

JONATHAN SHUTE

# PLANNING THE PLAY OF A BRIDGE HAND

Teacher's Manual for Part II



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## A u t h o r ' s   F O R E W O R D

This manual has been developed, with the publisher's permission, from the **third part** of the excellent book **Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand** by Barbara Seagram and David Bird, 2009, Master Point Press. In adapting the book to a classroom setting, we have, as much as possible, used the structure, examples, and actual words from the book. This manual has been written by Jon Shute, but would have been impossible without the help of Anne Posch, hence the “we” that is used.

Barbara and David are simply two of the very top bridge teachers and writers in the world. Together, they make a superb team.

While this course may be taught as a stand alone course, it works best as a follow up to our course **Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand, Part I**. As before, we **strongly urge** all students to obtain a copy of Barbara's and David's book to use as a textbook—it will greatly enhance their learning experience, and help them retain and review concepts in the future. Most students should already have this book from Part I.

We, Jon Shute and Anne Posch, are a husband-wife bridge teaching team and ACBL Gold Life Masters from Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. Our backgrounds are in business management and school teaching, respectively. We believe that the keys to Success At Bridge are 1. Be polite. 2. Have fun. 3. Be actively ethical.

Hopefully, the first course, Part I, opened your students' eyes to the way that experienced players approach the game and think through problems. This course builds upon that base, and moves into learning more challenging techniques, and recognizing diverse options in the play. Again, we use the “cards on the table” approach and keep a friendly classroom atmosphere.

Let's all continue to keep bridge a positive, fun experience, and support the concept of Zero Tolerance—and watch bridge grow!

Sincerely,

Jon Shute and Anne Posch, Sackville, NB, Canada

## How to Use This Manual and Teacher Suggestions

This course consists of 6 two-hour lessons aimed at “novices with some experience” up to and including “intermediates who want to solidify their basic declarer play and add to their thinking and technique repertoire”. It is a follow up to our course Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand, Part I.

Your students will find this experience challenging (and hopefully enlightening and fun!). It is important that you go through the problems slowly enough that they can understand them. While you have to keep the course moving to get through it, do not go so fast as to favor quantity over quality.

It’s useful to keep in mind, and sometimes say, that what you are doing is showing your students **options** that exist on some hands, and **when** those options might be applicable. The course very much focuses on thinking, not “rule” following.

Part II does not lend itself to a quick recap of salient points at the end of the course —the points are too specific and detailed. We have therefore included a **Key Points handout** at the back of the Manual that may be photocopied and given to students to take away at the completion of the course.

In writing this manual, we have used visual conventions that are consistent with those used in Audrey Grant courses:

Information contained in a box is meant as Instructions that the teacher should read to the class. E.g. :

In Diamonds, give North the ♦AQxx, give East ♦109x, give South ♦Jxxx, and give West ♦Kx .

Words or sentences in Italics are meant as Notes to the Teacher. E.g. :

*Distribute Hand Record for Hand 28. or PAUSE*

*PAUSE* means to give the class a chance to think and/or answer a question.

For much of the course we will be working with half or full hands. These come in two forms: “**Construct**” the following hands face up Dummy style for North-South, and “**Make Up**” and play a hand (e.g., Hand 28) whereby each player takes her own cards, keeping them hidden (except for Dummy), and plays the hand in a given Contract with a given lead.

We assume after a couple of times through **Construct** and **Make Up** hands, you will not need to repeat all the instructions. Hand Records for **Make Up** hands are found in an Appendix at the back of this manual. You may photocopy these to hand out to each table in your class. Since Part I ended with Hand 27, the Hand Records for Part II are numbered 28-51.

Perhaps you have another way to construct or make up hands, such as a dealing machine, or prefer to prepare boards ahead of time.

**Important Teaching Point:** Experienced bridge players (i.e., most of us teachers) often forget how many techniques of play are second nature to us. While this course is chock full of techniques, it also tries to explain **when** to use these techniques. If a student doesn't understand which conditions/circumstances require which technique, she will be left with confusion and a lack of confidence. It is important that the teacher keep an eye out for this in the classroom.

