



No-Trump Play: Avoidance and the Danger Hand

We have studied the planning of NT play on many occasions:

1. Count your Sure Tricks
2. Look for ways of developing the Extra Tricks you need
3. Choose a Work Suit and establish length tricks in it
4. Check to see what might go wrong

The Hold-Up

The easiest defence to NT contracts is to establish a long suit and cash it.

When one hand has winners to cash we call it the *Danger Hand*, and try to stop it gaining the lead.

We looked at one way of doing this in Lesson 45: by *holding up* your stopper in their suit until one defender has no more cards to lead you isolate the Danger Hand.

Sometimes we should hold up for one round even with two stoppers.

If their suit is divided 5-2 the hand with only two cards cannot remove your second stopper if it gets on lead.

Hold up with two stoppers when you may have to give up the lead twice.

Tempo at NT

NT play can be seen as a race between defenders and declarers to establish the tricks they need.

When the defenders have established their suit you must try to make 9 tricks without giving up the lead.

If giving up the lead will allow the defence to cash enough tricks to defeat you look for a line that does not involve giving up the lead.

Attacking the entry to the potential Danger Hand First

Often in a NT contract you have more than one Work Suit.

How do you choose which suit to play first?

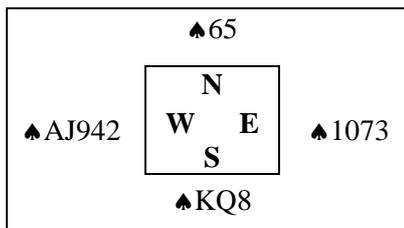
When one defender has a long suit that is not yet established start with the suit where he may have an entry.

Attack the entry to the hand with the long suit.

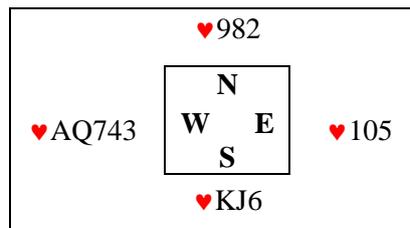
(Of course, if the suit is already established you must try to keep the Danger Hand off lead!)

Another type of Danger Hand

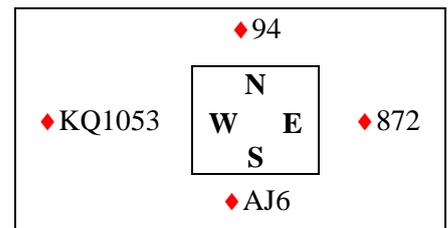
At both NT and suit contracts you try to avoid allowing defenders to lead through your unsupported honours.



West leads ♠4-♠5-♠10-♠Q



West leads ♥4-♥2-♥10-♥J



West leads ♦K-♦4-♦2-♦6

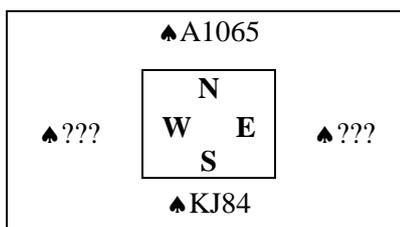
Now East is the Danger Hand. If he gets in to lead West's suit you will be in trouble.

Avoidance

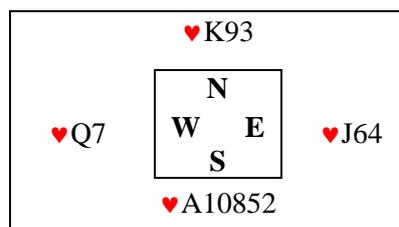
This is what we call the techniques we use to keep the Danger Hand off lead.

With a choice of suits to develop we choose the one where the danger hand cannot get on lead.

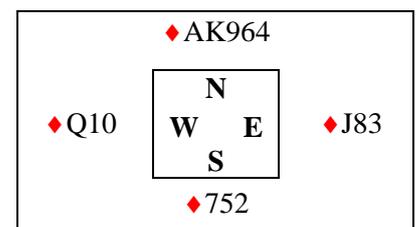
When there is one suit we must develop we try to play the cards in such a way that the Danger Hand cannot win a trick.



With a 2-way finesse you can keep either defender off lead by finessing into his partner's hand



To keep West out lead low to the 9.
To keep East out lead low to the 10
Try to lose the inevitable loser to the safe hand



To keep East out lead towards dummy twice. When West produces the queen – duck!