

MORRINSVILLE BRIDGE CLUB - CARD PLAY 101

A series of elementary card play tuition sessions at Morrinsville

This is ELEMENTARY and will be suitable for novices and even those currently having lessons

As declarer you control all your 26 cards

How you can do so to the best advantage

Without any stress or mental exertion

April 4 Topic:

Declarer Play - Notrumps



Contents:

- Page 2: Notes to be handed out (and talked about) at the start of the session (the red numbers refer to the board in which that point is illustrated)
- Pages 3-5 Travellers to go with the boards (a set of 9).
Place on top of the board with the bottom folded up so only the bidding can be seen.
Play the hand then open up the travellers and discuss the comments there
- Pages 6-8 Hand records with expanded comments to be handed out at the end

CardPlay 101: Declarer: Notrumps

[1] Remember whose side you are on!

Your objective is opposite to theirs!

You should not be leading the suit the opponents have decided to lead.

Even if you are strong in that suit, don't tip them off and they will lead it again for you!

Otherwise you just help them find out what really is your weak suit.

[2] Don't block your suits

When you have a suit with unequal length in the two hands always play the high card(s) from the *hand with fewer cards* first. For example:

[a] You have ♣ K Q 7 opposite ♣ A J 8 5
Win with the ♣ K first then ♣ Q ⑤

Then the third round is won in the (only) hand with more winner(s) in.

Similarly if you are missing top card(s)

[b] You have ♦ Q J 4 opposite ♦ K 10 5 3
Lead ♦ Q first then ♦ J ⑥

If you are dealt a combination such as A K alone you have a problem (for which there might or might not be a solution!)

But never create such a situation.

Short hand Sooner; Long hand Later

[3] Don't grab your "easy" tricks too soon

Many an "own goal" has been scored by declarer grabbing top-card winners too soon!

For example: You have ♠ A and ♥ K Q J
They have ♠ K Q J and ♥ A

Lead ♠ A and **they** get the next three tricks

Lead ♥ K and **you** get the next three tricks

Look for extra tricks with **nearly-high honours** ③⑨ and **suits with lots of cards** ① and set them up first.

Give up trick(s) to the opponents early. That way they can do less damage when they get the lead.

If you lose trick 2 you have probably done it right!

[4] Usually: play "second hand low" when opponents lead the suit

But there are a number of exceptions some of which are more obvious than others.

For example (as in the case of the opening lead)

You have: dummy ♠ Q 9
your hand ♠ J 4 3

♠ 6 led You can **make sure** of one trick by playing low from dummy. ②

Your own ♠ J brings out their ♠ A or ♠ K **without getting gobbled up** as the ♠ Q would.

The same applies if dummy has ♠ K rather than ♠ Q

You have: dummy ♥ A 7 5
your hand ♥ Q 10 6

♥ 4 led You can make sure of two tricks by playing ♥ 5 from dummy. (**But** if you could be in danger if you lose the lead (if say, another suit is unprotected) **and** have the tricks you need in top cards don't take the risk. Play ♥ A in that case). ⑦

BUT: dummy ♣ K 4
your hand ♣ 6 5 2

♣ 3 led ("Its now or never"). Play ♣ K and hope LH opponent has the ♣ A. If you play ♣ 4 you won't make any tricks regardless of who holds ♣ A.

[5] Watch the opponent's cards!

An opponent's early discard is always revealing. For example: You have: dummy ♣ 9 7 5 3

your hand ♣ A K Q 10 ④

You lead ♣ A K and LH opponent discards on the second one. That marks RH opponent with ♣ J 8. Lead another suit to dummy then lead a club and you will make both ♣ Q and ♣ 10.

Another example:

You have: dummy ♦ Q 9 7 5 3
your hand ♦ A K 4

You lead ♦ A K first. RH opponent plays ♦ 10 then discards on the next round. You can now lead the ♦ 4 and be sure to win with dummy's ♦ 9 ⑧

*If an opponent has no cards in a suit arrange it so he plays **last** on the trick and all you need to do is **beat the other opponents card**.*

Board 1 Dealer N Vul none
 N E S W
 p p 1NT all pass

Board 2 Dealer E Vul NS
 E S W N
 p 1NT p 2NT
 all pass

Board 3 Dealer S Vul EW
 S W N E
 p p 1NT X
 all pass

"Many small cards" are a source of tricks

South has six top tricks and the only realistic chance for another is in the club suit. The eight small clubs should produce a winner after he loses three tricks in the suit. He should lead clubs every time he gets the lead.