Teaching styles, of course, differ. Some teachers like to diagram hands on a whiteboard or easel and circle each card as it is played. Others prefer to keep the focus on the table, except for key points. We sometimes give notes to the teacher to “write on the board”. You are expected to do that with which you are comfortable. It often helps the students if you write key words or key points on the board.

It is ideal to play (Make Up) 4 or more Hands in a two hour lesson. Due to content planning, we could not fit exactly 4 Make Up hands in each lesson. Also, we have rotated Declarer through the four compass points so that, for most lessons, each student gets a chance as Declarer.

In an effort to be gender neutral, I have assumed North and West are “he” and South and East are “she”. If no compass direction is indicated, I’ve referred to “he” or “she” with no rhyme or reason. If I haven’t hit 50.0 %, in the words of Eddie Kantar, “Don’t write and don’t call.” ☺

At the end of each lesson the textbook pages covered in the following lesson are given, so students can pre-read before class, if they wish. In order to cover seven chapters, two hands left over from Part I, and two Review hands, in six lessons, we did a small amount of modification to the flow of the hands in the lessons relative to the book in Lessons 3, 4, and 5. When we taught this class, this was not an issue.

Our Pre-Class Set Up: A **White Board (and marker)** with **bridge tables** close enough to see the board, a **table marker** on each table with N,S,E,W, a **deck of cards** on each table divided into the four suits. Bid boxes are not needed.

We recommend a five minute break in the middle of each lesson.

## LESSON 1 Textbook p. 135-143

### INTRODUCTION

Hello! Welcome to the second part of Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand! We're glad to see you and to have you here. As always, we'll try to make this class fun, informative, useful, and, at times, challenging.

Our usual classroom ground rules apply:

**Firstly**, we won't put anyone on the spot by singling her/him out with a direct question. So, you don't have to be afraid to make eye contact with us!

**Secondly**, we ask that you not make comments among yourselves while we're presenting the lesson. If you do, it means that you, and others, won't be able to hear what is being presented. We'll give you lots of opportunity for discussion at your table.



This course is about **Declarer play**. Declarer play is considered the essence of bridge. In addition to helping you play your hands well, understanding Declarer play will help you in the bidding and in playing defense.

As in Course I, most of the concepts and examples, and many of the words, we present are taken from Barbara Seagram's and David Bird's Planning The Play of a Bridge Hand. Most of you already have a copy of the book from Course I. If you don't already have a copy, we **highly** recommend that you get one.

We will quickly review a few of the concepts of Declarer play that we presented in Course I via two example hands, then go on to examine more advanced techniques. Some of the other concepts from Course I will be incorporated in the appropriate lesson in Course II. Like Course I, this course will focus on Making a Plan.

**In Course I you were taught to make a plan before playing your first card from Dummy**. Perhaps in the time since Course I you have drifted away from making a plan. If so, it is **imperative** to reestablish this habit!

**Every** hand should begin with: *write on board*

--Reviewing the bidding,

--Analyzing the opening lead,

--Taking stock of your combined assets, **including entries**, and

--Counting losers (in a suit contract) or top winners (in a NT contract).

**You can then formulate a plan to make your contract.**

Everyone please take a suit from the deck of cards at your table. We're now going to **Make Up** Hand 28. Each person is responsible for his or her own hand. For example, if you are North, you are responsible for collecting the 13 cards that make up the North hand.

If you are North, and are currently holding the spade suit, look at the Hand Record that will be passed out in a minute, and take the spades that the Hand Record says should be in the North hand. Then pass the remaining spades to your left (to East). Receive a new suit from your right (from West). Take your cards for that suit and pass the suit on.

*Distribute Hand Record for Hand 28. (bonus hand, not in the book)*

The Hand Record indicates that South is Declarer in 6♠, so Dummy is North and should be face up on the table, Dummy style. The other 3 hands should be held face down, as in a normal game of bridge.

