

CHAPTER 9

SETTING UP A LONG SUIT (1)

With many card combinations it is possible to establish extra winners by eliminating the opponents' cards in that suit. Honour cards which are not winners can become promoted in situations like these:

9 8 6 5 3	A 10 7 2	K Q J
	4	

Play the ace, ruff a low card, back to dummy via another suit, ruff a low card. With the K-Q-J falling in three rounds (a lucky position), the 10 is now high. Cross back to dummy and cash the 10. If no honour falls when you play the ace, the 10 cannot legitimately be established as a winner with the above North-South cards.

10 9 8 6 2	A J 7 3	K Q 4
	5	

Play the ace and ruff a low card, back to dummy and ruff another low card. If the king and queen have dropped, the jack is now high. Note that you cannot gain an extra trick if you lead the jack and ruff it. If no honour falls when you ruff the first time, the jack will not legitimately score a trick.

8 7 6 2	A 9 5 3	Q J 10
	K 4	

Cash the king and ace and ruff dummy's low card on the third round. If the Q, J and 10 have all fallen, the 9 is high (a very lucky outcome on these cards).

Where you have no high card to promote, you may still set up extra winners if you or dummy hold greater length than the opponents.

Dummy A 7 4 2	Dummy A 7 4 2
You 5	You 5 3

You have the ace, but you cannot create any extra tricks with either of the above holdings. At least one opponent holds as many cards as dummy.

Dummy A 7 6 4 2
You 5

The opponents hold 7 cards. If these divide 4-3, you can make the ace plus one extra trick. The rule is:

Your length minus their length = Extra tricks possible.

Here dummy's length is 5, with a 4-3 division, their length is 4, so $5 - 4 = 1$. To score that extra trick: play the ace; ruff a low card; *cross to dummy*; ruff a low card; *cross to dummy*; ruff a low card; *cross to dummy after drawing trumps* and cash the last card in the suit. The last card will be a winner if the suit broke 4-3. If the suit divides 5-2 or worse, you cannot genuinely set up an extra trick. (You may succeed in such a case if the opponents unwisely discard from this suit — see page 40: *Keep length with dummy*.)

Note that to succeed you had to *cross to dummy* three times, so that dummy needed *three entries*.

Dummy A 7 6 4 3 2
You 5

How many tricks can you score with this holding in addition to the ace?

Take dummy's length. Subtract their length. The answer is the number of additional tricks you can set up.

A. The suit divides 3-3 :

Dummy's length (6) minus their length (3) = 3.

Q 10 9	A 7 6 4 3 2	K J 8
	5	

Play the ace and ruff a low card; *cross to dummy* and ruff a low card. With a 3-3 split, dummy's three remaining cards are high; draw trumps and *cross to dummy* to cash your three winners.

B. The suit divides 4-2 :

Dummy's length (6) minus their length (4) = 2.

Q 10	A 7 6 4 3 2	K J 9 8
	5	

Play the ace and ruff a low card; *cross to dummy*, ruff a low card; *cross to dummy*, ruff a low card; draw trumps; *cross to dummy* and cash two winners. Extra entries to dummy required = 3 (plus no overruff).

C. The suit divides 5-1 :

$6 - 5 = 1$. One extra trick can be established, provided that you have sufficient entries to dummy.

	A 7 6 4 3 2	
K		Q J 10 9 8
5		

Play the ace; ruff; *cross to dummy*; ruff; *cross to dummy*; ruff; *cross to dummy*; ruff; draw any remaining trumps; *cross to dummy* and cash one winner. Extra entries needed : 4. You also need plenty of trumps and no overruff by West.

Similarly :

A 7 4 3 2
K 5

In addition to the ace and king, two extra tricks can be set up if the suit divides 3-3 ($5 - 3 = 2$). Cash the king and ace and ruff the third round; if the suit did split 3-3, dummy's last two cards are winners. You need one more entry to dummy to reach those winners.

One extra trick can be set up if the suit splits 4-2 ($5 - 4 = 1$). Cash the king and ace; ruff; *cross to dummy*; ruff; dummy's last card is high. Draw any outstanding low trumps before crossing to dummy to cash the established winner. Two extra entries to dummy are needed, one to ruff the fourth round of the suit and one to re-enter to cash the winner.

Where a trick has to be lost in the suit anyway, it is often a good strategy to lose that trick early. This often saves you an entry to dummy.