1		♠ 874	Dir: N	
		♥ A52	Vul: None	
		♦ K97		
		♣ 9753		
♠	Q10653		♠	J92
♥	QJ		♥	10987
♦	QJ102		♦	864
♣	J10		♣	AKQ
		♠	AK	
7		♥	K643	
9	10	♦	A53	
14		♣	8642	
				♣♦♥♠NT
				N 2 1 1 - 1
				S 2 1 1 - 1
				E - - - 1 -
				W - - - 1 -

Play low from dummy at trick 1

On a spade lead South must play low from dummy not ♠Q. Retaining ♠Q in dummy prevents declarer's ♠J being captured on the next trick. After making one spade trick South can cash seven more top tricks in the red suits.

2		♠ Q9	Dir: E	
		♥ AQ7	Vul: N-S	
		♦ QJ53		
		♣ 10862		
♠	K10762		♠	A85
♥	9862		♥	J104
♦	86		♦	10972
♣	AK		♣	Q75
		♠	J43	
11		♥	K53	
10	7	♦	AK4	
12		♣	J943	
				♣♦♥♠NT
				N 2 2 - - 2
				S 2 2 - - 2
				E - - 1 1 -
				W - - 1 1 -

[Note: West's double shows 16+ and is primarily for penalties]

Don't grab "easy" tricks too soon

North can't hope to make 1NT but by immediately losing to ♥A he can make 3 heart tricks and escape for 1 down [-100]. If he grabs all his aces he will probably get only one more trick and be 3 down [-500].

3		♠ A64	Dir: S	
		♥ KQ62	Vul: E-W	
		♦ A73		
		♣ 874		
♠	1092		♠	KQJ7
♥	983		♥	A75
♦	QJ104		♦	K65
♣	K106		♣	QJ3
		♠	853	
13		♥	J104	
6	18	♦	982	
5		♣	A952	
				♣♦♥♠NT
				N - - - -
				S - - - -
				E 1 2 1 2 1
				W 1 2 1 2 1

Board 4 Dealer W Vul all
W N E S
1NT all pass

Watch the opponents cards

West has six top tricks and ♣10 is likely to yield another.

On cashing ♣AK North's discard on the second round marks South with ♣J842.

Then declarer leads to ♦A in dummy and leads a club to his ♣10 thereby preventing South's ♣J winning a trick.

4		♠ Q743	Dir: W
		♥ KJ542	Vul: Both
		♦ Q75	
		♣ 6	
♠ 1096		♠ J82	
♥ A108		♥ 973	
♦ 642		♦ AK8	
♣ AKQ10		♣ 9753	
8		♠ AK5	♣♦♥♠NT
13	8	♥ Q6	N - - 3 2 -
11		♦ J1093	S - - 3 2 -
		♣ J842	E 1 - - - 1
			W 1 - - - 1

Board 5 Dealer N Vul NS
N E S W
1NT all pass

Don't block your suit

North has his seven tricks with his four clubs and three aces.

But he must play the clubs in the right order. That is ♣K and ♣Q (*shorter hand*) first, then across to the ♣A and ♣J.

If he were to win with ♣A first he would be cut off from ♣J and be one trick short.

5		♠ 1084	Dir: N
		♥ A532	Vul: N-S
		♦ A84	
		♣ KQ7	
♠ 962		♠ KQJ3	
♥ KQ107		♥ J9	
♦ QJ105		♦ K97	
♣ 93		♣ 10642	
13		♠ A75	♣♦♥♠NT
8	10	♥ 864	N 1 - - - 1
9		♦ 632	S 1 - - - 1
		♣ AJ85	E - 2 - - -
			W - 2 - - -

Board 6 Dealer E Vul EW
E S W N
1♥ p 1NT p
3NT all pass

Don't grab "easy" tricks too soon and Don't block your suit

West must set up his three club tricks first by leading ♣Q (*shorter hand*) then ♣J.

