

Promotion in Suits and NT Part 2

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 9 4	♠ A K Q	♠ 10 8 7 5 2									
♥ A J 10 9 4	♥ Q 7	♥ 8 3									
♦ 10 9 7 2	♦ A K 8 5	♦ Q J 4									
♣ A 7	♣ J 10 6 4	♣ 9 8 3									
<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										
	♠ J 6 3										
	♥ K 6 5 2										
	♦ 6 3										
	♣ K Q 5 2										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3 NT by North			

Auction Commentary: North's lovely hand is too big to open 1 NT, but not strong enough to open 2 NT. So the auction plan is to open at the 1-level and then jump to 2 NT to describe the balanced hand with 18 or 19 HCP in it. Since there's no major suit fit to be found, South adds partner's 18 to their own 9, and bids the game.

Opening Lead: ♠ 8. This is the second highest from no honor. Low cards tend to show honors, and here, "HIGH HATES." East doesn't want the suit led back. We try to lead passively against a hand that has all the HCP, unless we have a good 5-card suit.

Planning the Play: Count the winners in NT! 3 ♠s and 2 ♦s are all we've got right away. North needs to find 4 more. The ♣ suit will produce 3 as soon as we PROMOTE them by forcing out the ♣ A. And thank heaven they didn't lead a ♥! We will force out the ♣ A right now, and then play a high ♥ to PROMOTE the other high ♥ to a winner.

Takeaway: This is called having "timing" on the hand. You have the time to force out the ♣ A without worrying about risking the contract. Once they take that card, there's nothing they can lead back that will be scary, that affords them enough tricks to set you. So long as you work on the ♣ suit first, you'll succeed.

Imagine if you didn't realize this, and you played the high ♥ first? You'd promote the other high ♥, yes, but West would lead that suit back right away. You'd win that and then start the ♣ suit. But now, West happily wins the ♣ A, along with the rest of their ♥s, and your contract is toast. TIMING: another important part of the PLAN!

Promotion in Suits and NT Part 2

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 8 7												
♥ A 10 5												
♦ Q 10 6 2												
♣ 8 6 5												
♠ Q 3	♠ A 9 6 5 4											
♥ 9 6 3	♥ K Q J 2											
♦ K 9 5	♦ 8 7											
♣ A Q J 10 9	♣ K 2											
	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;"> </td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S			
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♠ K 10 2												
♥ 8 7 4												
♦ A J 4 3												
♣ 7 4 3												

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
3 NT by West			

Auction Commentary: West's 2 ♣ bid has at least 10 points, (with probably at least 5 cards), and it's forcing because responder changed suits. East has to show their distribution, and next bids the 4-card ♥ suit. Since there was no jump in East's rebid, West knows that it's not a maximum opener's hand. Since East could be "done bidding" now, West needs to take the reins and get to game. Looks like 3 NT is the right place.

Opening Lead: ♦ 2 (4th best from the longest suit)

Planning the Play: Counting winners in NT, Declarer finds 1 ♠ and 5 ♣s. And on this lead, we will definitely make the ♦ K a winner. Where to find 2 more winners? PROMOTION to the rescue! The ♥s have conveniently given you the opportunity to force out the ♥ A and win the next 2 top ♥s. So long as the ♦ suit breaks evenly, they can only win 3 ♦ tricks and the ♥ A before we take 9 tricks.

BUT WHAT IF THE ♦ SUIT DIDN'T BREAK EVENLY? ... Wait, let's think about this. They led 4th best. And it was the 2. That means that there are exactly 4 ♦s in the North. Since we own 5 of them, then we know that South has exactly 4 ♦s, as well. Whew. Luck is another important facet of this game. :)

Takeaway: So long as the opponent's lead was the 4th best from their suit, we have the **RULE OF 11** at our disposal to find out more about that suit. You can figure this out using this equation: "11 - (spot of the card led) = x."

"x" is how many ♦s higher than the x are in the other 3 hands - (your 2 included!).

Promotion in Suits and NT Part 2

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

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

♠ Q 10 8 6 2
♥ J 6 2
♦ A 6 2
♣ J 10

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

Auction Commentary: 1 NT is a very descriptive opening bid. "Partner, I have a balanced hand, holding no singletons, no more than one doubleton, and I have exactly 15, 16, or 17 HCP." West should love her ♦ holding, since partner has to have at least 2 pieces and will probably be able to set up the suit pretty easily. This will be a source of tricks for partner in NT, so let's just skip them for now and go to game in NT. We have at least 10 points, and partner has at least 15.

Opening Lead: ♠ 6 (4th from the longest and strongest suit in South's hand)

Planning the Play: As soon as Dummy hits the table, Declarer counts winners: 2 ♠s, 3 ♥s, and 1 ♣. Three more tricks needed, and since those ♦s look like they're going to come home, Declarer needs to work on those FIRST. You can win the first ♠ and still have the second one when they return one, and the contract will make.

Which ♦ do you play first, after you win trick #1? HIGH CARD FROM THE SHORT SIDE -- lay that ♦ K on the table. Continue the suit until they win the ♦ A!

Takeaway: Even if the West hand had 6 pieces in ♦s, since the hand has strength enough to be in game, bidding 3 NT instead of trying to bid 5♦ is almost always the way to go. In 3 NT you only have to take 9 tricks, and then a 10th or even 11th trick would mean overtricks and top scores. In 5♦, you need 11 tricks just to make the contract! With an unbalanced hand, you'd want to be in 5♦ instead.

♠ AK
♥ 87432
♦ QJT965
♣ --

5♦ is a better contract here. With the existing East hand, and counting losers from the position of the master hand (West's long trump hand), the only loser is Ace of trump, and it makes 6♦!

Promotion in Suits and NT Part 2

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

♠ 8 7	♠ K 9 6 3	♠ 4 2			
♥ J 10 9 8 5	♥ K 2	♥ Q 6 4 3			
♦ 9 6 2	♦ Q J 10 4	♦ A 8 3			
♣ 9 5 4	♣ K Q 6	♣ 10 8 7 2			
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>			N	W E	S
N					
W E					
S					
♠ A Q J 10 5					
♥ A 7					
♦ K 7 5					
♣ A J 3					

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			
6 ♠ by South			

Auction Commentary: South can taste the slam! Too bad the ♠ A isn't in North's hand - a Grand Slam might be in the works. Opener showed a minimum with the 2 ♠ rebid, so 6 is high enough. :)

Opening Lead: ♥ J

Planning the Play: COUNT LOSERS in a suit contract. The missing ♦ A looks to be it, so no worries for the contract. PULL TRUMPS FIRST. Then you can force out the ♦ A, lay down your hand, and claim the rest of the tricks.

!!!!!! If you make a claim like this, you MUST include a "claim statement" about how you're going to play the rest of the hand. For this hand it doesn't matter so much, holding all the rest of the high cards so the hand plays itself. But if the play of the hand is not so clear, and your success depends on playing one suit before another, you need to make sure that as you lay your cards down you carefully explain your play-by-play plan. It might be something like this (in another hand):

"I'm going to draw the last trump, and then play the ♣s, so I can discard my losing ♥ on the extra ♣ in Dummy." If you just lay your cards down without a "claim statement," and there's a way for you to play it where the opponents could get a trick, the Director may force you to play it the other way, and the opponents will get that trick. And be considerate -- leave the cards on the table so they can look at them, and don't pick up the hands till they see the plan and agree.

Many players never "claim." They don't want to have the stress of mixing up the claim statement, so they just play the hand out.