

Suit Contract Declarer Play - Acol Trainer

Brief illustrated user guide

This trainer helps a learner practise planning an Acol suit contract before playing from dummy. It deals a suit contract, highlights the trump suit, gives West the opening lead, and then walks the player through lead-reading, loser counting, disposing of surplus losers and trump timing.

Use it to	Practise loser counting, planning and play in suit contracts.
You control	South and dummy (North). Click highlighted cards during play.
The program controls	The deal, auction, trump suit, West opening lead, planning hints, simple defensive play and the running score.

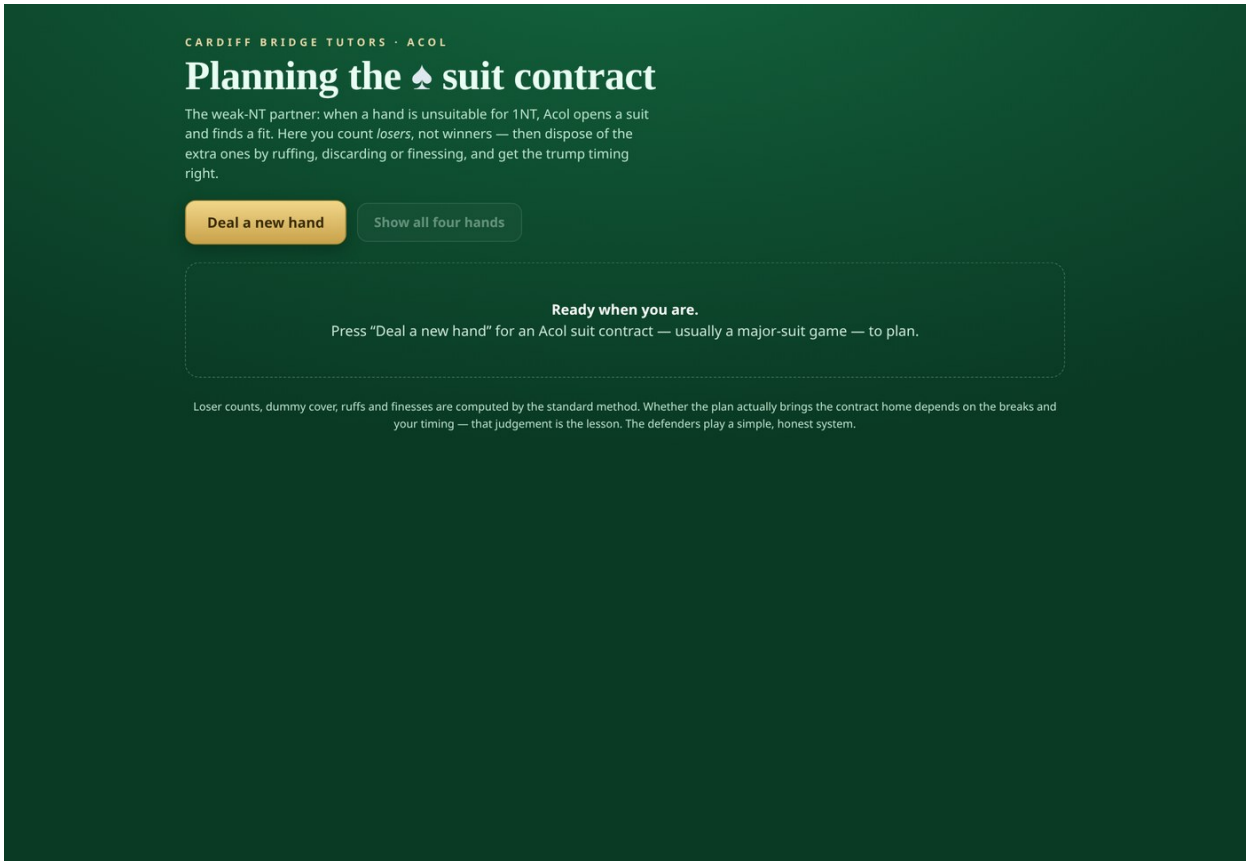


Figure 1. Opening screen: start by dealing a new suit-contract hand.

Quick start: one hand from start to finish

- 1 Deal a new hand.** Press Deal a new hand. The trainer selects an Acol suit contract and shows the auction, trump suit, required tricks and combined points.
- 2 Study South first.** You are South. Before dummy appears, look at the contract ribbon, the trump suit, your hand shape and the losers you may need to dispose of.
- 3 Reveal dummy through the opening lead.** Press Make the opening lead & see dummy. West leads and dummy appears. Do not rush to play a card.
- 4 Use the planning panel.** Open the three planning steps: read the lead, count losers, then decide whether to ruff, discard or finesse - and when to draw trumps.
- 5 Play it out.** Press Play it out. You play both South and North by clicking highlighted legal cards. The defenders play automatically.

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Planning the ♠ suit contract

The weak-NT partner: when a hand is unsuitable for 1NT, Acol opens a suit and finds a fit. Here you count *losers*, not winners — then dispose of the extra ones by ruffing, discarding or finessing, and get the trump timing right.

Deal a new hand **Show all four hands**

4♥ by South · trumps are **hearts** · needs **10** tricks · West to lead · South 16 + North 10 = **26** HCP

South opens 1♥ (a five-card major, too strong or shapely for 1NT); North raises to game, 4♥.

THE TABLE

You're South. Only your hand shows.

Study your hand and the auction. When you're ready, turn dummy up with the opening lead and start planning.