West is to lead the ♥K. You have **5 minutes** to plan and conduct the play. Keep your cards in front of you, duplicate style. When done, all hands should be face up on the table, Dummy style.

HAND: **28**

Contract: 6♠

Declarer: South

Lead: ♥K

**North**

♠ AQ642

♥ 7

♦ QJ1096

♣ J7

**West**

♠ 10

♥ KQ1053

♦ 84

♣ A9652

**East**

♠ 98

♥ J9842

♦ K73

♣ Q103

**South**

♠ KJ753

♥ A6

♦ A52

♣ K84

*After 5 minutes:* OK! Let's discuss this together. How many losers do you have?

♠ 0

♥ 1

♦ 1

♣ 3

**Total: 5**

So, you have 5 losers—4 too many!

Before we look at specifically how to cut these 5 losers down to 1, what are the three usual ways you can eliminate losers in a suit contract? *PAUSE*

--**Ruff** in the **short** trump hand (usually Dummy),

--**Discard** on winners in Dummy, and

--**Finesse**.

So, what can you do about your heart loser? *PAUSE*

Because the heart holding in Dummy is **shorter** than the heart holding in your hand, you can win the ♥A and **Ruff** the second round of hearts in Dummy. We'll look at when to do this after we've analyzed the rest of the hand.

What can you do about your diamond loser? *PAUSE*

The diamond length in Dummy is greater than in your hand, so you can't ruff a diamond in Dummy. Hearts and clubs are not longer in Dummy than in your hand, so you're not able to discard your diamonds.

Clearly, you will need to **Finesse** in the diamond suit to eliminate the loser. How will you do the finesse? *PAUSE*

Right. You'll **lead the ♦Q from Dummy**, hoping the ♦K is with East. If East covers the ♦Q with the ♦K, you'll take your Ace, otherwise you'll let the Queen run, then repeat the finesse if it wins. You are able to lead the ♦Q from Dummy because it is from a sequence (in this case the ♦QJ109) and you'll be happy if it is covered by the ♦K.

What can you do about your possible three club losers? *PAUSE*

Well, you could **Ruff one** in Dummy, as Dummy has shorter clubs than you do. You could also save one loser with a **Finesse** if it works. How would you do that? *PAUSE*

By leading a small club from Dummy **towards** your ♣K and hope the ♣A is with East... What's a better plan? *PAUSE*

Right, **Discard two clubs** on long diamonds in Dummy.

So this hand really comes down to the diamond finesse. If the ♦K is with East, you'll be able to avoid a diamond loser, pitch two clubs on diamonds (as long as diamonds don't break 5-0), and still be able to ruff a Heart in Dummy.

What should your Plan be? *PAUSE*

**PLAN:** I will win the ♥A, pull trumps (**no need to wait!**) ending in Dummy, and do the diamond finesse(s). After capturing the ♦K, I will return to Dummy by ruffing my heart loser, and discard two clubs on diamond winners. I will then have only one club left to lose.

On this hand, you can make your 6♠ contract by way of a Ruff, a Finesse, and two Discards! While that may seem complex, it's not hard to arrive at the right solution via the suit-by-suit analysis of your assets, and making a **plan**.

Please pick up your suits.

*Distribute Hand Record for Hand 29. (another bonus hand, not in the book)*

North is to lead the ♠J. You have **5 minutes** to plan and conduct the play. Keep your cards in front of you, duplicate style. When done, all hands should be face up on the table, Dummy style.

Please **Make Up** Hand 29. West is Declarer in 3NT, so Dummy is East and should be face up on the table, Dummy style.

HAND: **29**  
Contract: 3NT  
Declarer: West  
Lead: ♠J

**North**

♠ J109732  
♥ Q107  
♦ J3  
♣ J10

**West**

♠ AK  
♥ A954  
♦ K85  
♣ AQ52

**East**

♠ Q5  
♥ 863  
♦ A9762  
♣ 743

**South**

♠ 864  
♥ KJ2  
♦ Q104  
♣ K986

*After 5 minutes:* OK! Let's discuss this together. How many top tricks do you have?

