

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

IMPs
North Deals
Both Vul



♠ 8 4
♥ 9 7 2
♦ Q J 7 6 5 2
♣ 5 3

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to this - the 42nd session of Shark's Pointers Online.

The other night, playing in a high level IMP Pairs game, playing against a couple of experts from Sweden and Slovakia, I picked up the above shown hand.

Partner, an expert player from the Dallas area, opened the bidding 1 ♠, and East overcalled 2 ♣.

If the vulnerability were different and if I had a different hand with a different suit, I might have bid.

For example, holding a slightly different hand....

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IMPs



♠ Q J 7 6 5 2
♥ 5 3
♦ 8 4
♣ 9 7 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♣	1 ♦	?

If the auction had gone 1 ♣ - 1 ♦ and I held this hand or the same hand with QJxxxx of hearts, I would make a weak jump shift. With this hand, I would bid 2 ♠.

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♠ 8 4
♥ 9 7 2
♦ Q J 7 6 5 2
♣ 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	2 ♣	?

With this hand, to jump to 3D could be disastrous. We're vulnerable, and I have no where to run if doubled. So, I quite reasonably passed.

The auction proceeded as follows...

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♠ 8 4
♥ 9 7 2
♦ Q J 7 6 5 2
♣ 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	Pass	?

West raised to 3 ♣, and this was passed around to me. Well. It was still risky, but knowing my opps had a big club fit, it seemed likely that my partner might have some diamond tolerance, so I decided to try to push them up a bit by bidding 3 ♦ in the passout seat. I knew it was still very dangerous and I might be going for a big number - but I decided to "take a shot".

The subsequent auction shocked me!

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♠ 8 4
♥ 9 7 2
♦ Q J 7 6 5 2
♣ 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	5 ♦	All pass	

5 ♦ by South

Wow! Partner jumped to 5D! what a shock! - And I wasn't even doubled!

The opening lead was the K of ♥, and this was the full deal...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

IMPs

North Deals

Both Vul

♠ A K 10 7 5
 ♥ A 4
 ♦ A 10 9 4
 ♣ 6 2



♠ 8 4
 ♥ 9 7 2
 ♦ Q J 7 6 5 2
 ♣ 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	5 ♦	All pass	

Opening Lead K of ♥

5 ♦ by South

We only have a combined total of 18 HCP, but we have a 10 card diamond fit - missing the K.

Just looking at the dummy, it is clear we have 2 club losers and 1 heart loser - plus a potential diamond loser. The heart lead is very favorable for us. If we can pick up the diamonds, all we need is to find the missing spades to divide 4-2. We only need to pitch one of our clubs and we can still make our game. If the opponents had started with two clubs, we would have needed spades 3-3 or QJ doubleton in either hand so we could pitch 2 heart losers.

We've all seen this situation before. It seems likely there is a singleton K of diamonds in one of the hands and that hand didn't want to double to give away the position. With the opening lead suggesting the K and Q of hearts in the West hand, it does seem likely that East holds the singleton K of diamonds. So, I started with two top spades. Both opps followed with the Q being played by W on the second round. I held my breath and played the Ace of diamonds off dummy....

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IMPs

North Deals

Both Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	5 ♦	All pass	

Opening Lead K of ♥

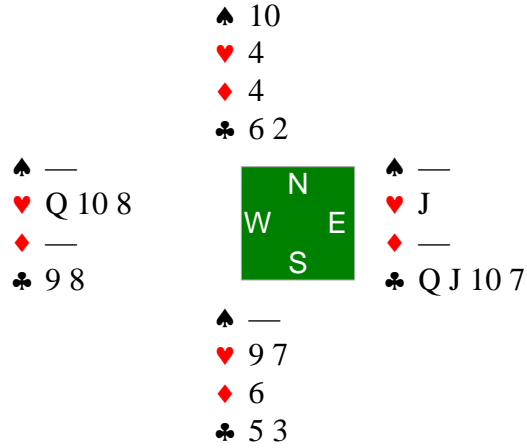
5 ♦ by South

When the K of ♦ dropped under the Ace, I was able to ruff a spade high in hand, cross to dummy with a diamond and ruff another spade in hand.

