

SUIT CONTRACTS - PART 1 (Major Suit Bidding Conversations)

LAST REVISED ON APRIL 5, 2018
COPYRIGHT © 2010-2018 BY DAVID L. MARCH

BIDDING

After *opener* makes a limiting medium strength opening bid, *responder* is the bidding captain because responder has the best information about the partnership's strength.

Because a no trump opening bid limit's opener's strength to a narrow range of high card points, responder has the necessary information to determine the strength of the partnership and can direct the partnership to the appropriate contract level.

But the point range for an opening bid of one of a suit is very wide and can include both high card and long suit points. Responder needs more information about the strength of opener's hand before responder can determine the appropriate contract level.

RESPONDER'S STRENGTH

If responder holds enough cards in opener's bid suit to guarantee an eight-card trump fit, responder has *trump support* for opener's suit. If the partnership wins a contract in that suit, opener will be the declarer and responder will be the dummy.

Short suits are valuable in a dummy that has *trump support* because declarer will usually be able to use the trump in the dummy to ruff losers in that short suit. The most common way to estimate the value for a dummy short suit is to assign one point for each doubleton, three points for each singleton, and five points for each void.

If responder has at least three-card trump support, responder can value the strength of the hand by adding short suit points to high card points. This total is the number of *dummy points* in responder's hand.

For example, suppose partner opens the bidding:

Bidding Auction: 1♥ → Pass → ??
<p>10 Dummy Points with: ♠K 9 7 ♥J T 4 ♦K Q 8 6 4 ♣7 2 9 HCP + 1 SSP for the doubleton club. Eight-card heart fit.</p>
<p>9 Dummy Points with: ♠K J 9 7 ♥T 4 ♦K Q 8 6 4 ♣7 2 9 HCP. Only a seven-card heart fit and less than three hearts.</p>
<p>15 Dummy Points with: ♠K J 9 7 ♥J T 6 4 ♦K Q 8 6 4 ♣ 10 HCP + 5 SSP for the club void. Nine-card heart fit.</p>

RESPONDER'S GOAL

About 34% of the hands that are dealt can be opened with a strength of 13-21 declarer points. But, as the table at the right indicates, if your partner does open the bidding there is a 73% chance that your partner only has 13-16 declarer points and a 90% chance that your partner only has 13-18 declarer points.

OPENER'S DECLARER POINTS	PERCENT OF OPENED HANDS
13-16	73 %
17-18	17 %
19-21	10 %

There is an inverse relationship between the points in the partnership hands. If the opener's point count is at the high end of the range, it is more likely that responder's point count is at the low end of the range. Likewise, if the responder's point count is high it is more likely the opener's point count is low. This suggests responder's goal should be:

Opener's Declarer Points	Responder's		Partnership Total Points	RESPONDER'S GOAL		Percent Opened Hands
	Dummy Points	Strength Attribute				
13-18+ (90%)	0-5		13-23+	Game Unlikely	Pass	10 %
	6-9	Weak	19-27+	Game Doubtful	Negative Response	30 %
	10-12	Medium	23-30+	Game Possible	Positive Response	28 %
	13-16	Strong	26-34+	Game Likely	Force Game	24 %
	17+		30-35+	Slam Possible	Explore Slam	5 %

RESPONDER'S RESPONSE BIDS

Responder's bidding choices **in priority order**, are shown on the next page.

• **Attributes:**

- ✓ All of the new suit responses are unlimited forcing bids and opener must rebid.
New suit responses are not forcing if responder already limited the hand to 0-12 points by passing a chance to open the bidding.
- ✓ All of the other responses are limited invitational bids and opener can pass.

• **Strength:**

- ✓ A new suit response at the one level requires at least six dummy points.
- ✓ A new suit response at the two level requires at least ten dummy points.

• **Shape:**

- ✓ A new major suit response (2♥ over 1♠) shows a five-card suit.
- ✓ A new minor suit response shows a four-card suit.
If the opening bid is 1♠ a new minor suit response may only show three cards with 3♠, 4♥, 3♦, 3♣ shape.