♠ 2    ♥ 1    ♦ 2    ♣ 1    **Total: 6**

Where can you possibly find 3 more tricks to bring your winner count to 9? *PAUSE*

Between your hand and Dummy, you have 8 Diamonds. If the 5 outstanding diamonds break 3-2, you can give up one diamond trick, then **the fourth and fifth diamonds will yield 2 extra tricks**. A successful **finesse** against the ♣K will allow you to make your contract.

While it is theoretically possible you could set up a long Heart or a long Club, you cannot afford to give up the lead that many times.

Do you **have** to lose a Diamond? *PAUSE*

**Yes**, your Ace and King cannot cover a 3-2 break.

How do you feel about the entry situation in Dummy? *PAUSE*

**Not good!** You have only **one** sure entry to Dummy, and no hopes for another entry. It's important to realize **when Dummy comes down** that that one entry is precious!

What do you need to accomplish with that one entry? *PAUSE*

You need to use it to **reach the good fourth and fifth diamonds**, and to take the, hopefully, winning **Club finesse**.



So, what's your Plan? *PAUSE*

**PLAN:** I will win the spade lead and duck a Diamond trick. I can then win the return, cash the ♦K, and cross to Dummy's ♦A. If diamonds are 3-2, I can cash dummy's fourth and fifth diamonds, **then** lead a Club from Dummy to try the finesse of the ♣Q.

Note that before playing to Trick 1 you stopped to **make a Plan**. You then took your inevitable diamond loser early, and when you got back in, you cashed the ♦K—the honor from the short side first. You then entered Dummy with the ♦A at the point where it **cleared the diamond suit from your hand and the Opponents' hands**.

In Course I we talked about **How the Experts Count**. Let's quickly review how that concept works:

On this hand, when you look at the diamond suit, you determine that you need diamonds to break 3-2. When you play out the diamonds, you start by ducking one round of diamonds, with everyone following. Then you cash the ♦K, and again everyone follows. **Now** you know that the diamond suit is

indeed breaking 3-2, because both opponents have followed to two rounds of the suit. You know that the last opposing diamond will fall under the ♦A.

So, instead of trying to count each diamond as it appears, you count by focusing on the possible distributions of the opposing cards in the suit, particularly the break or breaks that you need to make your contract. Then you watch to see if the opponents follow suit the necessary number of times. In this case, you need 3-2 diamonds, so you watch to see if both opponents follow **two** times.

This is a lot easier way, and a more useful way, to count than trying to count each diamond as it appears.

Please pick up your suits.

## CHAPTER 11 – Other Types of Finesses

In Course I you learned there were two types of basic Finesse:

### *Diagram on Board:*

North: ♦K42

South: ♦76

You can lead a small diamond towards the ♦K. If the ♦A is with West you will get a trick with the ♦K. And,

North: ♣A103

South: ♣QJ4

You can lead the ♣Q towards the ♣A. If the ♣K is with West, you will lose no tricks.

We'll now look at some other types of Finesses.

**The Double Finesse:** Occurs when you have a broken sequence that is missing **two** cards. For example,

In clubs, give to North the ♣AQ10

West ♣K764

East ♣J92

South ♣853

With this layout, you can take **two** finesses in the club suit, assuming you have two entries to the South hand.

Your first finesse is to lead a club from the South hand towards Dummy's ♣AQ10, and insert the ♣10. In this example, it loses to East's ♣J.

When you regain the lead, you can lead another club towards the ♣AQ and finesse the ♣Q. This finesse wins.

Why was it right to start by finessing the ♣10? *PAUSE*

West, trade the ♣4 to East for the ♣J.