A diamond to dummy and this was the position...

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North Deals
Both Vul



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	5 ♦	All pass	

Opening Lead K of ♥

5 ♦ by South

Declarer now cashed the established 10 of ♠, pitching a club. Having lost no tricks yet, declarer was able to play a club from dummy, concede a heart and cross rull to claim 11 tricks - making 5 ♦!

This was a very lucky hand. But today's Shark's Pointer is forget about points - it's all about trumps! Bid a lot with a big trump fit, bid very conservatively with a misfit.

Later, playing with the same partner, I held the following...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

South Deals
None Vul



♠ 10 9 6 4 3
♥ K 8 2
♦ K 10 6 5 3
♣ —

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
1 ♠	Dbl	Pass	2 ♦
All pass			

Opening Lead J of ♥

2 ♦ by South

I passed as dealer, neither vul, and after LHO's 1 ♠ opener and partner's double, I bid 2 ♦. I liked my hand a lot, but if I jumped to 3D and partner had a big hand with clubs, I wouldn't like it very much at all.

I was disappointed - to say the least - when I saw the following dummy after the opening lead of the J of ♥...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

IMPs
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ 8
 ♥ A Q 4
 ♦ A 9 8 7
 ♣ A 8 7 5 2



♠ 10 9 6 4 3
 ♥ K 8 2
 ♦ K 10 6 5 3
 ♣ —

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
1 ♠	Dbl	Pass	2 ♦
All pass			

Opening Lead J of ♥

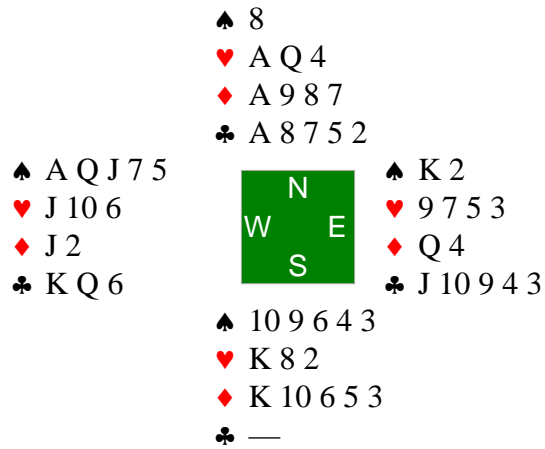
2 ♦ by South

Because of his controls and his trumps, North has a clear raise of diamonds! He couldn't have a much better hand. 4 decent trumps, a singleton spade and all working values.

If North just remembered today's Pointer- ..."all you need is Trumps..", he would raise to 3D. There are a couple of other reasons to bid. Partner has denied 4 hearts - opps very well may have a heart fit, passing 2D invites them to balance in - or to balance with 2S - neither of which North will like. As you can see....

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

IMPs
 South Deals
 None Vul



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Dbl	Pass	Pass
All pass			2 ♦

Opening Lead J of ♥

2 ♦ by South

Looking at all 4 hands, it is clear that NS are ice cold for 5D!

OK, let's look at one more recent example.

This time I held this modest assortment...

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IMPs
West Deals
E-W Vul



♠ J 7 2
♥ K Q 5 2
♦ 9
♣ K Q J 5 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	2 ♠	Dbl	?

I held this hand at favorable. My partner made a weak jump overcall in spades. Looks like we have 1 or two spade losers and a trick in each other suit - 4 or 5 losers. I usually like to have a top spade honor to redouble or even to raise spades directly. Looks like opps have a big diamond fit.

Not sure what to do hear. I hate to allow opps to exchange info.

What would you do?

Pass, 3H, 3C, 3S and 4S all have some merit. My style is to bid 3C for the lead, then revert to spades. It's not likely the opponents will pass out 3C.