- ✓ A 1NT response does not promise a balanced hand or stoppers in the unbid suits.

Dummy Points	RESPONDER'S RESPONSE TO A MAJOR SUIT OPENING BID	Bid Type
0-5	Pass	
6-9 Weak	Raise opener's major to the 2-level with 3+ card support.	Limiting Invitational
	Respond a new 4+ card suit at the 1-level (1♠ over 1♥). • <i>Plan to pass or make a limiting invitational rebid on next turn.</i>	Unlimited Forcing
	Respond 1NT .	Limiting Invitational
10-12 Medium	Limit raise opener's major to the 3-level with 4+ card support.	Limiting Invitational
	Respond a new 4+ card suit at the 1-level (1♠ over 1♥). • <i>Plan to make a limiting invitational rebid on next turn.</i> • <i>Plan to show 3 card support for opener's major on next turn.</i>	Unlimited Forcing
	Respond a new 4+ card minor suit at the 2-level. • <i>Plan to make a limiting invitational rebid on next turn.</i> • <i>Plan to show 3 card support for opener's major on next turn.</i>	Unlimited Forcing
	Respond a new 5+ card major suit at the 2-level (2♥ over 1♠). • <i>Plan to make a limiting invitational rebid on next turn.</i> • <i>Plan to show 3 card support for opener's major on next turn.</i>	Unlimited Forcing
13-16 Strong	Respond 3NT with a balanced hand, stopper's in the unbid suits, and a doubleton in the major.	Limiting Sign-off
	Respond a new 4+ card minor suit at the 2-level. • <i>Plan to drive to game on next turn.</i> • <i>Plan to show 3+ card support for opener's major on next turn.</i>	Unlimited Forcing
	Respond a new 5+ card major suit at the 2-level (2♥ over 1♠). • <i>Plan to drive to game on next turn.</i> • <i>Plan to show 3+ card support for opener's major on next turn.</i>	Unlimited Forcing

Bidding Auction: 1♠ → Pass → ??	
<i>Pass with:</i> ♠T76 ♥87 ♦Q962 ♣T932	
3 DumPs (2H+1S). Have 3-card spade support but too weak to respond.	
<i>Respond 2♠ with:</i> ♠AQ97 ♥J863 ♦Q432 ♣K9	
9 DumPs (8H+1S). Have 3-card spade support. Cheap raise opener's major.	

Bidding Auction: **1♠** → **Pass** → ??

Respond 3♠ with: ♠Q973 ♥K86 ♦Q432 ♣K9

11 **DumPs** (10H+1S). Have 4-card spade support. Jump raise opener's major (*limit raise*).

Respond 2♥ with: ♠92 ♥AQJ76 ♦QJ6 ♣KT6

13 **HCPs**. Can not support spades. Have 5-card heart suit. Make new suit forcing response and plan to drive to game on next turn.

Respond 1NT with: ♠86 ♥Q94 ♦QJT6 ♣Q876

7 **HCPs**. Can not support spades and too weak to respond a new suit at two level.

Respond 1NT with: ♠9 ♥T86 ♦QJ7 ♣K87643

6 **HCPs**. Can not support spades and too weak to respond a new suit at two level.

Respond 2♣ with: ♠QT9 ♥KT86 ♦QJ7 ♣K87

11 **DumPs** (11H). Have 3-card spade support. Too strong to respond a weak **2♠**. Can not limit raise with 3-card trump support. Without five hearts can not respond **2♥**. Must respond new minor with only a 3-card club suit.

In the unlikely event that partner also has a four-card heart suit, partner will bid hearts and you will know the partnership has a 5-3 eight-card spade fit and a 4-4 eight-card heart fit.

When making a forcing new suit response, bid the longest suit. With a choice of equal length suits:

- ✓ Bid the highest ranking five-card or longer suit.
- ✓ Bid the cheapest four-card contract bid.

