



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **(443) Suit Play – Discarding Losers on Dummy’s Length**

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Level: 4 of 10 (1 of 6)

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#### **General**

When dummy has a long suit, there are many ways to make use of this asset. When we refer to dummy here, we are discussing the hand that declarer is not counting losers from, usually the side with short trump; this is the side that is usually the dummy. When there is a long suit in dummy, it will often contain shortness as well, and we need to decide which asset we will attempt to make use of. We focus on how to make use of this length to develop discards for ourselves from the declarer’s hand. This is an effective plan if these discards are helpful in reducing the number of losers in our hand. Here we discuss how to establish long, relatively weak suits, into winners. We do this by running the opponents out of this suit and finally using the small cards for discards.

#### **Setting Up a Suit – Giving Up Losers**

When attempting to establish a long suit while playing in a suit contract, we have a variety of tools for turning these small cards into winners. The first options we will discuss are like those in a notrump contract.

##### *Example 1*

Dummy	Declarer
A7542	K93

If dummy has this 5-card suit, Axxxx, opposite declarer’s Kxx, and this suit splits 3-2, then we get four winners and one loser. That is, one loser and two other discards from declarer’s hand. When we play this suit, we can lazily play the King, then the Ace, then give up a loser. But if we do that, we must use an outside entry to get to these winners in dummy. Instead, it is best to either lose the first or second round of the suit, keeping transportation open to the dummy, then run the suit later.

##### *Example 2*

A7542	963
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This is a similar example, but we must give up two losers to establish this suit (even if it is 3-2). It is best to give up these losers early, in the first two rounds, and then take our winner and two discards.



### Example 3

87542            963

Even this suit can eventually be established into two discards (if the suit splits 3-2) – after losing the first three tricks.

### Setting Up a Suit – Ruffing Out a Suit

When playing in a suit contract, another tool for establishing a suit is to ruff out that suit. This means to trump that suit in declarer's hand until only winners are left in the dummy (usually when the opponents are out of the suit).

### Example 4

AK864            32

We play the Ace, the King, and then ruff the 3<sup>rd</sup> round. If the suit is 3-3, then with one outside entry we get two discards.

### Example 5

87654            32

In this example, we give up two losers and then start ruffing out the suit in the dummy. If the suit is 3-3, after one ruff the suit is established for two discards. If the suit is 4-2, then we must enter dummy twice to ruff out the suit and then another time to collect our one discard.

If the only entry is in trump suit then we must ruff the suit out before trump are drawn.

### Example 6

♠ A75            ♠ KQJT9  
♥ AK643        ♥ 87

In a ♠ contract with no outside entries in dummy, declarer must establish the ♥ suit before using the ♠A to use dummy's ♥ winners. We play ♥AK and ruff a ♥ (hoping for the suit to split 3-3) before using dummy's ♠A to return to the dummy.

### Unusual Safety Play

Managing entries to dummy is complicated when trying to establish (ruff out) a long suit, and this is especially true if there are few entries in the dummy. If those entries can only be found in the trump suit, then that must be used as an entry. This is a larger playing topic, called *Trump Suit Management*, but one that is an important part of establishing long suits in the dummy.

If only one other trick is needed to make our contract, then we can use some creative play to attempt to ensure our contract. Managing entries (especially in trump) and thinking of how to establish dummy's long suit are an important part of playing these hands best.



*Example 7*

♠ A53	♠ KQJT98
♥ 97	♥ 65
♦ AK432	♦ 65
♣ 973	♣ A74

Imagine on this hand, in a 4♠ contract, that the opponents cash two ♥ tricks and then shift to a trump. If ♦ split 3-3 then playing ♦A, ♦K, and ruffing a ♦ before using the ♠A allows us to use dummy's 2 small ♦ to discard our ♣ losers.

With only one outside entry, the best way to play this contract safely (especially at IMPs) is to duck the first round of ♦. Now we win the return and play ♦A and ruff a ♦. We draw trump ending in the dummy (with the ♠A) and play ♦ from the top. Even if ♦ are 4-2 this ensures a 10<sup>th</sup> trick as we can discard one ♣ on the ♦K and another on the established small ♦.

### Managing Entries

Another important part of establishing a long suit is managing outside entries. A vital part of doing this is making a plan at trick 1. One of declarer's biggest mistakes is often winning the opening lead in the wrong hand, using up a valuable entry too early.

*Example 8*

♠ 653	♠ AKQJT
♥ A6	♥ KQ7
♦ 642	♦ A8
♣ AK954	♣ Q86

In a 7♠ contract on a ♥ lead, the only real mistake declarer can make is to win the ♥A at trick 1. Declarer must leave this outside entry on the dummy. If ♣ are 3-2, then there is no issue. But if they are 4-1, we need to ruff one to establish the final ♣ and use the ♥A to return for our final ♣ winner – 5♠, 4♣, 3♥, and 1♦ for 13 tricks.

### Conclusion

When discards from declarer's hand will be helpful (which is not always the case, e.g., if KQJT in hand then 2-3 discards will not help) then establishing dummy's long suit is useful. If dummy's suit has only small cards in the middle and bottom then playing for a "good break", often through ruffing out the suit, is our best way to establish the suit into winners. In attempting to ruff out dummy's long weak suit, entries to dummy are an important part of the plan. We start by making a plan based on the idea that "good things" will happen (like the suit will split 3-3 or 3-2) and then work backwards from there – attempting to extend our plan to handle worse breaks (like 4-2 or 4-1). Playing these hands that require many entries to establish dummy's suit can be difficult. The most important thing you can do as declarer is to stop and take the time to make a plan at trick 1!