Even if South refuses to take his ♣A until the third round West can lead to ♥J in his hand to cash his last club.

6		♠ QJ1075	Dir: E
		♥ 975	Vul: E-W
		♦ KJ4	
		♣ 86	
♠ 642		♠ AK	
♥ J62		♥ AKQ4	
♦ Q106		♦ 9753	
♣ K1053		♣ QJ4	
7		♠ 983	♣♦♥♠NT
8	19	♥ 1083	N - - - 1 -
8		♦ A82	S - - - 1 -
		♣ A972	E 3 2 3 - 3
			W 3 2 3 - 3

Board 7 Dealer S Vul all
S W N E
1NT p 3NT all pass

Board 8 Dealer W Vul none
W N E S
1♥ p 1NT all pass

Board 9 Dealer N Vul EW
N E S W
p 1NT p 6NT
all pass

An exception to "play low from dummy at trick 1"

South must avoid allowing East to lead a spade through his precariously guarded ♠K. As he has his nine tricks all in top cards South must win the likely heart lead with ♥A. To play low hoping his ♥Q will win is an unacceptable risk in this situation.

Watch the opponents cards

Two aces and five clubs give declarer his contract. He must play ♣A and ♣K and note South's second round discard after the fall of ♣10. That means he can win with the ♣9 on the third round (assuming North doesn't play ♣J) and not lose any club tricks.

Don't grab "easy" tricks too soon

East has only nine top tricks but the ♣K Q J 10 will yield three more tricks for certain. So he must give up a trick to the ♣A immediately (trick 2 is not too soon!)

7		♠ 75 ♥ A75 ♦ AKQJ ♣ Q642	Dir: S Vul: Both
♠ A92 ♥ J98432 ♦ 92 ♣ 97	♠ QJ10843 ♥ K ♦ 84 ♣ J1083	♠ K6 ♥ Q106 ♦ 107653 ♣ AK5	♣♦♥♠NT N 4 4 1 - 1 S 4 5 2 - 5 E - - - 1 - W - - - 1 -
16	5	7	12

8		♠ Q103 ♥ QJ105 ♦ Q4 ♣ J862	Dir: W Vul: None
♠ J64 ♥ K8642 ♦ A9 ♣ AK4	♠ A9 ♥ 93 ♦ 7652 ♣ Q9753	♠ K8752 ♥ A7 ♦ KJ1083 ♣ 10	♣♦♥♠NT N - 1 - 3 - S - 1 - 3 - E 3 - 1 - 2 W 3 - 1 - 2
8	15	6	11

9		♠ 743 ♥ 109832 ♦ 10975 ♣ A	Dir: N Vul: E-W
♠ AK ♥ A64 ♦ AJ42 ♣ KQ62	♠ 652 ♥ KQJ ♦ KQ3 ♣ J1074	♠ QJ1098 ♥ 75 ♦ 86 ♣ 9853	♣♦♥♠NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 6 6 4 3 6 W 6 6 4 3 6
4	21	12	3

Board 1 **Dealer N** **Vul none**
N **E** **S** **W**
p **p** **1NT** **all pass**

Board 2 **Dealer E** **Vul NS**
E **S** **W** **N**
p **1NT** **p** **2NT**
all pass

Board 3 **Dealer S** **Vul EW**
S **W** **N** **E**
p **p** **1NT** **X**
all pass

"Many small cards" are a source of tricks

South has six top tricks (A and K in every suit except clubs) and the only realistic chance for another is in the club suit.

The eight small clubs should produce a winner after he loses three tricks in the suit. If one opponent has four (or five) clubs South can never make 1NT.

Declarer must lead clubs every time he gets the lead.

East, on defence, is also in the spotlight. He must remember whose side he is on, and not cash all his top clubs straight away. To do so would just make declarer's task a lot easier. East should return the suit his partner led (presumably spades)

1	♠ 874	Dir: N	Vul: None
	♥ A52		
	♦ K97		
	♣ 9753		
	♠ Q10653	♠ J92	
	♥ QJ	♥ 10987	
	♦ QJ102	♦ 864	
	♣ J10	♣ AKQ	
	7	♠ AK	♣♦♥♠NT
	9	♥ K643	
	10	♦ A53	N 2 1 1 - 1
	14	♣ 8642	S 2 1 1 - 1
			E - - - 1 -
			W - - - 1 -

Play low from dummy at trick 1

On a spade lead South must play low from dummy not ♠Q.