West **OPENING LEAD**
Hidden while you plan.

North **DUMMY**
Dummy appears once the opening lead is made.

4♥ by South · Need 10

Next trick

Declarer N/S 0 Defence E/W 0

South **DECLARER**

♠ A 2
♥ A Q J 4 2 **TRUMPS**
♦ A 9 4
♣ J 10 2

Make the opening lead & see dummy

Loser counts, dummy cover, ruffs and finesses are computed by the standard method. Whether the plan actually brings the contract home depends on the breaks and your timing — that judgement is the lesson. The defenders play a simple, honest system.

Figure 2. After dealing: the contract ribbon, trump suit, hidden defenders, South hand and the button to reveal the opening lead/dummy.

Reading the table screen

Contract ribbon. The green ribbon gives the contract, declarer, trump suit, tricks needed, opening-lead side, point count and auction. Use it as the first checkpoint before planning.

Trump suit. The trump row is shaded and marked TRUMPS in each visible hand. Remember that a trump beats any non-trump card when you cannot follow suit.

Seat panels. South is declarer; North is dummy; West is the opening leader; East and West defend. While planning, defenders remain hidden unless you choose Show all four hands.

Centre table. Cards played to the current trick appear on the felt. The score line tracks declarer tricks versus defensive tricks.

THE TABLE

Dummy is down — West has led

The lead is on the table and dummy is face up. Count your losers before playing to trick one.

North DUMMY

♠ A Q 2

♥ A 9 8 7 5 TRUMPS

♦ J 7 5

♣ Q 6

West OPENING LEAD

Hidden while you plan.

4♥ by South Need 10

♠ A

West leads the ♠A. Count your losers before you play from dummy.

Declarer N/S 0 Defence E/W 0

Next trick

East DEFENDER

Hidden while you plan.

South DECLARER

♠ 10

♥ K Q J 6 3 2 TRUMPS

♦ A Q 3

♣ J 7 3

Figure 3. Main table after the opening lead: dummy is visible, trumps are labelled, and the lead card is on the table.

The planning panel

Once West has led and dummy is visible, the trainer opens a structured planning exercise. Work from top to bottom before clicking Play it out.

Read the opening lead

Decide whether West is attacking a side suit, cashing a top card, leading safely, leading a singleton for a ruff, or leading trumps to cut down your ruffs.

Count your losers

Count from South, the long-trump hand. Compare your loser count with the number you can afford: 7 minus the contract level. In 4♥ or 4♠, for example, you can afford three losers.

Dispose of the extras and time the trumps

Give every surplus loser a home: ruff it in dummy, discard it on dummy's long suit, or try a finesse. If your plan needs dummy's trumps for ruffs, do not draw all the trumps first.

Tip: The loser ledger on the right shows how many losers you can afford, which ones the plan disposes of, and whether any remain unsolved.

STEP THREE · MAKE THE PLAN

Count losers, then give each one a home

A suit contract is won by disposing of losers, not by cashing winners. Work these in order — think first, then reveal.

1 Read the opening lead

Hide

Why this card? Is West attacking, cashing, playing safe — or angling for a ruff?

West led the ♠3, and it looks like a **singleton**. This is the classic attacking lead against a suit contract: West wants to **ruff** the second round. Expect West to hold an entry (often an ace) so partner can put them back in.

Counter-measure: drawing trumps promptly usually kills the ruff — but only if you don't need dummy's trumps for your own ruffs first. Weigh that in step three.

2 Count your losers

Reveal

3 Dispose of the extras & time the trumps

Reveal

Play it out

Show all four hands

LOSERS — WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD

ruff

ruff

----- afford 3

can afford

can afford

can afford

3 you can afford

2 disposed of

Plan covers the contract

Figure 4. Planning steps and loser ledger.

Playing the contract

In play mode, all four hands are visible for teaching. The highlighted hand shows whose turn it is. Legal cards are highlighted; click one to play it. If dummy is on lead or following suit, you still choose the card from dummy.

Defenders play automatically. East and West follow a simple, honest defensive style so the learner can focus on declarer planning, ruffs, discards and trump control.

Undo. The suit-contract trainer includes an Undo button in play mode. Use it for teaching or replaying a card choice; then continue with the current trick.

After each trick. The winner and running score are shown. Press Next trick when it is enabled. Continue until all 13 tricks have been played.

Review the result. Compare the final trick count with the contract target. If the contract fails, ask which loser needed a home, whether trumps were drawn too soon, or whether a defender was allowed a ruff.

STEP FOUR · PLAY

Bring the plan to life

You play both South and dummy (North). Take your ruffs and time the trumps as you planned; the defenders play their own simple system.

North DUMMY

♠ K Q J 9 7 6 5

♥ 10 5 3 TRUMPS

♦ 8

♣ A 3

West OPENING LEAD

♠ void

♥ K 7 TRUMPS

♦ K J 10 7 6 5

♣ K 7 5 4

4♥ by South Need 10

♠ 3

North (dummy) to play — your move (click a highlighted card).

Undo Next trick

Declarer N/S 0 Defence E/W 0

East DEFENDER

♠ 10 8 4

♥ 9 8 6 TRUMPS

♦ Q 3 2

♣ Q 9 8 6

South DECLARER

♠ A 2

♥ A Q J 4 2 TRUMPS

♦ A 9 4

♣ J 10 2

Figure 5. Play mode: click highlighted legal cards, use Undo when teaching, then advance to the next trick.