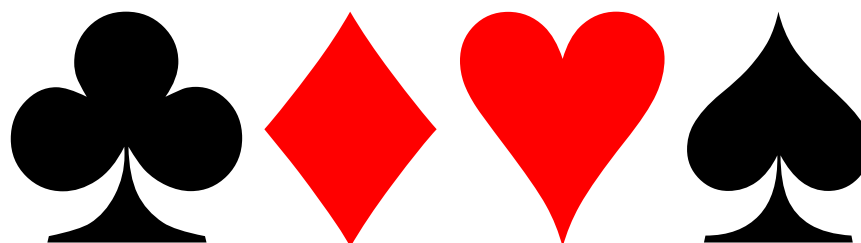




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Week 3 NT as Declarer



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

This week we are looking at how to play a NT contract as Declarer.

Later we'll look at NT as Defenders and later still at both sides with a suit contract.

The bidding concludes, the LHO leads, Dummy goes down and declarer can see 27 cards. He makes a plan...

That is easy to say, but what plan?

Refer to RWPB page 194 onwards:
“NT Contracts – The Declarer”.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

- Plan** Evaluate “top tricks”
- Determine how many extra tricks must be made.
- Decide how to make them
- By Force
 - By Length
 - By Position

*Note that in duplicate bridge you are not actually trying to make your contract. Your objective is **to do better than all the other pairs** playing the same board.*

So if the contract is 3NT and “normal” play makes the 3NT, you need to do better and get at least one overtrick, etc.

***Initially just strive to make the contract.** Later we can think about bettering it, and what to do if you have a choice between a humdrum result and a good result that might go bad if unlucky...*



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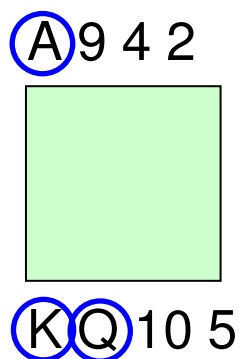


Week 3 NT as Declarer

What is a top trick?

It is one that you can guarantee to win if the suit is led. It involves looking at both Dummy and Declarer's hands.

Examples:



3 top tricks (AKQ)



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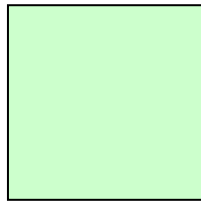
Week 3 NT as Declarer

What is a top trick?

It is one that you can guarantee to win if the suit is led. It involves looking at both Dummy and Declarer's hands.

Examples:

K J 10 9



Q 8

0 top tricks ([The Ace is missing](#))



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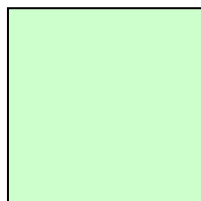
Week 3 NT as Declarer

What is a top trick?

It is one that you can guarantee to win if the suit is led. It involves looking at both Dummy and Declarer's hands.

Examples:

A K J



10 8

2 top tricks (AK)



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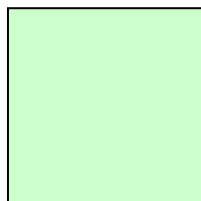
Week 3 NT as Declarer

What is a top trick?

It is one that you can guarantee to win if the suit is led. It involves looking at both Dummy and Declarer's hands.

Examples:

AK2



QJ5

3 top tricks (AKQ)

Even though you have the AKQJ, with only three cards per suit, you can't possibly make 4 tricks.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

If you can work out top tricks in your head, fine; don't read this slide.

If not, one "method" of determining top tricks is to mentally deal the shorter suit backwards onto the longer suit.

Thus with

K 6 3 2

and

A J 10

Pair them off:	K	6	3	2
	-	10	J	A

and sort them

A 2	K -	J 3	10 6
-----	-----	-----	------

The A and K are top tricks, the J isn't as the Q is missing.

Note that these pairings do NOT reflect how the cards will be played.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Having a suit with several Top Tricks in, how do you play it?

Communication must be maintained – otherwise you can block yourself from potential tricks.

Eg	You	A J 8 7 2	Dummy	K Q 6
----	-----	-----------	-------	-------

The wrong way:

Lead A	You	ⓐ J 8 7 2	Dummy	K Q ⓐ6
Then 2	You	- J 8 7 ⓑ2	Dummy	ⓑK Q -
Then Q	You	- J 8 ⓑ7-	Dummy	- ⓑQ-
Leaving	You	- J 8 - -	Dummy	- - -

But Lead is in dummy with no way to get to the J & 8 (in that suit at least).

So 2 points:

- Maintain entries to each hand, either in “this” suit or another.
- Play the cards so this type of blocking doesn’t happen...



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

The key to unblocking is to play the high cards in the short suit first.

