

TRICKS WITH TRUMPS

Should You Draw Trumps?

When playing in a suit contract it is often a good idea to draw trumps, You should, however, ask yourself whether you can make extra tricks by trumping losers before drawing trumps.

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

South opens 1NT and North bids 2♣ (Stayman). The final contract is 4♠ by South.

West leads their top diamond. If South wins the first trick and draws three rounds of trumps, they will not make their contract because they will be able to trump only one of their losing diamonds in dummy. Better play is to trump all three low diamonds in dummy *before* drawing the opponents' trumps, using the A♣ and the A♥ as entries to hand.

Trump in the Short Hand

		♠	
A K Q 9 7	W	E	J 10 8
		S	

If this is your trump suit you can draw the opponents' trumps and make five tricks in the suit. If you use one of West's trumps to trump a loser you will still make five tricks, but if you can use one of East's cards to trump a loser you still have West's five trump tricks for a total of six. In general, trumping in the short trump hand creates extra tricks while trumping in the long trump hand does not.

Preparing to Use Dummy's Trumps

You can only use the trumps in the short trump hand when dummy has an outside suit that is shorter than that suit's length in declarer's hand *and* when it is possible to exhaust dummy of the suit so that they can trump. Sometimes you will need to lose a trick or two to create a void so that you can use dummy's trumps.

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

North leads a diamond against West's four spade contract. West has three losing hearts and will also lose a club. To reduce the losers from four to three declarer should trump a heart in dummy. Clearly, they cannot afford to draw trumps straight away because then dummy won't have any trumps left. Declarer should lead a heart at trick two and lead hearts again when they regain the lead. They are then in a position to trump their third heart in dummy, after which they can turn their attention to drawing trumps.

Observe that declarer makes six trump tricks in total by trumping a heart in dummy. If declarer trumps dummy's diamonds they only make five trump tricks because they are trumping losers with long trumps.