Here was the complete deal...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

IMPs

West Deals

E-W Vul

	♠ K 10 9 6 5 3		
	♥ 10 7 4		
	♦ Q 10 4		
	♣ 4		
♠ Q 8	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ A 4	
♥ A 9 8 6 3		♥ J	
♦ K 5 2		♦ A J 8 7 6 3	
♣ A 10 9		♣ 8 7 6 3	
	♠ J 7 2		
	♥ K Q 5 2		
	♦ 9		
	♣ K Q J 5 2		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	2 ♠	Dbl	3 ♣
Pass	Pass	3 ♦	3 ♠
All pass			
3 ♠ by North			

Due to their heart ruff, they defeated us by 1 trick - but 3 NT was cold - even with diamonds being misguessed with a spade lead to West's Q. EW did well to avoid 5D - which appears to have no play from the long diamond side.

The point of all of this is that with a lot of trumps - bid a lot.

This is the whole basis behind Larry Cohen's *The Law of Total Tricks*. This is essentially *The Law of Total Trumps*. With a 9 card trump fit - contract for 9 tricks. With a 10 card trump fit - contract for 10 tricks - more or less regardless of your high cards (depending upon the vulnerability). But you have to be careful - vulnerability matters - and even non vulnerable doesn't mean invulnerable! The other thing you need to remember is that total trick estimates are frequently off by at least 1 trick. Look at this actual hand from last week, for example...

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West Deals
Both Vul

♠ A K 5
♥ Q 10 8 7 3 2
♦ 2
♣ 10 9 4



♠ 3
♥ A K J 9
♦ Q J 10 6 3
♣ K 6 5

Note - NS have 10 hearts. EW have 9 spades. The Law of Total Tricks would suggest that there should be 19 total tricks. But here's the entire deal...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

West Deals
Both Vul

♠ A K 5		♠ 9 6 4 2
♥ Q 10 8 7 3 2		♥ 5
♦ 2		♦ A 9 5 4
♣ 10 9 4		♣ Q J 7 3
♠ Q J 10 8 7	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	
♥ 6 4		
♦ K 8 7		
♣ A 8 2		
♠ 3		
♥ A K J 9		
♦ Q J 10 6 3		
♣ K 6 5		

The Law of Total Tricks would suggest that there should be 19 total tricks.

EW can make 8 tricks. They will lose 2 trumps, a club, a heart and a diamond ruff.

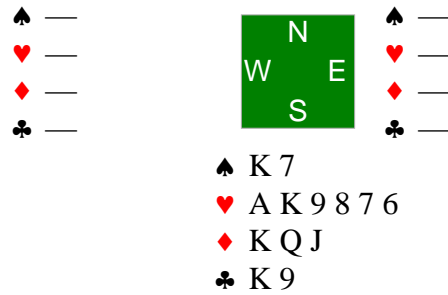
NS can make 10 tricks. They will lose 2 clubs and a diamond.

So there are only 18 total tricks - not 19 as predicted.

Note, however that if the Ace of clubs is with East, NS will only lose 1 club and 1 diamond, so there will be 19 total tricks in this lie of the cards.

OK, I think you got it. Let's switch gears now. Let's say you have the following hand...

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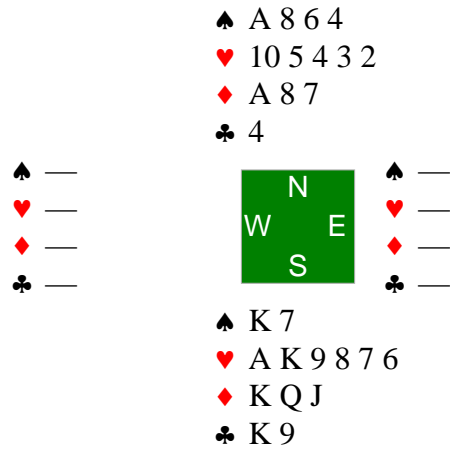


Let's wrap up with a discussion of a couple of scenarios in which you and your partner are known to have a lot of trumps - but you aren't certain how high you would be safe to bid - whether there might be a game or a slam.

You open 1 ♥ and partner bids 4 ♥. What do you do?

