

DEVELOPING LONG SUITS
(in No Trump and in Suit Contracts)
by Maritha Pottenger

1. Force Out Higher Honors

QJ10xx opposite 9xx

Give up two tricks (to Ace and King) to establish 3 tricks.

2. Duck a Trick

AKxxx opposite xxx

Give up one trick (playing low from both hands). If the suit breaks 3-2, you establish 4 tricks. This is safer than playing AK which risks losing two tricks in the suit when it breaks 4-1, before tricks can be established in another suit.

3. Play Top Winners

AKQxx opposite xx

Play Ace, King, Queen. If the suit breaks 3-3, you get 5 tricks. If the suit breaks 4-2, give up the fourth trick to establish the fifth card as a winner.

4. Finesse

AQ109x opposite xx

Finesse the 9. Whether it wins or not, finesse the 10 next.

AJ109x opposite xxx

Finesse the 9. Whether it wins or not, finesse the 10 next.

AKJ109 opposite xxx

Cash Ace. Then finesse the 9.

AKJT9 opposite xx

Finesse the 9. If it works, finesse the 10 next.

AQxxx opposite xxx

Duck one trick completely. Then finesse the Queen.

Qxx opposite J9x

Low to the Queen. Then low to the 9.

Kxx opposite J9x

Low to the King. Then low to the 9.

K10x opposite xxx

Low to the 10. Then low to the King.

QJ9 opposite xxx

Low to the Jack. Then low to the Queen.

KQ10 opposite xxx

Low to the King. If fourth hand wins, finesse the 10 next.

But good defenders will duck the first round to leave you with a 50-50 guess. Lead to the Queen or finesse the 10 depending on which defender is more likely to hold Ace.

AJ9 opposite xxx

Low to the 9. Then low to the Jack.

Q109x opposite Axxx

Ace. Then low to the 10.

Q1098 opposite Axxx

Run the 10 toward Ace. If it loses to Jack, run Queen next.

Axxx opposite KJ10x

Ace, then low to the 10.

Suit Contracts Only

5. Take a Ruffing Finesse

Dummy has KQJ10x opposite your void. Play the King. If the Ace is played, trump and return to dummy to enjoy the long suit (discarding losers). If the Ace is not played, discard a loser. If the Ace is on your right, you lose no tricks. If the Ace is on your left, you lose one.

6. Ruff to Establish a Long Suit

Suppose that spades are trumps. You have pulled trumps and now have ♠xxx ♥x ♦x ♣xxx. Dummy ♠-♥A ♦Axxxx ♣AK. Play the ♦A and ruff a diamond. Return to dummy with the ♥A and ruff a third diamond. Return again with the ♣K and ruff a fourth diamond. Finally, play to the ♣A to discard the losing club on fifth diamond that is now good if suit breaks 4-3, a 62% chance.