Thus You A J 8 7 2 Dummy K Q 6

The right way:

Lead 2 You A J 8 7 (2) Dummy (K) Q 6

Then Q You A J 8 (7) - Dummy - (Q) 6

Now you have the third card to lead back to a master in the long suit

Lead 6 You (A) J 8 - - Dummy - - (6)

Leaving You - J 8 - - Dummy - - -

J is a master and after 4 tricks the likelihood of 8 not being a master as well is low. 5 tricks without problem.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

But you need to think – there are exceptions.

Thus You A J 8 7 2 Dummy K Q

If you lead 2 to the K
and then Q to the 7, you have blocked yourself.

Even if it is (apparently) a master, you need to use the lowest card as a means of getting the lead over to the long hand.

So here 2 to the K
then Q to the A overtaking
then J and discard

and now with a 3-3 split, the remaining cards are good. With a 4-2 split you hope that the 10 and 9 happened to be with the L2 opponent.

If there was **another entry to hand**, you could choose to make the A & Q separately. **It depends on the individual hands & the distributions.**



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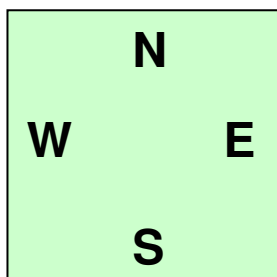
Week 1 Introduction

♠ Q 5 3
 ♥ 8 7
 ♦ K Q J 9 8
 ♣ A 5 2

12 HCP
 Bal (5332)

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣ 6



♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣

♠ A 5 2
 ♥ A 4 3 2
 ♦ 10 6 5
 ♣ K Q 3

13 HCP
 Bal (4333)

(As was noted in the session, N's 3NT does not follow the established guidelines – with 10-12 HCP, bid 2NT!) But anyway...

How many top tricks?

This is what declarer sees when dummy goes down after the opening lead...



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Week 1 Introduction

♠ Q 5 3
 ♥ 8 7
 ♦ K Q J 9 8
 ♣ **A** 5 2

(Contract 3NT by S)

5 top tricks

1 spade

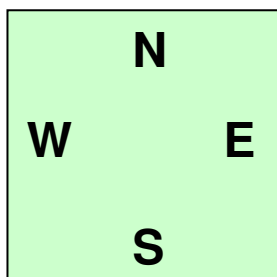
1 heart

3 clubs

Leaving 4 tricks to be engineered.

How?

♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣ 6



♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣

♠ **A** 5 2
 ♥ **A** 4 3 2
 ♦ 10 6 5
 ♣ **K** **Q** 3



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Week 1 Introduction

♠ Q 5 3
 ♥ 8 7
 ♦ K Q J 9 8
 ♣ A 5 2

(Contract 3NT by S)

Extra tricks

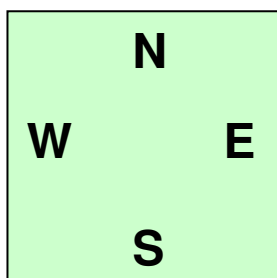
Where are the 4 extra tricks coming from?

Here Diamonds can make them. Top tricks pair & sort:

K - Q - J 5 10 2 9 6

The K (say) will lose to A, but then the Q J 10 9 are all good. *The 4 extra needed.*

♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣ 6



♠
 ♥
 ♦
 ♣

♠ A 5 2
 ♥ A 4 3 2
 ♦ 10 6 5
 ♣ K Q 3

This is “by force”, there is nothing that the opponents can do to prevent it – as long as declarer remains in control.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

“This is “by force”, there is nothing that the opponents can do to prevent it – as long as declarer remains in control.”

To make the four diamonds, one trick is going to be lost to A♦.

When that happens the next trick needs to be won to regain control.

So if we have already played our top tricks, we won't regain the lead and they can make their tricks.

Be a tortoise not a hare.

Play for the extra tricks first.

Keep control.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Extra tricks – by force (*reprise*)

This method is guaranteed to work as long as you retain control.

By “retain control”, I mean that you will need to lose the lead (perhaps more than once) but then you can guarantee to win the next trick.

If you have (in dummy & declarer)

Kx Qx

Then Kx loses to A, regain the lead and then win Qx.

If you have

Qx Jx 10x

Then Qx loses to A, regain the lead, Jx loses to K, regain the lead and then win 10x.

Thus if you have a run of HIGH cards LONGER than the number of missing TOP cards, you can force one (or more) winning trick.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Extra tricks – by length

This method may depend upon the distribution of the cards you don't have.

If **you** have a 5-3 split, that is 8 cards meaning they have 5 between them. With luck it will be 3-2, but ponder 4-1 or the rare 5-0.

Play the suit to exhaust the opponents of it. Then any cards you have left are winners.

If you have

J 10 6 3 2 9 5 4 (8 cards)

Then they have A K Q 8 7 (5 cards)

Lead the suit, perhaps J to 7 4 A. Regain lead, try again 10 to 8 5 Q. Regain lead and play 2 to K 9 -. And now both 6 and 3 are good. Two extra tricks using the masters "3" and "2"!



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Extra tricks – by position

aka finesse

With	Dummy	A J x x
	Declarer	K x x

there are two top tricks (AK) and the J can perhaps win. It all depends where Q is.

