

Declarer Play in a Suit Contract (2)

Drawing Trumps - Think at Trick 1

♠ A K Q 7 5 2	♠ T 8 6
♥ A K 6 2	♥ 7 5 4
♦ A K 3	♦ 9 8 6
♣ (void)	♣ K Q J 7

West plays in 5♠. North leads ♣A. How do you play?

This is a good time to play carefully, because it would be painful - very painful - to hold the best hand you'll ever be dealt, get yourself up to five spades, have partner put down extra values in dummy, get a favourable lead, and then go down against routine distribution.

To avoid this fate worse than death, ruff the opening lead high, then lead the *two* of spades, planning to cover whatever card North plays. You hope to take four spades, four red suit tops, and three clubs (or the equivalent). Only a wildly unusual distribution will defeat this plan.

The full hand:

	♠ 4	
	♥ J 9 8 3	
	♦ Q T 5 2	
♠ A K Q 7 5 2	♣ A 6 5 4	♠ T 8 6
♥ A K 6 2		♥ 7 5 4
♦ A K 3		♦ 9 8 6
♣ (void)	♠ J 9 3	♣ K Q J 7
	♥ Q T	
	♦ J 7 4	
	♣ T 9 8 3 2	

Normally drawing trumps is a priority and usually we hope they will split fairly evenly. However they don't always break as we would wish.

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

West plays in 4♥. North leads ♦3. How do you play?

It looks like you will lose a diamond, the Ace of clubs and possibly a trump on this hand. If they break 2-2 you will make an overtrick. If they break 3-1 (the most likely) then you will lose one and just make your contract. Only a 4-0 break can cause a problem, and even then you may survive if you prepare for it. The key is to avoid using the King of hearts, dummy's only quick entry, prematurely. You should win the opening lead (with ♦A) and cash the Ace of hearts. When hearts are not 4-0 you can lead to the ♥K, making 10 or 11 tricks depending on the trump split.

When hearts do break 4-0, you will be where you want to be - in the closed hand, to take a spade finesse. And just in case North ducks your ♠Q, you have the King of hearts where and when you need it, as a fast entry to let you throw your losing diamond on a spade winner. The full hand:

	♠ K T 8 2	
	♥ (void)	
	♦ K J 7 3 2	
♠ Q	♣ 8 7 5 3	♠ A J 5 4 3
♥ A 9 6 5 4 3 2		♥ K 7
♦ A 5		♦ T 8
♣ K J T	♠ 9 7 6	♣ Q 9 6 2
	♥ Q J T 8	
	♦ Q 9 6 4	
	♣ A 4	