	A 7 4 2	
Q 8 6		J 10 9
	K 5 3	

As the suit divides 3-3, an extra trick is possible ($4 - 3 = 1$). You could play king, ace and give up the third round. With the 3-3 break, dummy's 13th card is a winner but you need an entry in another suit to reach that winner. Since you have to lose a trick anyway, it is better to duck a round at once (play low from both hands) or cash the king first and then duck one round. You can now enter dummy on the third round by using dummy's ace and do not need an entry in an outside suit.

	A 8 5 3 2	
Q 9		J 10 7
	K 6 4	

With a 3-2 break, you can set up two extra tricks ($5 - 3 = 2$). You could play king, ace and lose the third round. Dummy has two winners and you will need an entry elsewhere to reach those winners.

It is superior to duck the first round of the suit or cash the king and duck the second round of the suit. Now dummy's ace is the entry to reach the established winners and you do not need an outside entry.

	A 8 5 3 2	
J 10 9 7		Q
	K 6 4	

With the suit breaking 4-1, you can set up only one extra trick ($5 - 4 = 1$). You could play king, ace and give up the third round. You then need two entries to dummy, one to ruff the fourth round and one to re-enter to cash the winner. It is better to duck one round at once or cash the king and duck the second round. Later you can play the ace on the third round and ruff the fourth round. Now you need only one extra entry to dummy to reach the winner.

A 9 5 3 2
6 4

You could cash the ace and then give up the second round. However, whether the suit breaks 3-3 or 4-2, it is better to duck the first round. Later cash the ace and ruff the next round. Whatever the break, this approach needs one less entry to dummy.

Where you hold no high card winner at all in the suit, you may still be able to set up extra tricks.

	8 6 5 4 2	
Q J 9		A K 10 3
	7	

If the suit breaks 4-3, you can set up one extra trick ($5 - 4 = 1$). Give up a trick to make yourself void. Then, *cross to dummy*; ruff; *cross to dummy*; ruff; *cross to dummy*; ruff the fourth round, leaving the last card in dummy as a winner; draw any missing low trumps; *cross to dummy* and cash the last card. To produce the extra trick, you need four entries to dummy.

7 6 5 4 3 2
9

Give up a trick to create the void. Then, *cross to dummy*; ruff; *cross to dummy*; ruff, etc. If the suit splits 3-3 ($6 - 3 = 3$), three extra tricks are available (and dummy needs three entries). If the break is 4-2 ($6 - 4 = 2$), two extra tricks can be set up but four entries to dummy will be needed.

Because these plays often require many entries to the hand with the long suit, it is a common strategy not to draw all their trumps at once but to use the trump suit itself for the required entries. This is illustrated in the hands that follow.

PLAY HANDS ON SETTING UP A LONG SUIT (1)

Hand 33 : Dealer North : Nil vulnerable

NORTH		WEST		EAST		SOUTH	
♠	Q 7 5	♠	A J 6 4 2	♠	9	♠	K 10 8 3
♥	4	♥	K 10 8	♥	A Q J 9 7 5 2	♥	6 3
♦	A K Q 9 5 2	♦	8 4	♦	J 6	♦	10 7 3
♣	Q J 10	♣	A 5 3	♣	9 7 2	♣	K 8 6 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
4♥	1♦	3♥	Pass
	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: ♦ 3. Bottom from three cards to an honour. Do not play middle-up-down when holding the 10.

Play: North wins ♦ Q (a defender wins with the cheapest card possible) and cashes the ♦ K. As South has played low-high, indicating more than a doubleton, North sees that a diamond continuation is futile. The natural switch is to clubs, dummy's weaker and shorter holding. The ♣ Q switch is won by the ace, as South encourages with the ♣ 8. After ♣ A, declarer continues with ♠ A; ruff a low spade; heart to dummy's 8; ruff a low spade; heart to dummy's 10; ruff a low spade. Dummy's ♠ J is now a winner. Cross to the ♥ K and cash the ♠ J, discarding a club. 10 tricks.

Notes: (1) With better than three tricks for partner, it is reasonable to raise a non-vulnerable pre-empt to game. In addition to three

sure tricks, West has potential for a diamond ruff and potential to set up spade tricks.

(2) After winning the ♣ A, East can see four losers (2 diamonds, 2 clubs). There are nine winners (7 hearts, 2 aces). By far the best chance for the extra trick is via the spade suit by setting up the fifth spade as a trick.

(3) It would be an error to draw trumps before tackling spades. Even one round of trumps eliminates one vital entry to dummy. You can then set up the ♠ J as a winner but cannot return to dummy to cash it.

(4) If North's three spades had included the king and queen (e.g. K-Q-5), declarer could score 11 tricks: win ♣ A; ♠ A; ruff a low spade (Q falls); heart to the 8; ruff a low spade (K falls); heart to the 10 drawing the last trump; cash ♠ J and discard a club; cash dummy's fifth spade and discard the other club.

