



Lesson 23 Teacher's Notes

The Play in Trump Contracts

Aims

- To emphasise the differences between no-trump play and suit play
- To train the class to make a plan when there are trump
- To explain why we sometimes have to postpone drawing trump

Content

1 Remind the class that there are **5 possible strains** – clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades and no-trump – but they are not **equally popular**

The most popular game contract is **3NT**, because it is the **lowest** game contract, needing only 9 tricks. Next come **4♥** and **4♠**, the **majors**.

The **minors**, **5♣** and **5♦** are the least popular because they need 11 tricks

One out of three games is played in no-trump: the other two in a suit contract.

2 Underline the differences between suit play and no-trumps play

Sure tricks may not be sure – you cannot count AKQ as 3 tricks since a defender might trump one.

Instead, we count **losers**. **Losers** are the tricks that **may** be lost.

We count them by looking at each suit in turn, starting with the trump suit.

When counting losers look at **both** hands: dummy may be able to take care of a loser in declarer's hand by trumping it.

3 Illustrate the advantages of counting losers

By counting losers we know whether there are more than we can afford to make our contract.

In **4♠** or **4♥** we have to make **10 tricks**, and can afford only **3 losers**.

In **5♣** or **5♦** we need **11 tricks** and can afford only **2 losers**.

In part score contracts we can afford more losers – but not too many!

After counting losers, the next step is normally to **draw trumps**.

Once that is done, the play continues as in no-trumps: choose the Work Suit and develop it.

4 Demonstrate **discarding a loser**

When you do not draw trump you run the risk of having your winners in the **side suits** (not trump) ruffed. Whenever it is practical the first thing we do is **draw trumps**.

Drawing trump is easy when we have a **solid suit**: we can play as many rounds as necessary **without giving up the lead**.

If the trump suit is not solid we may have to **give up the lead** in order to establish the trump suit.

If the defenders can cash enough tricks to defeat our contract we may have to **discard a loser** before playing trumps.

5 When playing in a Suit Contract we follow these steps

a. Count the Losers

b. If there are too many look for ways of reducing them to the right number

c. Draw trump if either: **you can do so without losing the lead**

or: **you can afford to lose the lead because your losers are not Immediate**

If you have too many **immediate losers** take essential discards first – then **draw trump**

NB Do not draw more trumps than necessary: you need trumps to keep control of the side suits
Establish Tricks in the Work Suit – continue as if you were playing in no-trumps