You started by finessing the ♣10 **in case** the layout was:

North ♣AQ10	
West ♣KJ76	East ♣942
South ♣853	

You can get **three** club tricks by playing to the ♣10 first. After winning the ♣10, you are still left with the ♣AQ over West's ♣KJ.

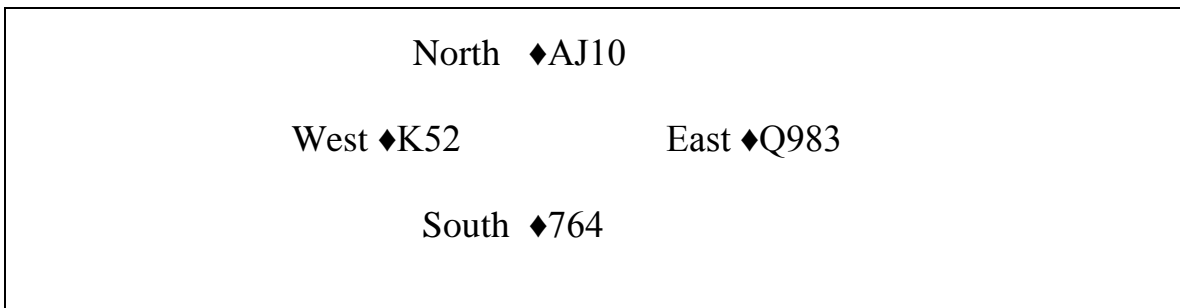
If instead you lead to the ♣Q first, you will be left with the ♣A10 over the ♣KJ and will only get two club tricks, as the Jack will force the Ace, and the King will beat the 10.

Remember to **finesse the lower card first**, generally, when you plan to take a double finesse.

Please take your cards back.

A slightly different form of the double finesse is shown in this example:

*Diagram on Board:*

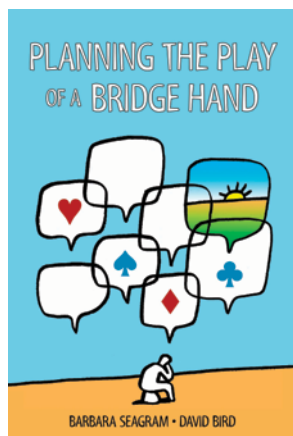


You can lead to the ♦10, losing to the ♦Q, then repeat the finesse against West's ♦K. You will fail to score two diamond tricks only when East has both the ♦K and ♦Q.

What are the approximate odds that at least one of the two diamonds  
finesses will win? *PAUSE*

**75%** for at least 1 out of 2 finesses to win. This percentage is not  
something that you must know, but it's useful to understand that needing  
one out of two finesses to work is a significantly better chance than  
needing one out of one finesse. 😊

## LOOKING FOR A BETTER APPROACH TO TEACHING DECLARER PLAY?



A presentation-ready Teacher's Manual for the second half of the ABTA award-winning book, *Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand*, by Barbara Seagram and David Bird. This completes the conversion into classroom format begun in Jonathan Shute's *Planning the Play of a Bridge Hand, Teacher's Manual for Part I*.

Six two-hour lesson plans are laid out with a word-by-word script, a review handout to give to the class and hand records for the set up of full hands. The course is aimed at players with some experience, up to and including intermediates who want to solidify their basic declarer play and add to their thinking and technique repertoire—in other words, the vast majority of bridge players.

This course will help your students learn and practice the concepts surrounding more advanced finesses (such as two way and ruffing finesses), entry management, trump management, keeping the danger hand off lead, hold up plays, combining chances in a hand, and counting the defenders' hands in order to place crucial cards.



**JONATHAN SHUTE** (Sackville, NB) is well known in Atlantic Canada as a bridge player (Gold Life Master), teacher, and writer. He believes wholeheartedly that bridge should be a fun game, and strongly supports the concept of Zero Tolerance for impolite behavior. Jonathan has a degree in Psychology from the University of New Hampshire, and an MBA from Dalhousie University in Halifax, and is a retired Business Administrator.