Retaining ♠Q in dummy prevents declarer's ♠J being captured on the next trick.

If the ♠Q has been squandered at trick 1 the defence will take the first 7 tricks. That's 2 down and a bit lucky East can't use his ♣Q which would make it 3 down.

After making one spade trick South can cash 7 more top tricks in the red suits.

Declarer also needs to avoid blocking the diamonds. He must win the first rounds in the short hand, that is ♦A and ♦K.

2	♠ Q9	Dir: E	Vul: N-S
	♥ AQ7		
	♦ QJ53		
	♣ 10862		
	♠ K10762	♠ A85	
	♥ 9862	♥ J104	
	♦ 86	♦ 10972	
	♣ AK	♣ Q75	
	11	♠ J43	♣♦♥♠NT
	10	♥ K53	
	7	♦ AK4	N 2 2 - - 2
	12	♣ J943	S 2 2 - - 2
			E - - 1 1 -
			W - - 1 1 -

Don't grab "easy" tricks too soon

A note on the bidding: West's double shows 16+ and is primarily for penalties, although partner should bid if he is very weak AND has a long suit.

North can't hope to make 1NT but by immediately losing to ♥A he can make three heart tricks and escape for 1 down.

That scores -100, not a bad outcome for a side which has only 18 high-card points.

If he grabs all his aces he will probably make only one more trick and be 3 down. That would be -500, a very bad result.

3	♠ A64	Dir: S	Vul: E-W
	♥ KQ62		
	♦ A73		
	♣ 874		
	♠ 1092	♠ KQJ7	
	♥ 983	♥ A75	
	♦ QJ104	♦ K65	
	♣ K106	♣ QJ3	
	13	♠ 853	♣♦♥♠NT
	6	♥ J104	
	16	♦ 982	N - - - - -
	5	♣ A952	S - - - - -
			E 1 2 1 2 1
			W 1 2 1 2 1

Board 4 Dealer W Vul all
 W N E S
 1NT all pass

Board 5 Dealer N Vul NS
 N E S W
 1NT all pass

Board 6 Dealer E Vul EW
 E S W N
 1♥ p 1NT p
 3NT all pass

Watch the opponents cards

On the likely heart lead declarer is looking at a lot of losers in the major suits.

But happily he has six top tricks and ♣10 is likely to yield another.

On cashing ♣AK North's discard on the second round reveals South had started with ♣J842.

Then declarer leads to ♦A in dummy and leads a club to his ♣10 thereby preventing South's ♣J winning a trick.

This is an example of a "marked finesse". Declarer only needs to beat South's card to make sure of winning the trick.

4	♠ Q743	Dir: W
	♥ KJ542	
	♦ Q75	
	♣ 6	
♠ 1096		♠ J82
♥ A108		♥ 973
♦ 642		♦ AK8
♣ AKQ10		♣ 9753
8	♠ AK5	
13	♥ Q6	
11	♦ J1093	
	♣ J842	
		♣♦♥♠NT
		N - - 3 2 -
		S - - 3 2 -
		E 1 - - - 1
		W 1 - - - 1

Don't block your suit

North has his seven tricks with his four clubs and three aces.

The likely spade lead will remove the only entry to dummy outside the club suit.

That makes it essential declarer plays the clubs in the right order.

That is win the first two rounds of clubs with ♣K and ♣Q (*shorter hand*), then lead the ♣7 to enter dummy for the ♣A and ♣J.

If declarer were to win with ♣A first he would be cut off from dummy's ♣J and be one trick short.

