

Theme of the Week: *When Not to Draw Trumps*

Dlr: North	♠ A K 6 3		
Vul: Both	♥ Q 6 4		
	♦ K 5 3		
	♣ J 5 4		
♠ J 10 9		N	♠ Q 7 4 2
♥ 8 5 3		W	♥ 9 7
♦ Q 10 8 6		E	♦ J 9
♣ K 9 6		S	♣ A Q 10 8 2
	♠ 8 5		
	♥ A K J 10 2		
	♦ A 7 4 2		
	♣ 7 3		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

Bidding: North is dealer and starts by counting his points; he has 13. North should then subtract 1 point for having a 4-3-3-3 distribution since this is the worst possible distribution in bridge.

Now, North has 12 points, and should open 1♣. South should also count their points; he has 12 high card points, 1 extra for the 5th heart, and 1 extra for the 4th diamond for 14 total points.

South has 4 or more hearts and 6 or more points and therefore should bid 1♥. North does not have 4 hearts to raise partner, but does have 4 spades and so he bids 1♠. South can bid 2♦ as 4th suit forcing to game since he has game values. North then bids 2♥ to show 3 hearts. South now bids game, 4♥, because there are 8 hearts between the two players and enough points for game.

Lead: The lead doesn't affect the contract, so let's just say West leads the J♠ as the top of sequence.

Declarer: Let's start by counting our tricks. We have 2 spades, 5 hearts, and 2 diamonds for 9 tricks. We need 10, so we have to look somewhere for that last trick.

Normally in a suit contract we like to draw trump immediately, but doing so would be detrimental to making this contract since the 10th trick is actually going to come from a diamond ruff in dummy.

To see why drawing trump is bad, let's say we started by doing just that, and then tried to set up diamonds. After playing the A♦ and K♦, we still have 2 diamonds in South and 1 diamond in North. Since we drew trump first, we cannot ruff the 4th diamond in our hand.

Therefore we have to start by playing the A♦ and K♦, and then a third diamond. We then win whatever the defense plays and play our fourth diamond, ruffing with dummy's Q♥ so East cannot overruff.

Now we have 5 hearts, 2 diamonds, 2 spades, and 1 diamond ruff for 10 tricks.

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

Bidding: I don't think there is an easy way to get to 6♠, so we are just going to say that is the contract we are in.

Declarer: This hand has a similar concept to the last hand. Here we have to ruff two small hearts in dummy so that the A♠ is our only loser.

To do this, we have to make sure that we don't try to draw trump first. If we do, East can play the A♠, then another spade. If this happens, we would only get to ruff a single losing heart and would have to lose the other for down 1.

Let's say the opening lead is the A♣ by West. This is the line of play that we should take.

- Ruff the club lead with the 2♠
- Win the A♥ and play another heart while ruffing in dummy.
- Play a diamond to the Q♦
- Ruff the third heart
- Draw trump and claim all the tricks but the A♠.