Fundamental Series 50
Declarer Strategy - Combining Chances - 1

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

	♠ K Q 7 6	
	♥ A Q 9 4	
	♦ 8 6 2	
	♣ Q 5	
♠ 8 2	N	♠ 9
♥ K 10 6 3	W E	♥ J 8 7 2
♦ Q J 10	S	♦ 9 7 4 3
♣ J 8 6 3		♣ K 10 9 4
	♠ A J 10 5 4 3	
	♥ 5	
	♦ A K 5	
	♣ A 7 2	

NS 6♠; NS 5N; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; NS 2♣;
Par +980: NS 6♠=

West	North	East	South
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♠	Pass	6 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: ♦ Q

Bidding: North has 13 HCP and should open 1 ♦ (longer minor). South responds 1 ♠. North rebids 2 ♠ to show a minimum opening hand with a four-card spade fit. The South hand rises to 19 points using the shortness method. South uses 4 NT (either Blackwood or RKC depending upon agreement) and bids the slam. In the example, North responds to RKC showing 2 keycards and the ♠ Q.

Defense: West should lead the ♦ Q from the complete diamond sequence.

Play: South starts with 3 losers (1 diamond and 2 clubs). One club can be easily trumped in the short-hand. Two possibilities exist to eliminate the diamond loser and you can try them both. A successful finesse in clubs or a successful finesse in hearts. Win the ♦ K. Pull trump ending in the South hand and take a club finesse by leading a low club towards the ♣ Q. If the ♣ K is in the West, the ♣ A can be used to discard the losing diamond from dummy. If the ♣ K is with East, win the return and try the heart finesse. If either works you make the contract. One of two finesse is a total chance of about 75%. Not bad.

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ Q 9 8 2	
	♥ 6 5 3	
	♦ 9 4 3	
	♣ A 9 6	
♠ A K J 10 6	N	♠ 7 5
♥ A 10 9 7	W E	♥ Q J 8
♦ 7 5	S	♦ A K J 10 6
♣ J 4		♣ Q 8 7
	♠ 4 3	
	♥ K 4 2	
	♦ Q 8 2	
	♣ K 10 5 3 2	

EW 4♠; EW 4♥; EW 3N; EW 4♦; EW 2♣;
Par −420: EW 4♥=; EW 4♠=

West	North	East	South
		1 ♦	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: ♣ 3

Bidding: East has 13 HCP and should open the bidding with 1 ♦. West responds 1 ♠ and East rebids 1 NT (12-14). West jumps in hearts with a game going hand (2 ♥ rebid is not forcing). Without a fit in either major, East rebids 3 NT.

Defense: South leads the unbid suit, clubs, North wins the ♣ A and with 2 clubs remaining returns the higher one, the ♣ 9. This puts the ♣ Q in declarer's hand. South should play low to establish the clubs and keep a link from partner's hand.

Play: East begins with 6 winners (2 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds, and 1 club with the opening lead). There are three opportunities for the extra tricks and declarer should try all three. If the ♠ Q was doubleton it would fall under the ♠ AK. If the ♦ Q were doubleton it would fall under the ♦ AK. In either case that would establish enough tricks to make the hand. If neither queen falls, East can try the heart finesse for the ♥ K. Those three chances add up to about 56%, much better than any one finesse alone.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ K 3 2
♥ A Q
♦ A K 7 3 2
♣ K 6 5

♠ J 9 8
♥ K 10 7 6 5
♦ Q 10 9 8
♣ J

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    N
  W   E
    S
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♠ Q 10 7
♥ J 9 8 4 3
♦ J
♣ Q 10 9 8

♠ A 6 5 4
♥ 2
♦ 6 5 4
♣ A 7 4 3 2

NS 4♠; NS 3N; NS 4♦; NS 4♣; EW 1♥;
Par +420: NS 4♠=

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: ♥ 4

Bidding: The North hand has 19 HCP and should open 1 ♦ and jump rebid 2 NT to describe an 18-19 point balanced hand. South should raise to 3 NT.

Defense: East should lead fourth best from the heart suit. West plays the ♥ K on trick one placing declarer with the ♥ AQ.

