- They will come from diamonds.
- The lead will be lost once.
- The danger suit is spades.
- After the first trick, one stopper remains.

The Plan. Win the first trick with the ♠K. Play a low diamond to the king. If that wins, play the ten of diamonds and **overtake** with the queen. Keep playing diamonds until the defence take their ace. Regain the lead, cash the remaining diamonds and the rest of the winners. It would be a mistake to finesse the hearts at trick two. The finesse may lose and give the defence the chance to establish their spade suit.

Example 10 (Board 34)

	North	
	♠ T 8 6 4 ♥ A T ♦ Q J T 9 ♣ A 6 2	
West		East
♠ A K ♥ K Q 7 3 ♦ K 8 7 3 2 ♣ Q J		♠ Q 9 ♥ 8 2 ♦ A 6 ♣ K T 9 8 7 5 4
	South	
	♠ J 7 5 3 2 ♥ J 9 6 5 4 ♦ 5 4 ♣ 3	

West	North	East	South
		3♣	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

North leads the ♦Q.

Checklist

- There are three sure tricks.
- Six more tricks are needed.
- They will come from clubs.
- The lead will be lost once.
- The danger suit is diamonds.
- After the first trick, one stopper remains.

The Plan. Win the first trick with the ♦K. Play the ♣Q and low from dummy. The defence will probably allow this to win. Play the ♣J and **overtake** with the king. If that wins too, play a third club to dislodge the defence's ace. Regain the lead and cross to dummy's ♦A. Take the club tricks and the rest of the winners. It is essential to overtake at trick three so that clubs can be continued without using up dummy's only entry.