Bidding Auction: **1♥** → **Pass** → ??

Respond 1♠ with: ♠Q9764 ♥9 ♦AQ65 ♣Q64

10 **HCPs**. Can not support hearts. Longest new suit is spades.

Respond 1♠ with: ♠Q9764 ♥9 ♦AQ653 ♣Q6

10 **HCPs**. Can not support hearts. Highest ranking new five-card suit is spades.

Respond 2♦ with: ♠Q6 ♥9 ♦K9764 ♣AQ653

11 **HCPs**. Can not support hearts. Highest ranking new five-card suit is diamonds.

Respond 1♠ with: ♠Q976 ♥9 ♦AQ65 ♣K645

11 **HCPs**. Can not support hearts. Cheapest four-card new suit bid is **1♠**.

Respond 2♣ with: ♠Q97 ♥T8 ♦AQ65 ♣Q645

10 **HCPs**. Can not support hearts. Cheapest four-card new suit bid is **2♣**.

The major suit response bids do not directly handle all of the situations in which responder can support opener's major. Responder can use the following strategies for these situations:

Dummy Points	Major Suit Support	
	3 Cards	4 Cards
6-9	Bid opener's major at two-level	
10-12	Bid new suit forcing Rebid opener's major on next turn	Bid opener's major at three-level (<i>a limit raise</i>)
13-16	Bid new suit forcing Jump to game in opener's major on next turn	

<p>Bidding Auction: 1♥ → Pass → ??</p>
<p><i>Respond 2♦ with: ♠9 4 ♥Q T 8 ♦A Q 9 7 3 ♣K T 6</i> 12 DumPs (11H+1S). Have 3-card heart support but too strong for weak raise. Make new suit forcing response and plan to rebid hearts at cheapest level on next turn.</p>
<p><i>Respond 2♣ with: ♠9 ♥Q T 8 6 ♦A Q 9 7 ♣K T 6 3</i> 14 DumPs (11H+3S). Have 4-card heart support but too strong for a limit raise. Make new suit forcing response and plan to jump to 4♥ on next turn.</p>

OPENER'S FORCED REBID

If responder makes an unlimited new suit forcing response, responder continues to be the bidding captain because, although opener knows the partnership's minimum strength, opener does not know the partnership's maximum strength.

Opener's forced rebid goal is to narrow the strength of the hand and continue the search for an eight-card trump fit. Opener's choice of rebids, **in priority order**, depends on the strength of the hand:

- **Minimal Strength (13-16 points)**
 Rebid as cheaply as possible.
 - ✓ Raise partner's new suit one level with at least three hearts or four cards for any other suit.
 - ✓ Rebid your suit at the cheapest level with extra length in your suit.
 - ✓ Rebid a new suit at the cheapest level with at least four cards in the new suit.
 - ✓ Bid no trump at the cheapest level.
- **Medium Strength (17-18 points)**
 Jump a level to show extra strength. If responder bid a new suit at the two level, opener can jump directly to game.

- **Maximum Strength** (19-21 points)

Jump directly to game.

Note that all of these rebids are limiting invitational bids.

Bidding Auction: **1♥** → **Pass** → **1♠** → **Pass**
??

Rebid 2♠ with: ♠QJ52 ♥AQ984 ♦93 ♣K6

14 **DumPs** (12H+2S) (*minimum strength*). Your 4-card support makes 8-card spade fit. Cheap raise responder's suit to show minimum strength.

Rebid 3♠ with: ♠KQ82 ♥AQJ54 ♦Q63 ♣3

17 **DumPs** (14H+3S) (*medium strength*). Your 4-card support makes 8-card spade fit. Jump raise responder's suit to show the medium strength.

Rebid 2♥ with: ♠83 ♥AQT973 ♦KQJ ♣T4

14 **DecPs** (12H+2L) (*minimum strength*). Can not support spades. Cheap rebid hearts to show extra length with minimum strength.