Play: North begins the hand with 8 winners after the heart lead (2 spades, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds, and 2 clubs). North has 3 chances for a ninth trick and declarer should try them all. Win the ♥ A. Cash the ♦ A and ♦ K. If the suit is breaking 3-2 then lead a third and make an overtrick. If the suit divides 4-1 then cash the ♣ A and ♣ K. if clubs divides 3-2 then lose and club and make an overtrick. If not, the last chance is a 3-3 break in spades. Combined chance is pretty good; 3-2 clubs or 3-2 diamonds or 3-3 spades). Total combined chance of about 93%.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 10 9 8 6
♥ Q 6
♦ K 7
♣ 7 5 3 2

♠ 4 3 2
♥ A K
♦ A Q J 10 3
♣ K J 10

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    N
  W   E
    S
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♠ A 5
♥ J 10 4 3
♦ 9 8 6 5
♣ A Q 8

♠ K Q 7
♥ 9 8 7 5 2
♦ 4 2
♣ 9 6 4

EW 3N; EW 5♦; EW 3♥; EW 4♣; EW 1♠;
Par −600: EW 3N=; EW 5♦=

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Opening lead: ♠ J

Bidding: West has 18 HCP and a balanced hand. West should open 1 ♦ and jump rebid 2 NT to describe the balanced 18-19 HCP hand. East should respond 1 ♥ searching for a fit and then just raise to the no-trump game.

Defense: North should lead the top of the complete sequence in spades. South needs to make and keep the path open to partner in spades by unblocking an honor under the ♠ A. The little spade is of far more value as a way to reach partner.

Play: West begins the hand with 7 winners (1 spade, 2 hearts, 1 diamond, and 3 clubs). There are two chances for the extra 2 tricks and declarer should try both to maximize the chances for success. Option one is a successful finesse in diamonds. That alone is about a 50% chance. There also is a chance in hearts, pretty small but to be ignored. Wait and win the second spade. Cash the ♥ A and ♥ K. If the ♥ Q falls, then there are 9 tricks without the risk of a finesse. If not try the diamond finesse. This option adds a significant boost to declarer's chances. Improving them from 50% to about 60%.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 7 6 5
♥ A K J 10 5 2
♦ K 10
♣ A 8

♠ K Q 8 4
♥ 9 4
♦ J 7 3 2
♣ Q J 4

N
W E
S

♠ 10 9
♥ 8 7
♦ A Q 9 8 4
♣ 9 6 5 2

♠ A J 3 2
♥ Q 6 3
♦ 6 5
♣ K 10 7 3

NS 4♥; N 3N; S 2N; NS 2♠; S 1♣;
Par +620: NS 4♥=

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: ♠ 10

Bidding: North has 15 HCP and a six-card heart suit for a hand value of 17 using the length method. North opens 1 ♥ and rebids 3 ♥ after the 1 ♠ response. Holding 11 points in support of hearts, South raises to the heart game.

Defense: East should lead the ♠ 10, mostly by elimination.

Play: North has 4 losers (2 spades and 2 diamonds). A diamond loser might be eliminated if the ♦ A is favorably located. That is about a 50% chance. There is another chance in clubs. If one defender holds ♣ QJx then the ♣ 10 can be established. Win the ♠ A. Cash the the ♣ A. Cash the ♣ K. Trump a club with the ♥ 10. If the QJ have both been played, pull trump and cash the ♣ 10 discarding a spade and lead a diamond towards the ♦ K for an overtrick if the ♦ A is favorable. If the clubs do not fall. pull trump ending in dummy and lead towards the ♦ K for the contract. The diamond finesse is 50%. The combined chance is more like 57%.

