

Tricks With Trumps

<p>♠ 6 5 ♥ A Q 10 6 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ Q 7 4 2</p> <p>♠ 10 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ A 10 9 7 3 2 ♣ A 8 6</p> <p>♠ A Q J 4 ♥ K J 7 3 ♦ 18 4 ♣ K 5</p>		<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1N<sup>(1)</sup></td><td>Pass</td><td>2♣<sup>(2)</sup></td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">All pass</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">1 12-14 2 Stayman</td></tr></table>		West	North	East	South		1N <sup>(1)</sup>	Pass	2♣ <sup>(2)</sup>	Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥	All pass				1 12-14 2 Stayman			
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<p>Holding just 4 hcp's East knows partner is marked with some values on this auction. He starts with ♦ 5. West wins and takes stock. With a sight of ♦ 234 East's lead must have been a singleton. First, declarer is marked with at least two diamonds (opening, 1N bid) and, secondly, partner won't have led ♦ 5 from a doubleton (since it's the lowest card held between the North and East hands).</p> <p>From this reasoning West confidently returns ♦ 2, a suit preference signal asking for the return of the lower ranking side suit (clubs). East ruffs ♦ 2, returns a club and West can lead a third diamond for East to obtain a second ruff. That's two aces and two ruffs for the defence and the contract has been defeated.</p>																							
<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♥</td><td>All pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		West	North	East	South			1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass	4♥	All pass			<p>Before making his lead South has been sure to listen to the bidding. Whilst East West have landed in 4♥ they have also shown a 4-4 fit in diamonds along the way. With South holding five diamonds that puts North with a void in the suit. South is hopeful of making ♥ K. If partner receives two diamond ruffs, ♠ A will be the defence's fourth trick.</p> <p>South purposely leads ♦ 2. This is another suit preference signal that tells North that South's entry lies in the lower ranking side suit, clubs. North ruffs the opening lead and should work out that partner's card at trick one was a clue to the winning continuation (granted, here, no other return is attractive). North fires back a club. South wins and gives partner the desired ruff. South can sit back safe in the knowledge that ♥ K is the setting trick.</p>					
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<p>♠ K 10 5 2 ♥ K 10 7 ♦ J 10 8 5 ♣ K 6</p> <p>♠ A 6 ♥ Q 9 8 5 3 2 ♦ 2 ♣ 8 5 4 2</p> <p>♠ Q J 10 7 3 ♥ A 6 ♦ K 7 6 4 ♣ A 9</p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1 ♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">All pass</td></tr></table> <p>Not all defences need a dynamic start (e.g. the lead of a singleton/doubleton) to be successful. Here West has some scattered values and knows partner isn't marked with a great deal. That said, if partner can get in we would welcome a diamond return (obviously the success of this is dependent on what diamond holding turns up in dummy). We lead a pretty solid top-of-a-sequence ♠Q. Declarer wins with ♠K and leads a low trump.</p> <p>East must be alert and ignore the old whist rule of "second hand plays low". East is aware of dummy's relative weakness in diamonds. Further if he can put West in with a diamond he'll receive a ruff. East rises with ♠A and returns a diamond. West is able to cash two rounds of the suit after which the diamond layout is known. A third diamond gives East the ruff that spells the contract's demise.</p> <p>Had East been caught napping (playing low at trick two) the contract would have made with declarer losing just two diamonds and the top trump.</p>	West	North	East	South				1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass			
West	North	East	South														
			1 ♠														
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠														
All pass																	

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable			
<p>♠ 5 4 3 2 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ A 8 6 4</p>	<p>♠ Q 7 ♥ K J 6 4 ♦ K Q 9 5 ♣ Q 10 7</p>	<p><b>West</b>      <b>North</b>      <b>East</b>      <b>South</b></p> <p>1N<sup>(1)</sup>      Pass      2♣<sup>(2)</sup>      Pass</p> <p>2♥      Pass      4♥      All pass</p> <p>1 12-14    2 Stayman</p>	
<p>It's often far from obvious, before making the opening lead, as to how a contract can be defeated. That said, it's always useful to come up with a plan that is sensible and which could lead to declarer failing. Here North, looking at two aces, is hoping for two other defensive tricks to beat 4♥. Perhaps partner has good diamonds; perhaps partner will have one diamond trick and can give North a ruff.</p> <p>Using this thinking North leads a top-of-a-doubleton ♦ 10. The spotlight falls on South. South can see ♦ 9 and knows partner's lead denies the higher (and touching) ♦ J. Using a system of leads where we lead second highest from bad holdings it's apparent that North has led either a singleton or a doubleton. Apart from ♦ A South has no other entry. If he wins the first diamond and returns the suit, but finds partner had started with a doubleton, there'll be no ruff for North.</p> <p>Does that mean that South must guess as to whether North has led from one or two cards? No. If North had a singleton West would be marked with <i>five</i> diamonds. With West showing 4hearts that would put West with 2452 shape. That's highly unlikely (and impossible if West has been taught not to open 1N with two doubletons). This evidence very strongly suggests that North has led from a doubleton.</p> <p>South should duck the opening lead (playing ♦ 7 as encouraging [or ♦ 3 if playing low likes]). He hopes North will get in quickly to play a second diamond. Yes, North takes the first trump (though second round will do). ♦ A, the diamond ruff and ♣ A give the defence four tricks.</p>			

Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable			
<p>♠ 9 7 2 ♥ A K J 6 4 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ K J</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 3 ♥ 10 5 3 2 ♦ 2 ♣ A Q 9 4</p>	<p><b>West</b>      <b>North</b>      <b>East</b>      <b>South</b></p> <p>Pass      1♥      Pass      2♦</p> <p>Pass      2N<sup>(1)</sup>      Pass      3♥<sup>(2)</sup></p> <p>Pass      4♥      All pass</p> <p>1 15-18 (<i>modern approach</i>)    2 3card heart support (<i>offering choice of games between 3N and 4♥</i>)</p>	
<p>It isn't always right to lead a singleton and listening to the bidding is important. Here dummy has shown a diamond suit and North will have some length (and, perhaps, values) in the suit too. Often when we lead a singleton when the opponents have shown the suit we make life easy for them.</p> <p>That's exactly what happens here. If East leads ♦ 2 it will have the effect of allowing declarer to pick up the suit without having to worry about it having broken 4-1. Trumps can be drawn and there are ten tricks (five in each red suit).</p> <p>What happens on the more solid lead of ♠ Q? Declarer will be defeated. The defence will take three spades and at least one club (if declarer covers the first or second round of spades, West will have to return a club for the defence to get the second club trick).</p>			

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable				
<p>♠ 10 7 2 ♥ A 4 ♦ J 10 3 ♣ 9 7 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ A Q J 9 8 6 ♥ J 10 3 ♦ 9 6 ♣ Q 2</p>	<p>West</p> <p>1 ♠ 3 ♠</p>	<p>North</p> <p>Pass Pass</p>	<p>East</p> <p>1 ♦ 3 ♦ 4 ♠</p>	<p>South</p> <p>Pass Pass All pass</p>
<p>With the opponents showing good diamonds and a spade fit it's likely that the defence's tricks will have to come from the other two suits. This is known as a cash out situation. We need to take our defensive tricks quickly. The best way to realise this is to start with the ultra-dynamic ♥ A. If partner has ♥ K North hopes to receive a ruff. Then just one more trick will defeat 4♠.</p> <p>On ♥ A South plays an encouraging ♥ 9 (or ♥ 2 of playing "low likes"). North continues with a second heart and, after taking the king, South plays a third round of the suit for North to ruff. North will switch to clubs and ♣ A will hold declarer to nine tricks.</p> <p>On an ineffective spade or diamond lead, declarer would make twelve tricks (six spades and six diamonds).</p>				

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable				
<p>♠ J 3 2 ♥ A J ♦ K 6 5 3 2 ♣ A K Q</p> <p>♠ 10 6 5 ♥ 10 8 7 6 4 ♦ Q 9 8 7 ♣ 3</p>	<p>West</p> <p>2 ♦ 4♣<sup>(1)</sup> 4N<sup>(2)</sup> 6♠</p>	<p>North</p> <p>Pass Pass Pass All pass</p>	<p>East</p> <p>Pass Pass Pass All pass</p>	<p>South</p> <p>1 ♠ 2 ♠ 4 ♦<sup>(1)</sup> 5 ♠<sup>(3)</sup></p>
<p>Again West can't <i>know</i> how the contract can be defeated but a good plan would be to say "I'll put partner with one black ace. That'll be enough to beat the contract after I've led my singleton club. If partner has ♣ A he'll return the suit and we'll defeat the slam at trick two; if partner has ♠ A he'll win quickly and, again, a second club will allow me to take my ruff".</p> <p>So West leads ♣ 3. Declarer wins and plays a spade taken, perforce, by East. On this card West plays ♠ 10. Why would West do that? East starts to think. The RCB response has marked declarer with both the king and queen of spades. That means West's ♠ 10 is the highest spade he holds. Perhaps he started with a singleton. If that were the case declarer cannot be defeated since we can now play him for (an unlikely) eight spades. That would give him seven spades, one heart, two diamonds (he's shown ♦ A) and two(+) clubs. That's twelve tricks.</p> <p>We should dismiss this as it doesn't defeat the contract. We should play partner to have pertered in trumps. In other words he's played a high (♠ 10) card to show that it is the start of playing high-low to confirm that he wants a club ruff. Yes, we may have automatically played a second club but partner's thoughtfulness has confirmed that the club return is correct. Superficially East may have thought he could just sit back and would take a heart trick.</p> <p>Always be grateful if partner does something to simplify the defence. Never presume that what's obvious to you is obvious from the other side of the table.</p>				

Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all			
<p>           ♠ 3            ♥ 10 9 7 6 4            ♦ A            ♣ K 7 5 4 3 2         </p> <p>           ♠ 7 5 4 2            ♥ Q 8 3            ♦ K Q J 8            ♣ Q J         </p>	<p>           ♠ A K Q 10 6            ♥ J 5 2            ♦ 10 9 7 6            ♣ A         </p> <p>           ♠ J 9 8            ♥ A K            ♦ 5 4 3 2            ♣ 10 9 8 6         </p>	<p> <b>West</b>            Pass         </p> <p> <b>North</b>            Pass         </p> <p> <b>East</b>            1 ♠            4 ♣         </p> <p> <b>South</b>            Pass            All pass         </p>	<p>           It's normal to lead an ace from ace king so when South starts with ♥ K North may have wondered whether partner has made a dynamic lead (from king doubleton) that has failed spectacularly. Never fear. South follows up with ♥ A and that sequence of plays confirms that South started with a doubleton.         </p> <p>           South obviously wants a heart ruff and it's important for North to signal where his entry is. He plays ♥ 10 on trick two and that tells South to lead a diamond (suit preference, a high card again asking for the return of the higher ranking suit). A diamond is returned and North continues the good work by playing ♥ 9, another high card. This tells South to continue diamonds. South takes the ruff and is able to give partner a diamond ruff.         </p> <p>           The contract has been held to eight tricks. Had the defence not have managed to take at least one ruff the contract would have made (thanks to the favourable lie of the heart suit).         </p>