Rebid 2♣ with: ♠843 ♥AKJ92 ♦3 ♣KQ84

13 **HCPs** (*minimum strength*). Can not support spades and no extra heart length. Cheap rebid a new suit to show minimum strength.

Bidding Auction: **1♠** → **Pass** → **2♥** → **Pass**
??

Rebid 4♥ with: ♠AKJ73 ♥QJ92 ♦87 ♣A5

17 **DumPs** (15H+2S) (*medium strength*). Partnership 27-?? (17+10 to 17+??). Your 4-card support makes 9-card heart fit (2♥ response promised five). Jump to game.

Rebid 2NT with: ♠KJ987 ♥T8 ♦KQ7 ♣A42

13 **HCPs** (*minimum strength*). Can not support hearts and no extra spade length. Cheap rebid no trump to show a balanced minimum strength hand.

OPENER'S INVITED REBID

If responder makes a limiting invitational response, opener becomes the bidding captain because opener has the most information about the partnership's minimum **and** maximum strength. If opener thinks the response is the best possible contract, opener can pass. Otherwise opener can either bid a game or invite responder to bid a game if responder is at the upper end of the limited strength range. But opener can not force responder to rebid.

Opener's rebid goal depends on the strength of the hand:

Responder's Dummy Points	Opener's		Partnership Total Points	OPENER'S REBID GOAL (Major Suit or No Trump)	
	Declarer Points	Strength Attribute			
6-9	13-16	Minimum	19-25	Game Unlikely	Part Score
	17-18	Medium	23-27	Game Possible	Invite Game
	19-21	Maximum	25-30	Game Likely	Force Game

Bidding Auction: **1♥** → **Pass** → **2♥** → **Pass**
??

Pass with: ♠QJ52 ♥AQ984 ♦93 ♣K6

13 DecPs (12H+1L) (*minimum strength*). Partnership 19-22 (13+6 to 13+9). Responder's 3-card support makes 8-card heart fit but very little chance for game.

Rebid 3♥ with: ♠QJ5 ♥AKQ984 ♦93 ♣K63

17 DecPs (15H+2L) (*medium strength*). Partnership 23-26 (17+6 to 17+9). Responder's 3-card support makes 9-card heart fit which has extra value. Invite partner with 8-9 points to bid game.

Bidding Auction: **1♠** → **Pass** → **3♠** → **Pass**
??

Rebid 4♠ with: ♠AKJ73 ♥QT92 ♦87 ♣A5

15 DecPs (14H+1L) (*medium strength*). Partnership 25-27 (15+10 to 15+12). Responder's 4-card support makes 9-card spade fit which has extra value.

Bidding Auction: **1♠** → **Pass** → **1NT** → **Pass**
??

Rebid 2♣ with: ♠AQ875 ♥K6 ♦5 ♣QJ843

14 DecPs (12H+2L) (*minimum strength*). Partnership 20-23 (14+6 to 14+9). Suggest clubs and invite partner to choose.

Rebid 2♠ with: ♠AQJ875 ♥K64 ♦5 ♣Q83

14 DecPs (12H+2L) (*minimum strength*). Partnership 20-23 (14+6 to 14+9). A spade contract should be easier to make than a no trump contract even if partner only has one spade.

Pass with: ♠AQT75 ♥K6 ♦J75 ♣Q83

13 DecPs (12H+1L) (*minimum strength*). Partnership 19-22 (13+6 to 13+9). With a minimum balanced hand, no trump is best chance.

RESPONDER'S REBID

- **Responder forced opener to rebid.**

If responder forced a rebid, responder is still the bidding captain. Opener's rebid narrowed the strength of the partnership which should allow responder to decide on the contract level. But responder can invite opener to bid a game if opener is at the upper end of the limited strength range. Responder should also have enough information about the partnership's suit fits and stopped suits to determine if the contract should be in a suit or in no trump.

- **Responder invited opener to rebid.**

If responder invited a rebid, opener is the bidding captain. If opener made a jump rebid short of game, opener must think a game is possible. Responder at the lower end of the strength range should pass. Responder at the upper end of the strength range should bid the game.