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q 9 7 4
♥ 3 2
♦ 8 7 6 5
♣ 10 6 2

♠ A K 6 2
♥ K Q 5
♦ Q J 3
♣ 9 7 5

N
W E
S

♠ J 5
♥ A J 7 6
♦ A K 10 9
♣ A Q 3

♠ 10 8 3
♥ 10 9 8 4
♦ 4 2
♣ K J 8 4

E 6N; E 6♠; E 6♥; E 6♦; W 5N; W 5♠; W 5♥;
W 5♦; EW 4♣; Par −1440: E 6N=

West	North	East	South
		1 ♦	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 NT	Pass
4 ♣	Pass	4 NT	Pass
6 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: ♥ 10

Bidding: The East hand holds 19 HCP and a balanced hand. East opens 1 ♦ (longer minor) and jump rebids 2 NT after the 1 ♠ response. West, holding 15 HCP knows the total HCP is 33-34. Right in slam zone. West uses Gerber to check on aces and finding three, bids the slam in no-trump.

Defense: South's best choice is the ♥ 10 from the sequence. Unlikely to give declarer any help.

Play: East starts with 11 winners (2 spades, 4 hearts, 4 diamonds, and 1 club). Two opportunities exist for the needed 12th trick. A spade finesse (low towards the ♠ J) and a club finesse (low to the ♣ Q). If either one is successful, the the slam is home. Win the ♥ K. Lead a low spade to ♠ J. When North plays the ♠ Q you are home. If the ♠ J were to lose to the ♠ Q, then try the club finesse next. You will make the hand anytime North holds the ♠ Q or ♣ K. One out of two finesses is about 75%.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ 10 7 4 3
♥ A 7 6
♦ 8 6
♣ A Q 10 5

♠ A Q
♥ Q J 10 9
♦ Q 9 3 2
♣ 7 6 3

N
W E
S

♠ 2
♥ 8 5 4
♦ K 7 5 4
♣ K J 9 4 2

♠ K J 9 8 6 5
♥ K 3 2
♦ A J 10
♣ 8

NS 4♠; EW 1♦; EW 1♣; Par +620: NS 4♠=

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: ♥ Q

Bidding: The South hand holds 12 HCP and a six-card spade suit. South opens 1 ♠ and North, with a hand value of 11 points using the shortness method should make a limit raise with 3 ♠. The South is worth 15 points using shortness and should accept and bid 4 ♠.

Defense: West leads the top of the complete sequence in hearts.

Play: South starts with 5 losers (2 spades, 1 heart, and 2 diamonds). A successful finesse in spades for the ♠ Q would eliminate a spade loser. A repeated finesse in diamonds would eliminate one diamond loser and allow the discard of a heart loser from dummy. Work to try both diamond finesses and the spade finesse. Win the ♥ A and take a diamond finesse. Win the heart return and play the ♣ A and take a second diamond finesse. Use the ♦ A to discard a losing heart. Trump the losing heart in the short-hand and take a spade finesse by leading the ♠ 10. South should take 10 tricks losing 2 spades and 1 diamond.

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ K 10 6 2
♥ Q J 9 6 3
♦ 10
♣ Q J 8

♠ 9 5 4 3
♥ A K
♦ A 6
♣ A 7 5 4 3

N
W E
S

♠ A 8 7
♥ 8 7
♦ K 7 5 4 3 2
♣ K 6

♠ Q J
♥ 10 5 4 2
♦ Q J 9 8
♣ 10 9 2

EW 4♠; EW 3N; EW 4♦; EW 3♣; EW 1♥;
Par −420: EW 4♠=

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: ♥ Q

Bidding: West opens 1 ♣ and rebids 1 ♠ over the 1 ♦ response. The East hand is worth 12 points using the length method and should rebid 3 ♦ with a six-card suit. West has enough to rebid 3 NT. Some may choose to open the West semi balanced with 1 NT, in which case East will simply sign off in 3 NT. A very clean auction.

Defense: North should lead the top of the incomplete heart sequence. South, holding an equal honor to the ♥ Q (the ♥ 10) should encourage with the ♥ 5, South's highest spot card.

Play: West begins the hand with 7 winners. Holding 8 diamonds, any 3-2 break in diamonds will yield all the needed tricks for the game. West wins the ♥ K and cashes the ♦ A and leads a second diamond. When North shows out, it is time to move to Plan B. Diamonds cannot established before the defense has set up their heart tricks. Win the ♦ K and begin to work on clubs. A 3-3 break in clubs, while not likely at about 36%, it at least has a chance for the needed tricks. Today is your lucky day. The combined chances between diamonds and clubs is very high at about 80%.