

# How To Plan a NT Contract

From start of the hand you always need to have a plan of campaign in your head

- Likely to change as the game develops

Opening lead is done and dummy comes down:

- Look to see if you have stopper in the suit led!!
- Count how many top tricks you have
- Then look at safest way to establish extra tricks needed

# How To Plan a NT Contract

What does Top Tricks mean?

It means tricks that are ready to cash

With ♣ K Q J 2 opposite ♣ T 9 7, for example, you would have no top tricks in clubs.

- You have to knock defender's ace before you score any tricks in clubs

Let's go through this process on a simple deal:

♠ 8 5  
♥ A Q T 4  
♦ A J 6 3  
♣ J 8 6

♠ K Q J T 3  
♥ 9 8 3  
♦ Q T 2  
♣ 7 2

♠ 9 7 6 2  
♥ 7 5 2  
♦ 9 7 5  
♣ A 5 3

♠ A 4  
♥ K J 6  
♦ K 8 4  
♣ K Q T 9 4

West leads ♠ K against 3NT. How you plan the play?

- 1- How many top tricks: 7 (2 more is needed)
- 2- Clubs look good by knocking the ace, but is it safe?  
**NO! Defenders will win and take at least 4 spades**
- 3- Can Diamonds yield the extra two tricks needed?

## Let's change that last deal slightly

♠ 8 6 5  
♥ A Q T 4  
♦ A J 6 3  
♣ J 8

♠ K T 7 2  
♥ 9 8 3  
♦ T 9 2  
♣ 7 6 2

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

♠ A 4  
♥ K J 6  
♦ K 8 4  
♣ K Q T 9 4

West leads ♠ 2 against 3NT, East plays the Jack. What is your plan?

- 1- How many top tricks: 7 (2 more is needed)
- 2- Clubs look good by knocking the ace
- 3- Can Diamonds yield the extra two tricks needed?

Which is the safest way and why?

## Decision decisions !!: Which suit to establish?

♠ 7 3  
♥ 7 5  
♦ A K Q 7 2  
♣ 9 8 6 3

♠ T 6  
♥ Q T 8 4 2  
♦ J 9 6 3  
♣ A 5

♠ J 9 8 5 2  
♥ J 9 6 3  
♦ T 5  
♣ K 7

♠ A K Q 4  
♥ A K  
♦ 8 4  
♣ Q J T 4 2

West leads ♥ 4 to East's jack against your 3NT, to king. What is your plan?

1- How many top tricks: 8 (1 more is needed)

2- Clubs; need to knock ace and king

Is this safe and why?

3- Can Diamonds yield the extra trick?

How do you play it?

## Decision decisions !!: Let's change slightly

♠ 7 3  
♥ 7 5  
♦ A K Q 7 2  
♣ 9 8 6 3

♠ A K 8 4  
♥ A K  
♦ 8 4  
♣ Q J T 4 2

West leads ♥ 4 to East's jack against your 3NT, to king. What is your plan?

1- How many top tricks: 7 (2 more is needed)

2- Clubs; need to knock ace and king

**Is this safe and why?**

3- Can Diamonds yield the extra trick?

**How do you play it?**

## Let's look at that dreaded 1NT contract

♠ 7 5 2  
♥ A J T 4  
♦ A K 7 3  
♣ J 4

♠ Q J 6 3  
♥ 8 5  
♦ J 9 8 4  
♣ A Q 5

♠ K 9 4  
♥ Q 9 6 2  
♦ T 6  
♣ K 7 6 2

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

West leads ♠ 3 against your 1NT. How would you plan to play?

- 1- How many top tricks: 6 (1 more is needed)
- 2- What do you know about spades distribution?
- 3- What about Diamonds?

**A 3-3 break will give us the 7<sup>th</sup> needed trick**

- 4- What about hearts finesse?

**A successful finesse will yield the extra trick**

- 5- What about clubs?

## Let's plan to play some NT contracts

♠ 8 7  
♥ K 3  
♦ Q 7 6 3  
♣ J T 8 6 2

♠ A K  
♥ A Q J 4  
♦ K J 2  
♣ Q 9 7 4

West leads ♠ 4 to against your 3NT. Plan the play.

