

# BRIDGE FROM THE BEGINNING

## *Lesson 1 – Tricks and Trumps*

It is my aim in this lesson course to give you sufficient information to get you started. At the end of each lesson there we will revise the most important elements.

Throughout each lesson you will find diagrams of bridge hands. If you click on these diagrams, your computer will play the cards for you to follow. You can go back and forth as you wish.

Whilst this does not replace the actual feeling of holding cards, I hope you find it preferable to simply trying to imagine the play of the cards when reading a book.

## **PLAYING THE CARDS**

Bridge is a game made up from a standard deck of 52 playing cards, without requiring the use of jokers. There are 4 suits (clubs ♣, diamonds ♦, hearts ♥, spades ♠) with the ace being the highest card in any suit and the 2 representing the lowest. Along with the ace, the king, queen and jack are referred to as honour cards.

4 players are seated at the 4 compass points around a table;

- North/South & East/West form 2 partnerships
- Each partnership combines assets to defeat the other

The dealer (each player takes turns to deal) shuffles the cards and distributes them one-by-one (facedown) in a clockwise motion until each player has 13 cards. After all cards have been dealt, the players pick up them up and sort into suits. It is best to separate them alternately in black and red suits and in order (highest to lowest) within each suit.

Before the play commences, there must be an auction (bidding) for the contract. At the conclusion of the bidding, one player is designated the declarer. It is the aim of the declarer to make their contract (we will discuss the bidding in detail from the next lesson forwards).

## **WHAT IS A TRICK?**

The player on the left of declarer (defender) leads the first card (opening lead). The partner of the declarer (the dummy hand) faces their cards on the table. It is recommended each suit be arranged vertically so that the declarer can see the cards. Both defenders keep their cards hidden as does declarer.

It is declarer's responsibility to choose dummy's cards as well as their own. Once the opening lead is made, each player in turn must play a card in the suit lead (following suit). These cards are played one at a time in a clockwise direction.

Once each player has contributed a card, this is referred to as a 'trick'. The side (NS or EW) who wins the trick, has the responsibility to lead to the subsequent trick. They may choose any suit.

### PLAY WITHOUT A TRUMP SUIT (NO-TRUMPS)

The highest card in any suit led wins that trick. If no other player holds cards in a suit that is led, it does not matter how low that card may be, it is still the winning card.

You can therefore draw an inference that not only high cards are important. By leading a long suit repeatedly, you may eventually score tricks with low cards by virtue of the fact that your opponent's have run dry – it pays to be persistent.

Here is an example of a hand being played. Click on the diagram and you will be taken via the link to a browser. A bridge hand of 52 cards will be displayed. Each time you wish to play a card, simply click the 'Next' button. Please disregard the bidding.

### CLICK HAND DIAGRAM FOR NO-TRUMP PLAY ('NEXT' TO ADVANCE CARDS)

	<b>N</b> undefined ♠ K7 ♥ K1054 ♦ 543 ♣ J973	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S				1NT	P	P	P	
W	N	E	S											
			1NT											
P	P	P												
<b>W</b> undefined ♠ QJ1032 ♥ A32 ♦ J86 ♣ Q8		<b>E</b> undefined ♠ 986 ♥ 986 ♦ 1097 ♣ AK64												
	<b>S</b> undefined ♠ A54 ♥ QJ7 ♦ AKQ2 ♣ 1052	1NT S      NS: 0 EW: 0												

### DEFENDER'S PRINCIPLES

The declarer holds a significant advantage over the 2 defenders. This is because they can see their partner's (dummy's) cards and don't have the added burden of communicating with partner.

Both defenders can also see dummy's cards but not their partner's and must therefore rely on different techniques to achieve the best results for their side.

Before we discuss some of these defensive techniques, it's imperative to understand the following seating positions.

- 1<sup>st</sup> hand – the player who leads to a trick
- 2<sup>nd</sup> hand – the 2<sup>nd</sup> player on a trick
- 3<sup>rd</sup> hand – etc (I'm sure you get the drift....)

As a defender, there are 2 main principles when choosing the appropriate card.

- 1) 2<sup>nd</sup> hand low – if dummy has led a low card, it is normally best for a defender to also contribute a low card.

