

Improvers' Lesson 5: Declarer Play in Suit Contracts

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ K J 6 3
♥ Q 8 7 5
♦ 10 5 3 2
♣ 4

♠ 2
♥ A K 3 2
♦ Q 9 4
♣ K 10 7 6 3

♠ 5 4
♥ 9 6 4
♦ A J 8 7 6
♣ J 9 5

♠ A Q 10 9 8 7
♥ J 10
♦ K
♣ A Q 8 2

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1 ♠
Dbl	2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

Drawing trumps & Promoting honours

Lead: ♥ A
Then West switches to a low diamond to show an honour. Declarer trumps the 2nd diamond and draws trumps in two rounds.

Declarer now plays the ♥ J which forces out the ♥ K. Now they can ruff two small clubs and discard the ♣ Q on the ♥ Q for 10 tricks.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A
♥ A J 10 9 6
♦ A 3
♣ J 10 9 8 3

♠ Q J 9 4 2
♥ K Q 7 5
♦ 10 9 8 6
♣ —

♠ K 8 7 5
♥ 8 3 2
♦ K 4 2
♣ Q 5 2

♠ 10 6 3
♥ 4
♦ Q J 7 5
♣ A K 7 6 4

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	5 ♣	All pass	

Finessing
Lead: ♠ Q

Declarer wins ♠ A and plays a trump to the ace. Discovering the void declarer now returns to dummy with a spade ruff to run the ♣ J. Draw the last trump and take a losing diamond finesse. Cross-ruff the rest of the hand.

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K 7
♥ J 10 9 7
♦ Q 10 9 8 2
♣ 9 5

♠ J 10 5 4 3
♥ K 8 6
♦ K 3
♣ Q J 10

♠ A 9 6 2
♥ A Q 3
♦ A 4
♣ K 8 6 3

♠ Q 8
♥ 5 4 2
♦ J 7 6 5
♣ A 7 4 2

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 ♣	Pass
1 ♠		3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

Drawing trumps & Promoting honours

Lead: ♥ J
Declarer wins the heart lead with the ♥ A and plays ace and another spade. The remaining two trumps fall together. Declarer now loses a trick to the ♣ A.

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A 7 5 3
♥ 9 7 6
♦ K 4
♣ K J 7 5

♠ Q 10 8
♥ Q 8 2
♦ J 10 9 2
♣ 10 6 3

♠ J 2
♥ K 5 4 3
♦ A Q 5
♣ 9 8 4 2

♠ K 9 6 4
♥ A J 10
♦ 8 7 6 3
♣ A Q

West	North	East	South
	2 ♣	Pass	1 NT
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	2 ♠

Unblocking
Lead: ♦ J

East wins the first two diamonds, then switches to ♥ 3 showing an honour. Declarer must win with the ♥ A, then unblocks ♣ A and ♣ Q. Now plays ♠ K then ♠ A (leaving last top trump out). Next the ♣ K and ♣ J discarding two losing hearts in South's hand. Cross ruff the rest losing only to ♠ Q for 10 tricks

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A 3
♥ Q J 10 9 2
♦ J 6 3
♣ A K 10

♠ 10 9 8 4
♥ A 7 5
♦ 10 9 8 7 2
♣ J

♠ K 7 5 2
♥ 3
♦ K Q 5 4
♣ 9 8 6 4

♠ Q J 6
♥ K 8 6 4
♦ A
♣ Q 7 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			4 ♥
All pass			

Establish long side suit

Lead: ♦ K
Declarer wins the diamond lead with the ♦ A and draws trumps after forcing out the ace. Now three rounds of clubs, cross to dummy with a diamond ruff and discard the remaining small diamond and the ♠ 3 on the ♣ Q and the ♣ 7.

Board 7
East Deals
Both Vul

♠ K
♥ A K 6 2
♦ A 7 4
♣ K Q 5 3 2

♠ J 9 7 6 5
♥ 7 4
♦ 9 6 3 2
♣ 8 4

♠ Q 10 3 2
♥ Q J 5
♦ Q 10 8
♣ A 10 6

♠ A 8 4
♥ 10 9 8 3
♦ K J 5
♣ J 9 7

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	Pass	Pass
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	1 ♥

Establish long side suit
Lead: ♠ 5

Declarer wins ♠ K and plays ♥ A and ♥ K leaving the ♥ Q out. Now lead a small club towards dummy's ♣ J97 and continue to play clubs until the suit is set up.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ K J 9 8
♥ 2
♦ K 10 8 6 4
♣ J 9 8

♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ 7 6 3
♦ 3
♣ K 6 5 4 3

♠ A 2
♥ A K Q 10 8 4
♦ A Q 7 2
♣ A

♠ 6 4 3
♥ J 9 5
♦ J 9 5
♣ Q 10 7 2

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 ♥ ¹	Pass	6 ♥	All pass

1. stronger than bidding 4 ♥

Ruffing in Dummy

Lead: ♣ 2
Declarer wins ♣ A and sees that there are 4 potential losers. Before drawing trumps, declarer plays ♦ A and ruffs a diamond.

Now declarer discards the ♠ 2 on the ♣ K and returns to their hand with the ♥ A, ruffs another diamond then draws trumps.

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 7
♥ A 9 5 3
♦ 10 9 7 5
♣ 9 4 3

♠ A J 6 5
♥ J
♦ K 8 3
♣ K Q 10 7 2

♠ Q 10 8 2
♥ K Q 6 4
♦ Q J 6
♣ J 5

♠ K 4 3
♥ 10 8 7 2
♦ A 4 2
♣ A 8 6

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

Finessing
Lead: ♦ 10

Declarer plays ♦ Q, South wins and plays back a ♦. Declarer wins ♦ J. Declarer has 3 aces to lose and can't afford to lose a spade as well. Play ♠ Q. If not covered by ♠ K, let it run. Repeat the finesse and draw the last trump. Lose only the ♣ A and ♥ A.