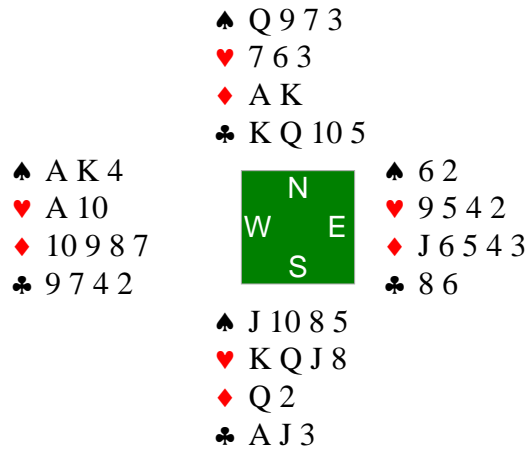


Promotion in Suits and NT Part 1

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	
4 ♠ by North			

Auction Commentary: South is delighted to hear partner's opening bid, and knows immediately that the partnership belongs in game. It's responder's job to find the best spot. Since a new suit by responder is always forcing, South starts with 1 ♥ - bidding the 4-card majors up the line. North doesn't have 4 of the ♥s, so moves up the line asking if partner can support North's 4-card ♠ suit. Bingo! South found the right spot and immediately bids game. (The one who knows, goes, as they say!)

Opening Lead: ♦ 4 (4th best from the unbid suit)

Planning the Play: In a suit contract, Declarer must start the plan by first counting the losers. North sees 2 ♠ losers and 1 ♥ loser. Since a 4-level contract can afford 3 losers, it looks like all will be well. Don't be tempted to start taking minor suit winners yet! What if there's something strange afoot, and someone will jump in with a trump! When you count losers and don't find too many -- and with all probability you're going to make the contract -- your plan needs to be to draw the trumps first! Don't let them ruff in while you're taking your outside suit winners!

There's nothing to be done about losing the 2 top trumps. And step 2 in your plan for success is to lose a top ♥ to the ♥ A. This will PROMOTE your other 2 top ♥s to winners. Once that's accomplished, ten tricks will be a walk in the park :)

Perfectly bid, and perfectly played. Well done!

Promotion in Suits and NT Part 1

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A K Q 8	♠ J 10 7 5	♠ 6 4 3									
♥ 6 5	♥ 7 3 2	♥ A K Q 4									
♦ J 6 4	♦ K Q 10	♦ A 7 5 3									
♣ Q J 4 2	♣ A 8 5	♣ 10 9									
<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 9 2										
	♥ J 10 9 8										
	♦ 9 8 2										
	♣ K 7 6 3										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♦	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
3 NT by East			

Auction Commentary: Responder has an opening hand and needs to make sure they bid game. When there's not a major suit fit to be had, we'll wind up in NT. So, after East shows a minimum by rebidding 1 NT, it's up to West to bid the game.

Opening Lead: ♥ J (top of the sequence)

Planning the Play: A Declarer in a suit contract counts losers. But a Declarer in a NT contract starts the plan by counting winners. (This way, if you find that you don't have enough tricks right away to make your contract, you can look around for the best way to develop them.) Winners are 3 ♠s, 3 ♥s and the ♦ A. We need 2 more to make the 9 tricks we contracted to make. The best option is the ♣ suit, since you have all the high ones except the ♣ AK. You will use the PROMOTION technique to create your 2 missing tricks. Since you have high cards in the rest of the suits, you should start losing ♣s at your first opportunity.

Takeaway: With enough combined points to be in game, (around 25-26), you always want to find one. Remember that there is a "game bonus" for making the contract when you actually BID the game!

Promotion in Suits and NT Part 1

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

	♠ J 9 5 3										
	♥ A 5 3										
	♦ K 8 5										
	♣ J 3 2										
♠ K Q 6 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 8 6 2		♥ Q J 10 9									
♦ Q J 10 9		♦ 7 4 2									
♣ 6 5		♣ Q 10 9 8									
	♠ 10 8 4										
	♥ K 7 4										
	♦ A 6 3										
	♣ A K 7 4										

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	1 NT by South		

Auction Commentary: North's hand isn't all that strong. But with at least 6 points as responder, you must bid here. What if partner's rebid happened to be a strong hand, and your 6 points was exactly what partner needed to make a game bid? Don't pass because you "don't like your hand" or your "suit is crummy." With 6 points after partner has opened, you must still try to find the fit. When South rebids 1 NT, denying 4 ♠s and showing a balanced minimum opener (12-14 HCP), North should pass. Whenever game is not possible point-wise, find a reasonable low-level spot and pass. :)

Opening Lead: ♦ Q (Again the top of a sequence, but for the defenders! West is hoping in NT to force out the ♦ A and ♦ K, to PROMOTE 2 ♦s to winners.)

Planning the Play: Here we are in NT, so Declarer starts the plan by counting winners. There are 2 top ♥s, 2 top ♦s, and 2 top ♣s. We only need one more trick to make the contract. Where is the best place to develop that? You have a tie for length in the 2 black suits. But the ♠ suit has a definite path to success, holding the right "spot cards" to do it. Yes, you're missing the ♠ AKQ... but your ♠ JT98 are all high enough to force out the top ones!

When your plan is to lose the lead a bunch of times like this, it can be scary. When you're playing NT, you MUST TAKE YOUR LOSERS EARLY while you still maintain control in the other suits!


One more very important piece of this plan will be to be able to GET to the Dummy hand once the ♠ J is set up! Save a high red card as an entry for later!

Promotion in Suits and NT Part 1

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

<p>♠ 6 5 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ Q J 10 7 ♣ 8 7 6 5</p>		<p>♠ 10 9 ♥ Q J 10 9 ♦ A 5 4 2 ♣ Q J 3</p>	<p>♠ A K 7 4 2 ♥ K 6 5 ♦ K 3 ♣ 9 4 2</p>
<p>♠ Q J 8 3 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ 9 8 6 ♣ A K 10</p>			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
<p>1 NT by West</p>			

Auction Commentary: It's disappointing that East can't find a ♠ fit. But with a minimum opening hand opposite a 1 NT rebid from a passed hand, it's best to quit at a low level.

Opening Lead: ♥ Q (top of a sequence, trying to PROMOTE a couple of ♥ winners)

Planning the Play: Counting winners in NT, Declarer needs 7. There are 2 ♠s and 2 ♥s off the top. Needing 3 more winners, you're going to rely on those terrific ♦s. You must force out the ♦ A in order to make the 3 tricks that you need. Identifying the objective, you must do the work FIRST, by winning the ♥ lead and immediately playing the ♦s. The ♦ suit does present one little wrinkle -- and that's transportation to the long side of the suit. Use your ♦ K in Dummy first, (the high card from the short side), to force out the ♦ A. If they don't take it, you'll play the small one to get back to your hand to continue the suit. The only outside entry to your hand is that ♥ A, so you'll need to have that ready once they play that ♦ A. So at trick #1, if you played the ♥ A first and THEN made your plan, this will be much harder! Win the opening lead with Dummy's ♥ K, and save yourself the anxiety. ;)

Takeaway: The PLAN is mandatory. Every time. Every hand. In suit contracts, count losers to find ways to eliminate them where needed. In NT contracts, count winners to find ways to develop some where needed.

PLANS not only identify the strategy with regard to setting up specific suits, they also identify problems within the suits themselves. Lopsided, uneven suits need extra care. Unblock them, high cards from short sides first. Then save outside entries to them for once they're set up. PLAN, PLAN, PLAN: it's not sexy, but it sure is necessary!