

## Establishing A Long Suit

We all know the value of Aces and Kings. Playing the highest card in a suit will usually win us a trick and get us on the way to making our contract. However, there is often a rich source of tricks available to declarer *eventually* and that can be found in our long suits. Although we may not start with the winning cards, if we play a few rounds of our longest suit, the opponents will find that they run out of cards. Suddenly, our remaining sixes, sevens and nines will be just as good as aces.

### When You Are Playing No Trumps

Just as when you play a Suit contract it is nearly always right to draw trumps, when you play a No Trump contract it is nearly always right to play your long suit early. Even if you lose the first one or two tricks, eventually the opponents' holdings will be exhausted and your remaining little cards will be established as winners.

♠ A94  
♥ KJ54  
♦ A2  
♣ 7654

♠ 73  
♥ AK62  
♦ AT72  
♣ Q95

♠ K2  
♥ AQ  
♦ JT9  
♣ QJT98

♠ K62  
♥ 73  
♦ 953  
♣ KT762

3NT – opening lead ♦ K

1NT – opening lead ♠ 5

Resist the temptation to immediately play all your big cards! They'll be tricks eventually but there's no rush to take them. If you work away at your long suit you will end up with all those high card tricks *and* a whole bunch of established winners in your long suits.

### When You Have A Trump Suit

You can establish a long suit the same as in No Trumps (ie by playing on that suit until the opponents don't have any left). However, if you are playing with a trump suit, you can also establish a long suit by **ruffing the suit good**. This means to ruff a few rounds, exhausting the opponents' holdings, before then cashing those small, established winners. One warning when ruffing a long suit good – you will need to ensure you retain an **entry** to the long suit so that you can get there to enjoy your hard work at the end of the hand!

♠ KQT8  
♥ KJ863  
♦ 943  
♣ 72

♠ AT985  
♥ 75  
♦ KQT  
♣ 954

♠ AJ92  
♥ A4  
♦ A75  
♣ AT94

♠ J  
♥ A2  
♦ AJ96542  
♣ A53

Four Spades – opening lead ♦ K

Five Diamonds – opening lead ♣ K