Why is this so? When a defender is in 2<sup>nd</sup> hand, their partner is in 4<sup>th</sup> hand. If 4<sup>th</sup> hand can win a trick, they may have an option of doing so cheaply. If 2<sup>nd</sup> hand has already risen with a high card, they remove all necessity for declarer to guess in 3<sup>rd</sup> hand play.

**CLICK HAND DIAGRAM FOR 2<sup>ND</sup> HAND LOW ('NEXT' TO ADVANCE CARDS)**

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">11</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px; text-align: center;">D</div> </div>	<b>N</b> undefined ♠ 32 ♥ A ♦ ♣	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	P	P	1NT
	W	N	E	S						
P	P	P	1NT							
<b>W</b> undefined ♠ Q5 ♥ 2 ♦ ♣		<b>E</b> undefined ♠ A4 ♥ 3 ♦ ♣								
	<b>S</b> undefined ♠ KJ ♥ 4 ♦ ♣	1NT S      NS: 0 EW: 0								

When playing the hand on your browser, it is possible to make your opponents hands disappear by clicking on the different compass positions. This will allow you to accurately picture what it would be like LIVE, not seeing your opponent's hands.

- 2) 3<sup>rd</sup> hand high – if 1<sup>st</sup> hand (partner) has led a low card and 2<sup>nd</sup> hand plays low, in order for 4<sup>th</sup> hand not to win cheaply, 3<sup>rd</sup> player must contribute a high card. If 1<sup>st</sup> hand leads a sufficiently high card, 3<sup>rd</sup> hand would not need to play high.

**PLAY WITH A TRUMP SUIT**

Until now, we have discussed how card play develops when there is no trump suit (no-trumps). If a card is led in any suit and an opponent does not hold a card of higher value in that suit, they cannot win the trick.

In trump play, however, a trump suit is decided during the bidding. This is considered to be the boss suit. The benefit of declaring a trump suit is that a player is able to win a trick even if their card is not high. A player must 'follow suit' to whichever card is led and can only 'trump in' when they no longer hold cards in the suit (void in led suit).

**CLICK HAND DIAGRAM FOR TRUMP PLAY ('NEXT' TO ADVANCE CARDS)**

	<b>N</b> undefined ♠ J83 ♥ 76 ♦ Q765 ♣ J1095	W    N    E    S P    P    P    1♥	
	<b>W</b> undefined ♠ KQ102 ♥ 9854 ♦ 8 ♣ K743	<b>E</b> undefined ♠ A974 ♥ 103 ♦ 10943 ♣ AQ2	
	<b>S</b> undefined ♠ 65 ♥ AKQJ2 ♦ AKJ2 ♣ 86		1♥ S                      NS: 0 EW: 0

**REPLAY THE SAME COMBINATION IN NO-TRUMPS ('NEXT' TO ADVANCE)**

	<b>N</b> North ♠ J83 ♥ 76 ♦ Q765 ♣ J1095	W    N    E    S P    P    P    1NT	
	<b>W</b> West ♠ KQ102 ♥ 9854 ♦ 8 ♣ K743	<b>E</b> East ♠ A974 ♥ 103 ♦ 10943 ♣ AQ2	
	<b>S</b> South ♠ 65 ♥ AKQJ2 ♦ AKJ2 ♣ 86		1NT S                      NS: 0 EW: 0

## **TERMS TO REMEMBER**

**Auction:** bidding to determine a contract

**Dealer:** the player who distributes the cards and gets first opportunity to bid

**Declarer:** player who wins the auction and selects their own cards and dummy's

**Defender:** the 2 opposition of the declarer

**Discard:** when a player cannot 'follow suit'

**Dummy:** partner of declarer, whose cards are faced on the table after opening lead

**Honour sequence:** a combination of touching honour cards

**No-trumps:** when the highest card in any suit wins

**Opening lead:** 1<sup>st</sup> lead made by the defender on the left of declarer

**Singleton:** when a player holds 1 card in a suit

**Trick:** 1 card played in turn by each player

**Trumps:** the boss suit chosen during the bidding (auction)

**Void:** when a player holds zero cards in a suit

## **AND.....**

'2<sup>nd</sup> hand low, 3<sup>rd</sup> hand high'

'Declarer should draw trumps'

'Defenders lead top of an honour sequence'