5	♠ 1084	Dir: N
	♥ A532	
	♦ A84	
	♣ KQ7	
♠ 962		♠ KQJ3
♥ KQ107		♥ J9
♦ QJ105		♦ K97
♣ 93		♣ 10642
13	♠ A75	
8	♥ 864	
10	♦ 632	
9	♣ AJ85	
		♣♦♥♠NT
		N 1 - - - 1
		S 1 - - - 1
		E - 2 - - -
		W - 2 - - -

Don't grab "easy" tricks too soon and Don't block your suit

Declarer has six top tricks in hearts and spades so needs three more.

He gets three club tricks after losing to ♣A.

West must set up his three club tricks first by leading ♣Q (*shorter hand*) then, if it is allowed to win, ♣J.

South can be awkward by refusing to take his ♣A until the third round, denying declarer a club entry to his hand.

But in that case West is able to lead to his ♥J to cash his last club.

6	♠ QJ1075	Dir: E
	♥ 975	
	♦ KJ4	
	♣ 86	
♠ 642		♠ AK
♥ J62		♥ AKQ4
♦ Q106		♦ 9753
♣ K1053		♣ QJ4
7	♠ 983	
6	♥ 1083	
19	♦ A82	
8	♣ A972	
		♣♦♥♠NT
		N - - - 1 -
		S - - - 1 -
		E 3 2 3 - 3
		W 3 2 3 - 3

Board 7 Dealer S Vul all
 S W N E
 1NT p 3NT p
 all pass

Board 8 Dealer W Vul none
 W N E S
 1♥ p 1NT all pass

Board 9 Dealer N Vul EW
 N E S W
 p 1NT p 6NT
 all pass

An exception to "play low from dummy at trick 1"

Normally declarer would play low from dummy on the heart lead so he will also win with his ♥Q sooner or later.

But things are *not* normal here as South must avoid allowing East to lead a spade through his precariously guarded ♠K.

As he has his nine tricks all in top cards South must win the first trick with ♥A.

To play low hoping his ♥Q will win is an unacceptable risk in this situation.

Happily the ♥K falls under the ♥A and declarer makes his ♥Q after all.

Watch the opponents cards

Two aces and five clubs should provide the seven tricks declarer needs.

But he needs to watch the opponents cards carefully.

He leads his ♣A and ♣K (short hand first) and notices South follows first with ♣10 then discards on the next trick.

That reveals North had started with ♣J862.

So when declarer leads his third club he only needs to beat North's card to be sure of winning that trick. And, whatever North plays, dummy's fourth club will be higher than North's one.

Don't grab "easy" tricks too soon

East has only nine top tricks but the ♣K Q J 10 will yield three more tricks for certain.

So he must lose to the ♣A immediately.

Although it doesn't do any harm cashing a few red-suit winners early on, neither does it do any good!

Declarer should stay focused on the plan and lead clubs at trick 2.

And if he is allowed to win the first club (impossible on this layout) he should keep on leading clubs until the ♣A is taken.

7		♠ 75 ♥ A75 ♦ AKQJ ♣ Q642	Dir: S Vul: Both
♠ A92 ♥ J98432 ♦ 92 ♣ 97	♠ QJ10843 ♥ K ♦ 84 ♣ J1083		
16	♠ K6 ♥ Q106 ♦ 107653 ♣ AK5	♣♦♥♠NT N 4 4 1 - 1 S 4 5 2 - 5 E - - - 1 - W - - - 1 -	
5	7		
12			

8		♠ Q103 ♥ QJ105 ♦ Q4 ♣ J862	Dir: W Vul: None
♠ J64 ♥ K8642 ♦ A9 ♣ AK4	♠ A9 ♥ 93 ♦ 7652 ♣ Q9753		
8	♠ K8752 ♥ A7 ♦ KJ1083 ♣ 10	♣♦♥♠NT N - 1 - 3 - S - 1 - 3 - E 3 - 1 - 2 W 3 - 1 - 2	
15	6		
11			

9		♠ 743 ♥ 109832 ♦ 10975 ♣ A	Dir: N Vul: E-W
♠ AK ♥ A64 ♦ AJ42 ♣ KQ62	♠ 652 ♥ KQJ ♦ KQ3 ♣ J1074		
4	♠ QJ1098 ♥ 75 ♦ 86 ♣ 9853	♣♦♥♠NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 6 6 4 3 6 W 6 6 4 3 6	
21	12		
3			