Hand 34 : Dealer East : N-S vulnerable

NORTH		WEST		EAST		SOUTH	
♠	A K Q 9 3 2	♠	5 4	♠	7 6	♠	J 10 8
♥	6 2	♥	J 9 7 5	♥	Q 10	♥	A K 8 4 3
♦	J 10 9	♦	7 5	♦	A K 8 4 3	♦	Q 6 2
♣	A Q	♣	10 8 7 6 5	♣	K J 9 2	♣	4 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	2♣	1♦	1♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♣

Lead: Top diamond. Normal, attractive start.

Play: East cashes the top diamonds, West signalling high-low asking East to continue with a third round. West ruffs the third diamond and switches to the 6 of clubs. Declarer should win the ♣ A, rejecting the club finesse; cash one top trump; then play off the ♥ A, ♥ K and ruff a heart high; cross to the ♠ 10; ruff a heart; cross to the ♠ J and cash dummy's fifth heart to discard the ♣ Q. 10 tricks.

Notes: (1) North's jump to 2♣ is forcing, showing 16 points or more and at least a 5-card suit. Many partnerships play that a change-of-suit is not forcing after a 1-level overcall.

(2) 3NT would be easier but that is very hard to judge.

(3) It would be an error to finesse the ♣ Q at trick 4. The ♣ K is

marked with East: only 14 HCP are missing and East opened the bidding. Without ♣ K, East would have opened with only 11 HCP, possible but unlikely. Even if there had been no opening bid, the club finesse is only a 50% line, while setting up the hearts works if hearts are 3-3 (36%) or 4-2 (48%), an 84% chance. Even if North held a singleton heart, setting up the fifth heart is better than the 50% chance of a successful finesse.

(4) After taking ♣ A, it would be an error to draw two rounds of trumps. When hearts are 4-2, dummy is one entry short to reach the established heart winner.

(5) It would be an error to ruff the third round of hearts with a low trump. This runs the unnecessary risk of an overruff by East who could then cash the ♣ K for two down. *When you can afford it, ruff high.*

CHAPTER 25

SETTING UP A LONG SUIT (2)

One of the major problems in setting up a long suit is shortage of entries in the hand which contains the long suit. There are certain techniques which can improve your chances.

DUMMY	DUMMY
A 7 6 4 3	A 7 6 4 3 2
8 5	8 5

With such holdings, it is often best to duck the first round. This leaves the ace as an entry. Later you can lead a second round to the ace and ruff the third round. If you start by playing the ace and another round, you need an outside entry to dummy before you can ruff the third round of the suit. If dummy has plenty of entries, playing the ace on the first round may not hurt your chances. If entries are precious, ducking the first round may be necessary.

Similar considerations may indicate the best way to handle these suits :

DUMMY	DUMMY
A K 6 4 3	A K 6 4 3 2
8 5	8 5

If you need two extra tricks from the first combination or three extra tricks from the second, the normal play is to cash the ace and king and ruff the third round. If the break is friendly, you will succeed. If you are after the maximum number of tricks possible and dummy has two or more entries, again it is best to cash the ace and king, ruff a third round, return to dummy to ruff a fourth round if necessary and return to dummy to cash your winners.

However, if dummy is short of entries *and* you need only one extra trick from the first combination or two from the second *and* you can afford to give up the lead, a sound move is to duck one round. This caters for one opponent holding four cards in the suit. When you regain the lead, you then cash the ace and king and ruff the fourth round. Use dummy's only outside entry to reach the established winners.

When you can afford to give up a trick, it can often be worthwhile to concede a trick to the opponents in order to set up the rest of the suit as winners. This is attractive when the long suit has good pips provided you can afford to lose the lead.

A J 10 6 2 Play the king and ace. If all have followed, lead the jack. If East plays the queen, ruff, but if East follows low or shows out, you can discard a loser. This will set up two tricks in dummy no matter where the queen lies.

K 4

A J 9 6 2 You play the king and ace. If the 10 has fallen, the position is the same as above. Lead the jack. If East plays the queen, ruff, but if East follows low or shows out, you can discard a loser on a loser. West may win with the queen, but dummy's 9-6 are then good for two tricks.

K 4

A 10 9 6 2 Play the king and ace. If either the queen or jack has dropped, you can lead the 10, ruffing if East plays the other honour, or discarding if East follows low or shows out. West may win the third round but dummy has two winners.