DEFENDER PLAY

OPENING LEADS AGAINST SUIT CONTRACTS

The common opening leads against suit contracts are:

- **Highest card in partner's bid suit.**

This is usually your partnership's long suit and you should try to take winners in that suit early. If your lead wins the opening trick, continue the suit.

- **Top of connecting honors.**

This lead promises the next lower card in the suit. *Note that you do not need a three card sequence or broken sequence.*

- **Fourth highest card in your longest and strongest suit.**

This lead promises at least one honor.

- **Top of a doubleton.**

This lead starts a *high-low* signal to indicate the doubleton. After you play your low card on a subsequent trick, your partner will know that you are void in the suit.

- **A singleton.**

This lead is effective if the bidding suggests partner might be able to take the trick and return the suit for a ruff.

- **A trump.**

This lead is effective if the bidding suggests **either** that declarer has most of the top honors **or** that declarer might need ruffing power in the dummy.

DECLARER PLAY

MAKING A PLAN

The basic strategy that should be followed to make your trump suit contract is similar to the strategy for no trump contracts. But because of the power of the trump suit, there are important differences in the way that a plan for the offense is developed:

1. Listen to opponents' bids.
2. Observe the opening lead.
3. Plan your offense:
 - a. Pause to consider the number of tricks you **can afford to lose**.
 - b. Look at the combined hands and count **losers in one hand, *the master hand***.
 - ✓ Include losses needed to promote high cards.
 - c. Analyze ways to **eliminate extra losers**:
 - Ruff losers from the master hand using trump from the support hand.
 - Finesse opponents' high cards.
 - Discard losers from the master hand on extra winners in the support hand.
 - ✓ Consider developing a long suit to create winners.
 - d. Now execute the plan.
4. Watch defenders play.
5. Keep track of cards played.

There are two main reasons for concentrating on losers instead of winners:

- **You can only count sure winners in the trump suit.**

Unless you draw trump immediately, there is a danger that opponents might trump one or more of the sure winners in your side suits.

- **You might be able to trump side suit losers.**

If you plan to ruff one or more of your side suit losers, you may not be able to draw trump immediately.

COUNTING LOSERS

The second step in planning your offense is to count the losers in each suit and add up the counts to get the total number of losers. **Losers should be counted in one hand**, the hand with the longest and strongest trump suit. This hand is called the *master hand*. In the vast majority of cases, the master hand will be declarer's (your) hand instead of the dummy.

Unless noted otherwise, assume that South has the longest and strongest trump suit and is the declarer and master hand for the examples that follow.

A loser is any card **in the master hand** that is not a sure winner and that can not be covered by a high card in the supporting hand. For example, there are no losers in the master hand for any of the following combinations:

NO LOSERS
Q 6 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND A K 2

NO LOSERS
A Q SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND K 7 3

NO LOSERS
7 6 4 2 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND A K

In the left example, the Two in the master hand is covered by the Queen in the support hand. In the middle example, the seven and three in the master hand are covered by the Ace and Queen in the support hand because the master hand holds the King.

In the following examples, the master hand has one loser that can not be covered by honors in the support hand:

1 LOSER
K 7 6 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND A 8 4

1 LOSER
7 6 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND A K 4

1 LOSER
9 5 3 2 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND 7

You might be able to ruff the four in the middle example, but it must be counted as a loser in the original count because you may have a better use for the trump in the support hand.

UNSUPPORTED HIGH CARDS

If you have only one unsupported high card you must count it as a loser. For example:

3 LOSERS (Possible Finesse)
9 4 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND K 3 2

2 LOSERS (Possible Finesse)
K 5 4 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND 7 2

3 LOSERS (Unlikely Finesse)
8 7 3 SUPPORT HAND MASTER HAND Q 6 4

In all of these examples, you might be able to finesse the honor and take a trick. But the decision to risk the finesse can not be made until you have a count of your losers and have analyzed various alternatives to eliminate them.

