

STAMFORD BRIDGE CLUB

4TH FEBRUARY 2015

DECLARER PLAY IN A SUIT CONTRACT

Declarer Play in a Suit Contract

Trumps make extra tricks by ruffing.

Remember this applies to both declarer **AND** the defenders.

So if you don't want the defence to ruff your winners you must draw their trumps.

On most hands you have to decide whether you want to get rid of the defence trumps (by drawing trumps) or if you want to use your trumps in some way so you do not want to initially draw trumps.

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

West plays in 6♠. North leads ♦7. How do you play?

Clearly you have one heart loser only, and twelve easy tricks. Win the diamond and **draw trumps**. You will look and feel silly if you don't and then someone ruffs your Queen of clubs.

Look at a similar hand

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

West plays in 4♠. North leads ♦7. How do you play?

Here you have no losers outside the trump suit. Again you must get rid of the opponents' trumps. You hope that they split 3 – 2 so that you just lose three trump tricks. You must lead a trump every time you take the lead so that the defence trumps fall on the same trick and are not used for ruffing.

It is easy to draw trumps when you hold all the top honours.

Declarer often goes wrong if the trump suit is weak, by not playing trumps and then letting the defence make extra tricks.

Ruffing losers

Sometimes you need to delay drawing trumps to ruff a loser in your hand with a trump from the dummy.

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

West plays in 6♠. North leads ♣K. How do you play?

You have eleven top tricks here. The twelfth will come from a heart ruff in the dummy. So don't draw the opposition trumps, but play Ace and King of hearts and then a small heart which the dummy can ruff. However it is still best to draw two rounds of trumps first, and then play on hearts. This cuts down the possibility of dummy being overruffed. You can then cross back to the King of diamonds to draw the rest of the trumps.

Using the trump suit for entries

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

West plays in 6♠. North leads ♠Q. How do you play?

Here you are likely to lose a spade and a heart if you draw trumps. You cannot reach the King and Queen of diamonds in the dummy. What you must do is to give up one trump trick to be able to reach the dummy, and then throw your losing spade and heart on the King and Queen of diamonds. Win the Spade lead in hand and then cash the Ace of diamonds. Then lead the eight of clubs and overtake with the nine in the dummy. Presumably the opponent with the ten of clubs will win the trick and lead back a heart or a spade. Win the trick and then play the five of clubs to the seven in dummy (now a winner), and you can cash the two top diamonds to throw away your spade and heart loser (hoping the diamonds do not break too badly so the defence cannot ruff).

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

West plays in 6♠. North leads ♠Q. How do you play?

How do you get rid of your three losing diamonds?

The best way is to establish the heart suit in dummy and hope that the defence hearts split 4 – 3.

So: Ruff the opening lead in the dummy and play a small heart and ruff in your hand.

Then lead the club King and ruff it in the dummy, leading another small heart and ruff it in your hand.

Then lead the club Ace and ruff it in the dummy, leading another small heart and ruff it in your hand. If you are in luck the opponents' hearts will split 4 -3 and they will have to follow each time.

Now with your top three trumps remaining, draw the opponents trumps (hoping they split no worse than 3 – 1). Finally cross to dummy with the Ace of diamonds and lead the Ace of hearts (on which the opposition last heart will fall) and the other two hearts, on which you can throw your losing three diamonds. And you make all thirteen tricks!

It is easy to ruff a loser, but not so easy to ruff a winner! This hand would be easier if declarer held three small clubs rather than his actual holding.

Note that the slam would fail if the opening lead is a spade (because it stops a ruff) or a diamond (because it takes away the entry from dummy)

Establishing a side suit by ruffing

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

West plays in 4♥. North leads ♠K. How do you play?

You must obviously lose a spade and two clubs here, so you cannot afford any diamond losers. You could hope they break 3 – 3, and just draw trumps. However it is more likely they will break 4 – 2.

If the opponents continue with spades, ruff the second round and then cash just one top trump. Then play Ace and King of diamonds and a small diamond, ruffing with the Jack in the dummy (to avoid and overruff). Cross back to hand with a trump and draw the opponents trumps. Hopefully your diamonds are now good for the contract.

Discarding losers

Sometimes risks must be taken in order to rid oneself of a loser without delay

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

West plays in 5♦. North leads ♠K. How do you play?

If you try and draw trumps first the defence will take the Ace of trumps and two spade tricks. What you must do is hope North has the King of hearts and lead a heart to the Queen at trick two. If it wins you can then discard a spade on the Ace of hearts. Then you can draw trumps and make your contract for the loss of one spade and the Ace of Hearts.

Avoiding an overruff

Usually when ruffing we trump with our lowest card. This gives a danger of an overruff. If you can afford to ruff high then do so.

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

West plays in 4♠ after North has overcalled in clubs. North leads ♠A followed by ♠K, South playing high – low to show a doubleton. North then leads ♣Q. How do you play? Do you ruff high or low?

If you ruff low you will be overruffed. If you ruff high then you have to rely on the opposition trumps being 2 – 2.

It is best here not to ruff at all, but discard a diamond from the East hand. If they then lead another club you can ruff in the West hand, draw trumps and then ruff a diamond in dummy for your contract.

Next week, before the supervised pairs

Trump control

Drawing a master trump

Dummy reversal

The crossruff