K 4

The above are variations of the ruffing finesse which is often used to set up a long suit. These cases have a common thread :

A Q J 10 6 2	A J 10 9 6 2	A J 10 9 6 2
4	Q	K

In each case, you can lead your singleton and take it with dummy's ace. Then lead dummy's top card. If East covers with the missing honour, ruff it. If East follows low, you discard. West may win but the rest of this suit in dummy is now high.

A K J 10 6 2	A K 10 9 6 2	A K 10 9 6 2
5	J	Q

In each case you can overtake your singleton and cash dummy's ace and king. Then lead dummy's top honour. If East covers with the missing honour, ruff it and dummy's remaining cards are high. If East plays low on the third round, discard. Dummy's remaining cards will be winners if West takes this trick. When you need to cash two rounds before taking the ruffing finesse, it is usually best to have drawn all the opposition trumps. Where your singleton was the queen and dummy has plenty of entries, you could play the queen, cross to dummy in another suit and then cash the ace and king. You will know what is going on in the suit by then. To overtake the queen and use the ruffing finesse may be vital if dummy has only one outside entry.

Hand 111: Dealer South: N-S vulnerable

NORTH	
♠	A K J 9 4
♥	9 5
♦	7 4 3
♣	A K Q
WEST	EAST
♠	8 5
♥	A Q 7 6 4
♦	10 9 8 5
♣	6 3
♠	7 6 3
♥	K 10 8 3
♦	K Q J
♣	8 7 4
SOUTH	
♠	Q 10 2
♥	J 2
♦	A 6 2
♣	J 10 9 5 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♣

Lead: ♦ K. Cannot go past top of sequence.

Play: Declarer wins the ace of diamonds, cashes the ace and king of spades and does not draw the missing trump. Next, declarer plays off the ace, king and queen of clubs. Having survived thus far, declarer leads a spade to dummy, drawing the last trump in the process, and cashes two club winners, discarding two red losers.

Notes: (1) 3♦ is a trial bid, inviting game and seeking help in diamonds. It is suitable where the trial suit has two or three losers. (2) Declarer cannot afford to draw three rounds of trumps, else there is no entry to the clubs. Cashing the ♣ A-K-Q while a trump is out is risky, but any other line has zero chance of success.

Hand 112: Dealer West: E-W vulnerable

NORTH	
♠	8 7
♥	A J 5
♦	Q J 10 2
♣	Q 8 7 3
WEST	EAST
♠	A Q J 4 3 2
♥	K 9 8
♦	8 4
♣	A K
♠	K 10 6
♥	4 3 2
♦	A 6
♣	J 10 9 5 2
SOUTH	
♠	9 5
♥	Q 10 7 6
♦	K 9 7 5 3
♣	6 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
4♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

Lead: ♦ Q. Easy choice.

Play: Declarer wins ♦ A, cashes the A-K of clubs, leads a spade to dummy's 10 and plays the jack of clubs. If South discards, West discards the diamond loser. Later declarer can cash the ♠ A, lead a trump to dummy and cash the remaining club winner(s). If South ruffs the club, West overruffs, leads a trump to the king (drawing the last trump) and ruffs a club high. A low trump overtaken by dummy's 6 provides access to the club winner for a heart discard.

Notes: (1) West must not duck the diamond lead. South could overtake with the king and switch to hearts. Curtains. (2) After ♦ A, ♣ A-K, it is not safe to cash ♠ A and lead a spade to the 10 before leading ♣ J. If trumps were 3-1, the last trump might ruff this club and the clubs could not be set up and cashed.

Hand 113: Dealer North: Nil vulnerable

NORTH	
♠	7
♥	A K 10 9 6 4
♦	K Q J
♣	K 6 2
WEST	EAST
♠	A K 10 9
♥	7 5 3
♦	8 7 5
♣	9 7 5
♠	8 6 5
♥	8 2
♦	10 9 6 2
♣	Q J 10 4
SOUTH	
♠	Q J 4 3 2
♥	Q J
♦	A 4 3
♣	A 8 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Lead: ♣ Q. Sequence leads occur frequently in textbooks.

Play: Win with the ♣ K and lead a spade. East plays the 5 (lowest from an odd number to give count), jack, king. West returns a club. (If West tries to cash the ♠ A, North's task is simplified.) Win ♣ A, ruff a spade, heart to the jack, ruff a spade, heart to the queen, ruff a spade. Draw the last trump. Cross to ♦ A and cash the spade.

Notes: (1) If Roman Key Card Blackwood is used, North bids 5♥ to show two key cards (♥ A and ♥ K). (2) Win ♣ K at trick 1 and keep the ♣ A as an entry to dummy. (3) Use dummy's trumps as entries before using the ♦ A as an entry. (4) A trump lead would have defeated 6♥.