1- How many top tricks?

2- Clubs?

Is this safe and why?

3- Can Diamonds yield the extra trick?

If this is the suit, what are you hoping for and how to play it?



## Let's plan to play some NT contracts

♠ A Q  
♥ K 9 4  
♦ Q 6 3  
♣ A J 9 6 4

♠ J 8 6 4  
♥ A 7 3  
♦ A 7  
♣ Q T 7 3

West leads ♦ 5 against your 3NT. Plan the play (will you play dummy's ♦ Q at trick 1?).

- 1- How many top tricks?
- 2- Clubs is obviously your best suit  
Who has the king of C?
- 3- That dictates your plan at trick 1?

# How To Plan a NT Contract

## North

♠ 7 3  
♥ 7 5  
♦ A K Q 7 2  
♣ 9 8 6 3

## Hand 1

Dealer South

♠ T 6  
♥ Q T 8 4 2  
♦ J 9 6 3  
♣ A 5

♠ J 9 8 5 2  
♥ J 9 6 3  
♦ T 5  
♣ K 7

♠ A K Q 4  
♥ A K  
♦ 8 4  
♣ Q J T 4 2

# How To Plan a NT Contract

East

♠ 7 3  
♥ 7 5  
♦ A K Q 7 2  
♣ 9 8 6 3

Hand 2

Dealer West

♠ T 6 2  
♥ Q T 8 4 2  
♦ J 9 6  
♣ A 5

♠ Q J 9 5  
♥ J 9 6 3  
♦ T 5 3  
♣ K 7

♠ A K 8 4  
♥ A K  
♦ 8 4  
♣ Q J T 4 2

# How To Plan a NT Contract

## South

♠ Q J 5  
♥ 6 4  
♦ A K 9 7 5 3  
♣ 6 4

## Hand 3

Dealer North

♠ K 7 2  
♥ Q J T 9 2  
♦ J 8  
♣ Q T 5

♠ T 8 6 3  
♥ 8 7 5  
♦ Q T 4  
♣ K 9 3

♠ A 9 4  
♥ A K 3  
♦ 6 2  
♣ A J 8 7 2

# How To Plan a NT Contract

## West

♠ 7 5  
♥ T 6 2  
♦ 9 7 3  
♣ A T 7 6 2

♠ J 6 3 2  
♥ Q 9 4  
♦ Q T 8 2  
♣ Q 9

♠ A K 8 4  
♥ A K 7  
♦ A K 5  
♣ 8 5 3

## Hand 4

Dealer East

♠ Q T 9  
♥ J 8 5 3  
♦ J 6 4  
♣ K J 4

# How To Plan a NT Contract

North

♠ 7 3  
♥ Q 5  
♦ A J T 9 4 2  
♣ J T 5

Hand 5

Dealer South

♠ A T 8 6 2  
♥ 9 8 3  
♦ 7 6  
♣ K 7 3

♠ J 9 4  
♥ T 7 4 2  
♦ K 8 5  
♣ 8 6 2

♠ K Q 5  
♥ A K J 6  
♦ Q 3  
♣ A Q 9 4

# How To Plan a NT Contract

East

♠ K 6  
♥ K 7 5 4  
♦ K J T 3  
♣ Q 8 5

Hand 6

Dealer West

♠ Q T 8 5 2  
♥ T 8  
♦ 8 4 2  
♣ K 7 3

♠ J 9 4  
♥ Q J 9 3  
♦ A 7  
♣ T 9 6 4

♠ A 7 3  
♥ A 6 2  
♦ Q 9 6 5  
♣ A J 2

# How To Plan a NT Contract

South

♠ 6 5 2  
♥ K T 5  
♦ A Q 9  
♣ Q 7 4 3

Hand 7

Dealer North

♠ K Q J T 7 3  
♥ 8 2  
♦ J 5 2  
♣ K 8

♠ 4  
♥ J 9 7 6 4  
♦ 7 6 4 3  
♣ J T 5

♠ A 9 8  
♥ A Q 3  
♦ K T 8  
♣ A 9 6 2