

Using Length in Suit and NT Part 2

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

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

Auction Commentary: East's hand is a maximum opener's hand... and it gets even better when the ♠ fit is found. But knowing that West has 6-9 points with this single raise, it doesn't look like there is enough for a slam. East signs off in 4♠.

Opening Lead: ♦ A (promising at least the ♦ K)

Planning the Play: Once the Dummy hits the table, we count LOSERS in a suit contract, so we can see how many we have versus how many we can afford. It looks like we have 1 ♥ loser, 1 ♦ loser, and 1 ♣ loser - perfect! When you don't have too many losers, your first obligation is to draw the trumps.

Using Length in Suit and NT Part 2

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: While North might want to raise to 2♦, if you bid 1 NT with this balanced 8 count you'll only need 7 tricks to make your contract. 2♦ means 8 tricks required. Unless the hand is weirdly distributed, where you'd rather be in a suit contract to be able to ruff, try to be in NT. Less tricks needed is better! (Look at this hand in 2♦: you will lose 1♠, 1♥, 1♦ and 3♣s. DOWN ONE!)

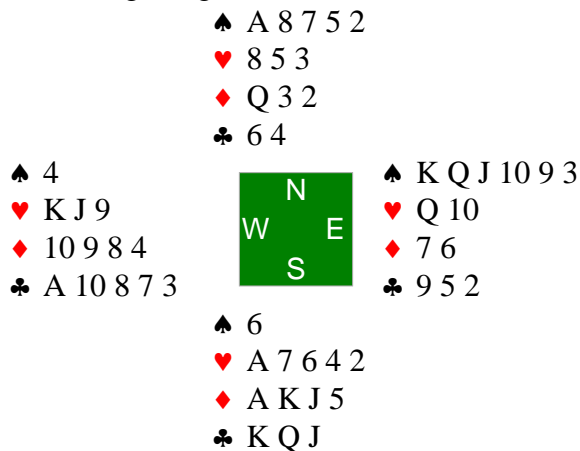
Opening Lead: ♥ Q (top of the sequence)

Planning the Play: We count WINNERS in a NT contract, to see if we have enough right away to make the contract. Sure winners here are 2♦s, 2♠s, and 2♥s. In NT we often rely on our long suits for another winner. The ♦ suit is missing 5 pieces, and if they divide 3/2 as expected, we can promote the 4th to a winner by purposely losing one. The thing is, there was a ♥ lead, and we can stop that suit twice. Should we win a ♥ now? Sure, take the first one and start the ♦s. You play ♦ AK and lose one. They return another ♥. You win that and the contract is made with that last ♦. Before they can take too many tricks, you will have made enough to make your contract: ♠ AK, ♥ AK, ♦ AKx. They can have the rest :)

Takeaway: Declarers want to make a hold-up play when they don't have enough tricks to make the contract. The purpose would be to void West of East's suit. This way, if West got in when you are trying to establish your ♦s, (for example), then West wouldn't be able to lead back to what we believe is the long suit in East. But upon further examination of your order of play, you realize that it's not necessary to hold up on this hand. Don't hold up -- play the hand as planned. Maybe they'll make an error on the defense. It could happen!

Using Length in Suit and NT Part 2

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
4 ♥ by South			

Auction Commentary: South's unbalanced 18 count wants to be in a suit contract. When North shows the fit, South bids the game.

Opening Lead: ♦ 10 (top of a series)

Planning the Play: Counting LOSERS in a suit contract, there's the ♣ A, and "some amount of ♥s." ♦s are good and no ♠ losers. We will promote 2 ♣s to winners, we have 4 ♦s to win, 1 top ♠, and 1 top ♥. We need 2 more winners, and those will come from the trump suit. We are missing 5 pieces, and we expect those to break 3/2. So since we don't have too many losers, the plan should be to draw trumps first.

Using Length in Suit and NT Part 2

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

Auction Commentary: A 2 NT opener shows a balanced hand with exactly 20 or 21 HCP. East's 7 HCP means that we need to bid game. (Please remember that any time one of us limits their hand, they're not in charge of the auction. West's got a strong hand, but East is in charge. So, when East signs off in game, West cannot think about going any higher. East has already done the math for the partnership!)

Opening Lead: ♥ J (top of that long sequence)

Planning the Play: Counting WINNERS in NT, Declarer needs to find 9. There are 2 ♠ winners, 3 ♥s, 1 ♦ and 2 ♣s. Wow, with all these points we still need to find 1 more trick. Looks like the ♦ suit is the ticket home.

Examination and Thought Process: They led ♥s. After we win this trick, we will still have 2 stoppers in all 3 other suits outside of the ♦s. We hold 8 pieces in ♦s. The missing 5 pieces are probably 3/2. Declarer has 3 pieces, and this is important because once you let them in and they lead another ♥, your outside entry to Dummy will be gone. If the ♦s divide as expected, you need to duck twice. You should duck twice FIRST, and then win the ♦ A on your third small ♦.

What happens if you take the ♦ A first, and then give them 2 tricks? Bye-bye entry. That's why we call this section "Planning the Play!"

Takeaway: Many newer players see the value in making the Plan, but are worried they're going to spend too much time doing it. Some hands are more difficult than others, and without the Plan stage, they often fail. You should take as much time as you need to Plan! If the opponents want protection against the clock, let them call the Director :)