Let's say you pass and partner puts down the following dummy...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

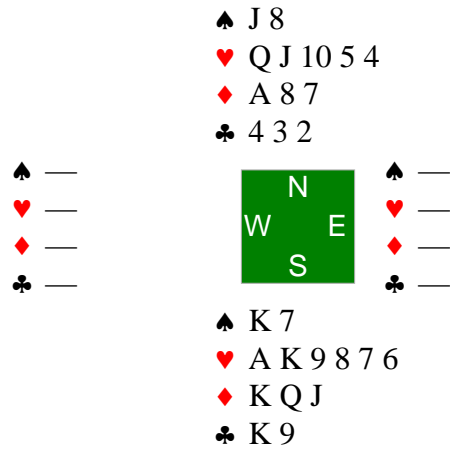


You open 1 ♥ and partner bids 4 ♥. What do you do?

Let's say you pass and partner puts down the following dummy... 6 ♥ is ice cold.

OK, so let's start over and now bid 4 NT (RKCB) and partner of course, comes down with the following hand...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need

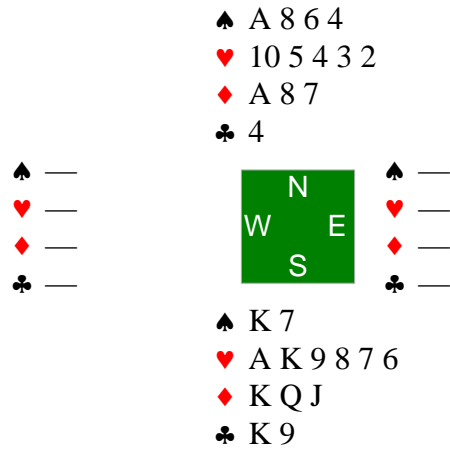


You bid RKCB, partner shows 1 ace. You stop in 5 ♥, and the defense starts with a spade to East's Ace and a club back to your K and West's Ace - down 1.

Is there any way to know what to do?

Well, there is no guarantee, but a great tool is the use of 3 NT over 1 of a major by partner to show 5 trumps and 1.5 to 2 outside defensive tricks and a direct jump of 4 of partner's major to show 0-1 outside defensive tricks. So with the above hand the auction would be 1H - 4H, and South will clearly pass. And on the other hand...

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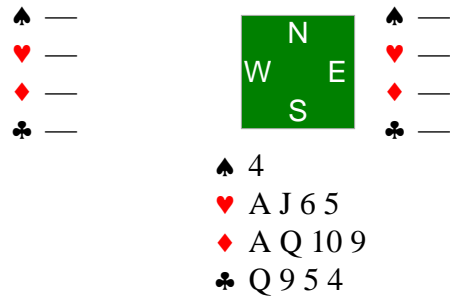
The auction would be 1H - 3 NT (Note: The North hand is not strong enough to splinter.)

And after this auction, South will not unreasonably check for Aces and get to the slam.

OK. One final convention I want to acquaint you with before we leave today.

You hold the following hand ...

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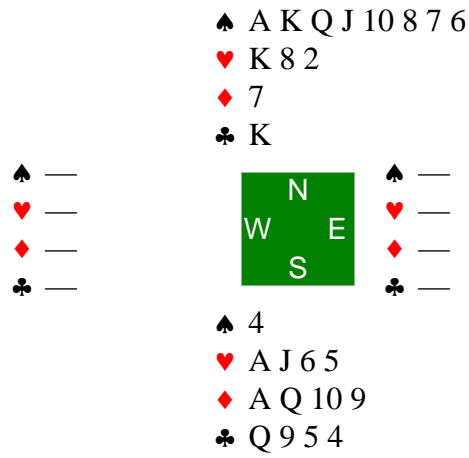


Your partner opens the bidding 4S. Your call.

Let's assume you pass.

Here's the entire deal...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need



Your partner opens the bidding 4S. Your call.

