

Planning the Play – The S.W.O.T. analysis

Once you have arrived at your final contract you will need to plan how to achieve the best result. What is SWOT analysis?

Strengths Count your top winners; - those you can make without losing the lead.

Weakness Work out how many tricks you are short of your target

Opportunities Inspect each suit in turn looking for opportunities to make extra tricks.

Threats Think about what can go wrong and how you can counter it

To be effective in your approach you must know how many tricks you need. Under

Opportunities consider how to increase your trick tally. E.g.

- ♣ Tricks that can definitely be developed.
- ♣ Tricks that can be developed if the suit breaks well.
- ♣ Tricks that can be developed if a finesse works.

Consider the following hand – taken from Book 2. Only the North and South hands are shown.

	Bidding	West	North	East	South
♠ A Q					
♥ 8 7 4 3					1♥
♦ K Q J 10		pass	2♦	pass	2♥
♣ A K Q		pass	4NT	pass	5♦
		Pass	6♥	all pass	

♠ J 5
 ♥ A K Q J 10
 ♦ 9 8 2
 ♣ J 10 2

West leads the ♠6. Plan your play!

- Strengths** ♠ = 1 trick, ♥ = 5, ♦ = 0, ♣ = 3 Total top tricks = 9
- Weakness** Declarer needs to find **three** more tricks.
- Opportunities**
- ♠ - The finesse might provide one extra trick
 - ♥ - No chance of extra tricks
 - ♦ - Three extra tricks once the ♦A is knocked out
 - ♣ - No extra tricks available
- Threats** Your opponents will win the ♦A and cash a spade trick.

Cunning Plan: The diamond **Opportunity** gives you three guaranteed extra tricks, enough for your contract, *but too slowly*. Having drawn trumps you could pair up dummy's fourth diamond with your ♠ J on any other lead except spades. *Now that also is too slow*. **You have to bite the bullet and take the spade finesse immediately.**

Once you have succeeded with the finesse you can now draw trumps and set about the diamonds, only losing to the Ace.

If the finesse fails then the contract **could never** be made. You just have to say "Well done defence – a good lead." Any other suit lead would have given you time to draw trumps and set up your diamonds.

Well done SWOT ! Did you get it correct?