

SVEN'S CARD PLAYING STRATEGIES

FOR DECLARER

You have just declared the contract. It's time to plan how you are going to win it. Take your time. My strategies are illustrated below by way of examples.

My Strategies	Examples of how to do it					
<p>Counting Certain Tricks: A <u>certain trick</u> (CT) is a trick that can be taken without losing the lead. After the Opening Lead, count the CTs <u>in each suit</u> by looking at own and Dummy's holdings.</p>	<p>Example 1: You: Kxx Dummy: Axx CTs = 2</p>	<p>Example 2: You: KJ Dummy: AQ CTs = 2</p>	<p>Example 3: You: KQx Dummy: Ax CTs = 3</p>	<p>Example 4: You: KJxx Dummy: AQx CTs = 4</p>	<p>Example 5: You: Kx Dummy: AQx CTs = 3</p>	<p>Example 6: You: KJ Dummy: AQx CTs = 3</p>
<p>Taking Certain Tricks: After counting your Certain Tricks (CTs) it is time to plan how you will take them, if or when you get the chance. Here are the salient points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select strategy for each suit. • Count your Certain Tricks. • Take long suit tricks in short hand first. • If need be, overtake short suit honour to cash rest of tricks in long suit. 	<p>Example 3 (3NT): ♠ You: A52 Dummy: J4 ♥ You: A765 Dummy: 932 ♦ You: K2 Dummy: AQJT3 ♣ You: AK86 Dummy: 743 CTs=9 (♠1+♥1+♦5+♣2). The ♦s are the problem: K♦ should be taken first. If you take K♦ on second trick, you have no way of getting back into Dummy.</p>		<p>Example 3 (3NT): ♠ You: 983 Dummy: A42 ♥ You: AK6 Dummy: 973 ♦ You: A973 Dummy: 42 ♣ You: AQJ Dummy: KT852 CTs=9 (♠1+♥2+♦1+♣5). The ♣s are the problem: To avoid blocking the suit, take A♣ and Q♣ first, then overtake J♣ by K♣ so you can cash remaining two tricks.</p>		<p>Example 3 (7NT): ♠ You: AJ84 Dummy: KQ6 ♥ You: KJ3 Dummy: AQ95 ♦ You: AQJ6 Dummy: K5 ♣ You: 75 Dummy: A432 CTs=13 (♠4+♥4+♦4+♣1). To cash all 13 tricks: In ♠.suit, play K♠, Q♠ then 6♠ In ♥.suit, play K♥, J♥ then 3♥ In ♦.suit, play K♦ then 5♦ In ♣.suit, play 7♣</p>	
<p>Predicting Trump Split: Carefully count your trumps. Even though you hopefully have a <u>Fit</u> (or better) it is always a good idea to consider how the remaining trumps might be split between opponents' hands. Is it 2-3, 1-4 or, 0-5? After the opening lead you know how many trumps the opponents have. The bidding often helps you to predict the trump split.</p>	<p>Example 1 (2-3, Hurrah!): 2nd Hand: xx 4th Hand: xxx This is the ideal situation, because you will almost certainly be able to clear out the trumps in 3 tricks. Depending on the cards the tricks may not all be yours.</p>		<p>Example 2 (1-4, so be it!): 2nd Hand: x 4th Hand: xxxxx Here you may actually need 4 tricks to clear out the trumps. Depending on the cards the tricks may not all be yours.</p>		<p>Example 3 (0-5, Damn it!): 2nd Hand: void 4th Hand: xxxxx Very bad luck. The opponents are almost certainly going to win a trick or two by trumping. Adding insult to injury they may even start pulling yours.</p>	

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