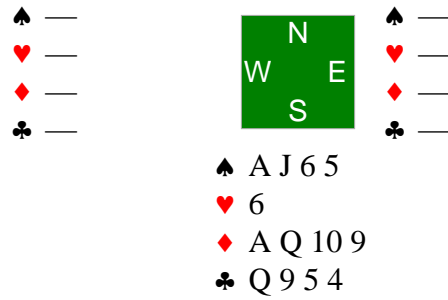
Let's assume you pass.

Here's the entire deal...

6 ♠ is ice cold.

OK. So later in the session, your partner opens the bidding 4 ♥ and you hold the following hand...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need



Your partner opens the bidding 4S. Your call.

Let's assume you pass.

Here's the entire deal...

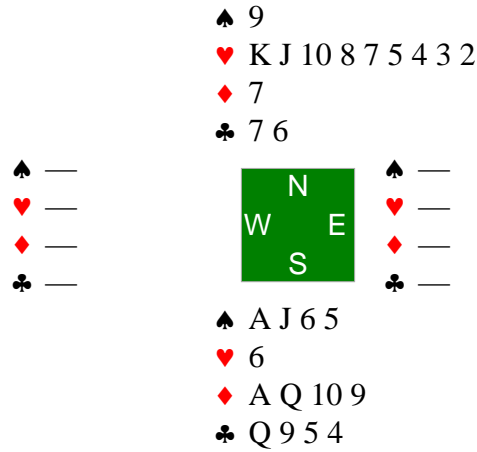
6 ♠ is ice cold.

OK. So later in the session, your partner opens the bidding 4 ♥ and you hold the following hand...

Ahh, this looks very familiar. You know what to do. You bid Blackwood! Partner shows 1 or 4 keycards which gets doubled, you bid 5 ♥ and that gets doubled.

Here's the complete hand...

All You Need Is Trumps- Trumps - Trump Is All You Need



Your partner opens the bidding 4S. Your call.

Let's assume you pass.

Here's the entire deal...

6 ♠ is ice cold.

OK. So later in the session, your partner opens the bidding 4 ♥ and you hold the following hand...

Ahh, this looks very familiar. You know what to do. You bid Blackwood! Partner shows 1 or 4 keycards which gets doubled, you bid 5 ♥ and that gets doubled.

Here's the complete hand...

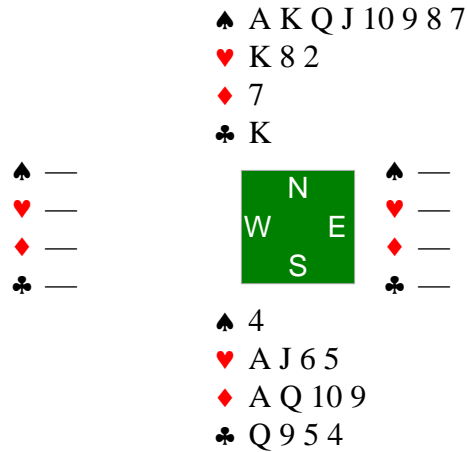
Any way to avoid these disasters?

Yes! There's a very popular convention called NAMYATS (Stayman spelled backwards).

On the hand shown above, one would open 4 ♥ (or 4 ♠ if that were the long major).

On the earlier hand....

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Your partner would open 4 ♣ to show a good 4 ♥ opener, and 4 ♦ to show a good 4 ♠ opener.

A "good" opener is defined as 8.5 to 9 winners.

Using these methods, in order to preempt with 8 or 9 clubs or diamonds, one would open 3 NT.

Typically, this would show a broken suit. With 8 or 9 solid one would probably open 1 of a minor in the hope of playing 3 NT - from the right side.

You may or may want to explore the 1M - 3 NT bid showing a good raise to 4 with 5 trumps and the various sequences associated with Namyats.

There's a lot to both. Don't rush into adopting either of these until you and your partner have a very clear understanding of what constitutes the various bids and your various responses.

These are all about trumps!

Today's Shark's Pointer is: Bid more with more trumps - but use discretion and be aware of tools at your disposal to help you get to the best contract most of the time.

See you next week - same time, same station!