**(123) Declarer Play: Suits - Trump Fits**

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**General**

When we play a trump contract one of the most powerful parts of our hand is our fit. Fits produce tricks! The larger our fit, the more trump we have, and trump have a way of turning into tricks – by setting up a long suit, ruffing losers, etc. The concept of the Law of Total Tricks (LOTT) is all about the power of fit – the larger our fit the more we should bid. Let’s examine fit in more detail!

**Basic Fit – 8 Cards**

When we have only an 8-card fit we have control of the hand, but not a plethora of trump. A bad break or mismanaging our trump can lead to disaster. In determining how to play our hand (and specifically how to make use of our trump suit) we must consider the type of 8-card fit we have. Let’s look at some examples to help us explore this in more detail.

***6-2 Fits***

6-2 Fits (or 7-1/8-0 fits) are some of the simplest trump suits to play. We will count losers from the long side and not be able to ruff many (usually not any) of our losers in the short side. We will be in firm control of the hand, since even if we get a bad break we will have more trump than the Defenders.

***5-3 Fits***

With 5-3 fits we have fewer trump in our hand and thus are more susceptible to losing control of the hand if the outstanding trump splits poorly (4-1 or 5-0). It also means that we have more losers (cards in the other suits – potential losers) in our hand to deal with – remember we count losers from the long side. However, Partner has 3 trump and we may be able to ruff some of these outside losers. But since we only have an 8-card fit (not a large fit) then if we draw trump (even if trump split well, 3-2) we will no longer have any trump remaining in Partner’s hand to ruff with. Thus, we must do our ruffing before drawing all the trump.

***4-4 Fits***

If we have a 4-4 fit then we no longer have a long suit (or a long side), so we can count losers from either side and set up either hand. 4-4 fits are the most flexible hands to play, but the lack of a long trump suit makes us even more susceptible of losing control of the hand if there is a bad trump break (5-0 or 4-1). Even if there is a 3-2 trump split, our lack of a 5-card suit can make us susceptible to losing control of the hand. If trump do split well, we will have a trump remaining in both hands and be able to ruff a loser in Partner’s hand (the side we are not setting up). If we have more losers, we can try to ruff those in the other hand (the hand we are not setting up) before drawing trump – giving us more trump tricks. 4-4 fits also allow for other lines of play like crossruffs (where we never actually draw trump).

**Better Fits - 9 Card Fits**The larger our fit the more trump we will have left to ruff with after trump are drawn with 6-3 or 5-4 fits. This allows us to be in control of the hand (we have a long suit). We also have enough trump to often be able to ruff in the other hand before or after drawing trump. These fits have some of the advantages of both 5-3 fits and 4-4 fits.

**Better Fits – 10 Card Fits**

As our fits grow larger and larger we continue to be able to ruff more and more of our losers. A classic example of this is the power of a 5-5 fit if both hands have shortness. In this case, many losers can be ruffed and our side suits can be setup. This is the kind of hand where tricks seem to magically appear out of nowhere – the true power of fit!

**Conclusion**

Fit is one of the most powerful declarer assets in bridge. “Fit is King” is the saying – and is often true. In trump contracts, fit produces tricks in many ways (ruffing losers, establishing long side suits, making soft trump card Queens and Jacks less relevant). Understanding the power of our fit in the auction is often done through the Law of Total Tricks (LOTT). Using our fit in the play is done by our approach to the hand – counting our losers instead of winners. So make use of our fits and the power of trump!