SOLID SEQUENCES

When you have a **solid sequence in the combined hands**, you can promote cards in the sequence into winners but you must lose tricks to do it. Count the losers in the master hand as the number of missing cards higher than the sequence. For example:

1 LOSER (Missing A)	2 LOSERS (Missing AK)	3 LOSERS (Missing AKQ)
K Q J <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">SUPPORT HAND</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">MASTER HAND</div> 7 5 3	J 7 2 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">SUPPORT HAND</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">MASTER HAND</div> Q T 6	9 8 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">SUPPORT HAND</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">MASTER HAND</div> J T 7 2

In the example on the right, you might be able to ruff one of the losers using trump in the support hand. But you can not make that assumption when you are making your count.

BROKEN SEQUENCES

Count the losers in a broken sequence in the same way that you count the losers in a solid sequence. For example:

1 LOSER (Missing K)	2 LOSERS (Missing AQ)	2 LOSERS (Missing KJ)
8 4 2 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">SUPPORT HAND</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">MASTER HAND</div> A Q J	7 6 4 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">SUPPORT HAND</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">MASTER HAND</div> K J T	7 5 2 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">SUPPORT HAND</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">MASTER HAND</div> A Q T

You can try a finesse in all of these cases, but you must assume that the finesse will fail when you make your original count. The decision to try the finesse must be based on an analysis of the best way to eliminate extra losers.

OTHER COMBINATIONS

In the example to the right, you could have three losers. But, if the missing cards are split 3-2 (68%) you only have two losers. And, if West has the missing ace, you might be able to finesse the King and Queen against the Ace to reduce the count to one loser. A conservative count is two losers.

2 LOSERS
K Q 8 3 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">SUPPORT HAND</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">MASTER HAND</div> 7 5 4 2

FAST AND SLOW LOSERS

There are two types of losers:

- **Fast Loser**

A fast loser is one that defenders can take as soon as they get the lead because they have the high cards in the suit.

- **Slow Loser**

A slow loser is one that defenders can eventually take but only if they can drive out your high cards in the suit.

If you have too many fast losers, your plan should avoid giving up the lead because opponents will be able to defeat the contract. If your losers are slow, you can plan to give up the lead because you will be able to regain the lead before opponents take too many tricks.

COUNTING LOSERS (1 FAST • 2 SLOW)																	
<p style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">OPENING LEAD: ♥K</p> <p><i>Listen:</i> The bidding is no help.</p> <p><i>Observe:</i> The ♥K should be top of connecting honors. West should have the ♥Q.</p> <p><i>Pause:</i> Can afford 3 losers.</p> <p><i>Pick:</i> South should be the master hand because it has the longest and strongest trump suit. The dummy should be the supporting hand.</p> <p><i>Look:</i> 3 South losers (0 ♠ + 1 slow ♥ + 1 slow ♦ + 1 fast ♣).</p> <p><i>Analyze:</i> There is no way to eliminate any of the losers.</p> <p><i>Execute:</i> Take the first trick with the ♥A. Draw trump to ensure the opponents can not ruff any of your winners. Then lead a club to promote two club honors. When you regain the lead take your winners and make the contract.</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> NORTH - DUMMY </div> <p>♠ A J 6 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ 9 6 4 3 ♣ Q J T</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="width: 25%;">South</th> <th style="width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="width: 25%;">North</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> SOUTH - DECLARER </div> <p>♠ K Q T 8 7 4 ♥ A 6 ♦ A 2 ♣ K 4 3</p>	East	South	West	North	Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass			
East	South	West	North														
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠														
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass														
Pass																	
<p>If you pick the dummy as the master hand, you would count six losers (no spades, two slow hearts, three slow diamonds, and one fast club). You would still make the contract but the analysis would be complicated because you would need to decide how to eliminate three losers.</p>																	

DRAWING TRUMP

As long as defenders have trump they have the potential to ruff one or more of your winners and defeat the contract. This means that you should usually draw your opponents trump as soon as possible.