If “Q x x “ is with RHO (Right hand opponent), then they will play low on tricks with the A & K and wait for the J before playing the Q.

If you lead the J and they play the Q you beat it with the K, but thought the K makes, the J hasn't. So still only the two “AK” tricks.

However maybe the Q is with LHO.

Lead low from declarer. If LHO plays low, play the J hoping the Q has been missed. If LHO plays the Q, beat it with the A – and now the J is promoted for 3 tricks.

This only works 50% of the time – depends where the Q is.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Extra tricks – by position

aka finesse

“This only works 50% of the time – depends where the Q is.”

Actually that statement isn't true. You may know where or be able to find out where the missing high card is – and then alter your plan accordingly.

Imagine A Q 9 x
 K 10 x x

You have 8 cards, they have 5 : J x x

If you can work out where the J is, you can choose your finesse.

If LHO has J, lead low from declarer through LHO, playing 9 as finesse or Q beating J.

If RHO has J, lead low from dummy thru RHO, playing 10 as finesse or K beating J.

The A is good anyway and may help determine where the J is.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Rule of 11

Iff (if and only if) the opening lead is “fourth highest” of a suit (likely a 2,3,4,5,6,7) then you can apply the Rule of 11.

11 – value of opening lead = number of cards beating opening lead in the other 3 hands.

You can see your hand & dummy’s. So work out how many in RHO,

EG	Dummy	A 9 2	
	Declarer	Q J 6	Lead 5

11 – 5 = 6. 6 cards higher than 5. You can see 5 of them (AQJ96), so RHO only has one card over 5. Also you have 6 cards (3-3), LHO has at least 4, RHO has at least 1. So there are 2 more small cards to position.

Often this determines whether & how to take first trick and later finesses.



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Practice making the most trick from a lone suit.

In the session, we went through some example hands working out how many top tricks were possible and how to play to maximise the number of tricks achieved in the suit – assuming that if/when you lose a trick you have a master to regain it on the next trick and that there is no trumping.

To practice this at home sort out one complete suit and 7 low cards from a different colour suit. Now shuffle the 20 cards well and deal 5 to each player. Ignore (remove from the table) the 7 other-suit cards and study what is left.

Determine for each partnership of hands the total HCP + the total number of cards. (Eg AJT4 + Q7532 = 7HCP + L9 = 16.) Make the partnership with the highest result Declarer/Dummy and work out how to play it to maximise the tricks taken,



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Week 3 NT as Declarer

Rule of 7

If you have only one stopper in a suit, you need to keep it until the defenders have run out of that suit.

Why?

You take the trick with your sole stopper. They later regain the lead and now make a run of the remaining cards in that suit – you can do nothing.

If they are split 5-3. You win the first (now they are 4-2) and when they regain the lead they win 4 tricks in a row.

However declarer + dummy have 5 cards in suit. Use the Rule of 7.

$$7 - \text{cards in 2 hands} = 7 - 5 = 2.$$

Duck the first 2 tricks and use the stopper on the 3 round. *If you can.*

Now they are left with 2-0 & hopefully can't regain lead to play them.



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Week 3 Play

Play

Divide yourselves into pairs and then into tables. Fill in table slips.

NS have the pair number of their table.

EW have the pair number of their table plus 6.

When you have played a hand, pass it to the next numbered table in sequence. The highest numbered table passes to table 1.

And one last thing – **as part of the learning process** – I would like the partner of whoever has just bid to take whatever action is **standardly required** (announcing 1NT to be 12-14 points, ALERTing a conventional bid, ...) – **AND ALSO** to give a brief **description** to the other three players on what the bid means.

Any questions?

Tea & coffee.

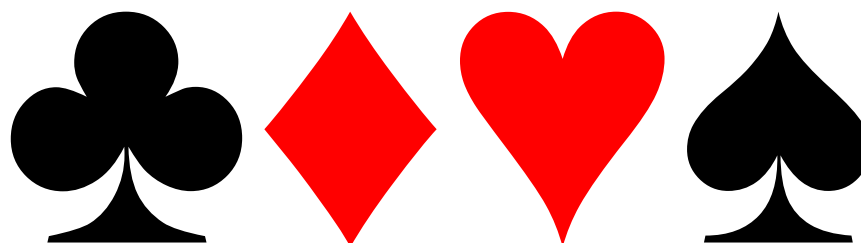
PLAY



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Week 3



The end

(Set hand references to follow.)



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Week 3 Set Hands

Set hands

All from Andrew Robson – Declaring Notrump Contracts

#	Dlr	Vul	Source	Dlr = Dealer, Vul = Vulnerability.
1	N	None	DNC #1, Q♣=E	A♠=N
2	E	N/S	DNC #2	A♠=N
3	S	E/W	DNC #3, ♥↔♠	A♠=S
4	W	Both	DNC #4	A♠=E
5	N	N/S	DNC #7	A♠=N