You definitely should draw trump if you do not have any more losers than you can afford. You should also draw trump if you plan to promote high cards in a side suit or develop a side suit to create extra winners. If you fail to draw trump and there is a bad distribution of the cards in one or more of the side suits, a defender may be able to ruff a trick and defeat the contract.

COUNTING LOSERS • DRAWING TRUMP

OPENING LEAD: ♦ A

Listen: East has at least 9 points and five diamonds. West has at least 6 points and 3 diamonds.

Observe: The ♦ A should be the highest card in partner's bid suit.

Pause: Can afford 3 losers.

Pick: South should be the master hand because it has the longest and strongest trump suit.

Look: 4 South losers (0 ♠ + 1 fast ♥ + 2 fast ♦ + 1 slow ♣).

Analyze: You can expect to lose the two diamonds on the first two tricks. Your only hope is that the missing clubs are split 3-1 (50%) or 2-2 (41%) so that you can develop the fourth club into a winner. But you must draw trump before you can develop the clubs.

Execute: When you gain the lead, lead a trump and continue until you drive out the ♥ A. When you regain the lead again, finish drawing trump and then play the clubs.

NORTH - DUMMY

♠ A 8
♥ Q 8 7 6
♦ J 7
♣ A Q 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♥
2♦	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH - DECLARER

♠ K Q
♥ K J T 3 2
♦ 9 4
♣ K 8 6 4

BIDDING EXPLAINED (*Overcalls are covered in Week 6*)

- North opens 1♣ with 13 good declarer points (12 HCP + 1 ♣ LSP).
- East overcalls 1♦ to describe a hand with at least 9 declarer points and at least five diamonds.
- Counting the ♠ KQ as four points, South has 12 declarer points (11 HCP + 1 ♥ LSP). South expects to drive toward a game but South's first priority after a minor suit opening is to bid a four card or longer major suit. So South responds 1♥ which, because it is an overcall of an overcall, describes a hand with at least 11 points and at least five hearts. *This bid does not limit South's strength.*
- West bids 2♦ to describe a hand with at least 6 dummy points and at least three diamonds.
- North bids ♥ 2 to describe a hand with 13-16 dummy points and at least three hearts. *This bid limits North's strength.*
- South now knows that the partnership has 25-28 points and an eight-card heart fit. South bids the 4♥ game. *This bid is a sign-off bid.*

OPENER OPENS 1♥ OR 1♠

DECLARER POINTS	
13 ————— 18	19 ——— 21
90%	10%

RESPONDER RESPONDS IN PRIORITY ORDER

DUMMY POINTS				
0 ————— 5	6 ————— 9	10 ——— 12	13 ——— 16	17 ————— +
10%	30% WEAK	28% MEDIUM	24% STRONG	5%

Invitational **3MAJ** *Limit Raise* 4+ card support

Invitational **2MAJ** 3+ card support

*Forcing*¹ Cheap New 4+ Card Major (**1♠** over **1♥**)

*Forcing*¹ Cheap New 4+ Card Minor (**2♣** or **2♦**)

*Forcing*¹ Cheap New 5+ Card Major (**2♥** over **1♠**)

Invitational **1NT**

PASS

1 Not forcing if responder is a passed hand

OPENER'S FORCED REBIDS

DECLARER POINTS		
13 ————— 16	17 - 18	19 ——— 21
Minimum CHEAP	Medium JUMP	Maximum GAME

**OPENER'S INVITED REBIDS
AFTER WEAK (6-9) RESPONSE**

DECLARER POINTS		
13 ————— 16	17 - 18	19 ——— 21
PART SCORE	INVITE GAME	FORCE GAME

**OPENER'S INVITED REBIDS
AFTER MEDIUM (10-12) RESPONSE**

DECLARER POINTS			
13 - 14	15 - 16	17 - 18	19 ——— 21
PASS	INVITE GAME	FORCE GAME	CONFIRM SLAM