



Declarer in Trump Suit



The first step in making a plan for a suit contract is to count your potential Losers then decide which techniques to use for extra tricks – you may need to use two or more techniques in a contract:

- a. Force out defenders' high cards (**Promotion**) in your best side suit. Keep cover in other two suits.
- b. Use the power of the **Length** of a suit which will be your best side suit
- c. Use the position of a defender's high card(s) via a **Finesse**
- d. Discard losers on winners. May have to do this before drawing trumps.
- e. Use trumps in dummy to **ruff** losers and develop side suit. Do this before drawing trumps.

Look for ruffs (trumping) in the short hand. It may be necessary to take the ruffs in the short hand BEFORE drawing opponent's trumps. Draw trumps as soon as it is safe to do so – at least two rounds.

Note: Ruffing in the long hand does not create extra tricks but ruffing in the short hand does.

Count trumps – the number of trumps gone as well as which trumps have been played.

Use knowledge of opponent's bidding - Interfering bids, Doubles (take-out, passed hand take-out, negative, responsive) or Pre-empts (long suit thus shortage in other suits) for Finessing.

Can use 8 ever / 9 never rule. If you have 8 trumps combining declarer's and dummy's hands then finesse the Q. If you have 9 trumps then lead out A then K and hope the remaining four trumps fall ie. two in each opponent's hands. When finessing the Q you need AJ or KJ in one hand.

When would you **not** draw trumps (or not all of them):

- When you need trumps for ruffing (typically in short hand) or to establish a suit to discard a loser
- Have too many losers and if declarer will lose the lead playing trumps (e.g. missing trump Ace) and the defenders can then cash their winners before you have time to discard them
- When a bad break is discovered (e.g. 4:0 split)
- Stop drawing trumps if the outstanding trumps are the highest, force opponents to use them to trump in rather than taking your (declarer's) remaining trumps

Rule of Thumb: with 20 HCP or less defend in 2 of a major or 3 of a minor to be competitive.

SUMMARY

1. In a suit contract begin by counting losers then make a simple and safest plan.
2. When playing in a suit contract, declarer's first task is typically to "draw trumps" if it safe to do so.
3. If drawing trumps will exhaust one hand's trumps, there will be no trumps remaining to ruff losers. The ruffs will need to be taken before trumps are drawn. Sometimes the need to take a discard or establish a suit that will provide a discard is more pressing than the need to draw trumps.
4. Always count the trump suit. And if possible, count cards in best side suit as well.
5. Building on NT techniques (Promotion, Length & Finesse), we now have two extra techniques being Ruffing in the Short Hand and Discarding a Loser on a Winner.

Examples of How to make a Plan in a Trump Suit

Your hand South:	♠ 5	♥ AQJ854	♦ AQ4	♣ 982
Contract:	4H			
Lead:	AC (top of a sequence) Defenders win three club tricks then switch to a trump.			
Dummy North:	♠ AJ63	♥ K942	♦ 93	♣ J76
Losers: 4	S: 0	H: 0	D: 1	C: 3 Total: 4
Strategy: using the finesse and ruffing a loser techniques to make your contract	You have already lost three club tricks, so you must avoid any losers in diamonds. You must hope for a successful finesse of the QD to save one loser. You can then save another by ruffing the third round of diamonds in the dummy. You combine the techniques of finessing and ruffing. Best strategy: I will draw trumps, finesse the QD (hoping that East holds KD) and then ruff a diamond in the dummy.			

Your hand South:	♠ 75	♥ K6	♦ A109653	♣ K84
Contract:	6D			
Lead:	QC (top of a sequence)			
Dummy North:	♠ AKQ6	♥ Q94	♦ QJ8	♣ A73
Losers: 3	S: 0	H: 1	D: 1	C: 1 Total: 3
Strategy: combining the finesse, ruffing a loser and promotion with a little luck to make a slam.	You must avoid two losers to make the slam. A successful trump finesse will save one loser and the club loser can be discarded on dummy's spades. Win the club lead with dummy's AC and run the QD. If West follows with a low diamond, repeat the diamond finesse and draw all the trumps. Continue with the AS, KS and QS discarding the club loser. Finally, you can knock out the AH to set up a trick in hearts. This combines the techniques of finessing and discarding. Even if you're not in slam, this is the best strategy to make maximum tricks. So best plan: win the lead with AC, finesse trumps and draw all trumps. Then discard the club loser on the spades and set up a heart trick through promotion.			

Your hand South:	♠ A3	♥ AKJ963	♦ A76	♣ 65
Bidding:	S: 1H W: Pass	N: 2H E: Pass	S: 4H W: Pass	All pass
Lead:	KD (top of a sequence)			
Dummy North:	♠ 65	♥ Q102	♦ 932	♣ A10874
Losers: 4	S: 1	H: 0	D: 2	C: 1 Total: 4
Strategy: How to establish a long suit to discard a loser	Set up dummy's club for a spade discard. You win the diamond lead and before playing trumps duck a round of clubs. Defenders win two diamond tricks then switch to a trump. What now? Win the trump in hand, cross to AC and ruff a club with a high trump to avoid risking an overruff. West shows out on the third round of clubs and you return to dummy with a trump to the 10. Another club ruff with a high trump establishes the 13 th club in dummy. You cross to the QH and discard your spade loser on the 10C. Best plan is to win the diamond lead and duck a club. Then cross to the AC and set up the club suit (ruffing twice if necessary) and then discarding the spade loser on the last club in dummy.			

Your hand South:	♠ Q10974	♥ K53	♦ KJ6	♣ K7
Bidding:	N: 1C	S: 1S	N: 2S	S: 4S All pass
Lead:	QH (top of sequence)			
Dummy North:	♠ KJ83	♥ A62	♦ Q82	♣ QJ5
Losers: 4	S: 1	H: 1	D: 1	C: 1 Total: 4
Strategy: establish a discard before drawing trumps	The only way to make the contract is to discard a losing heart on dummy's club. If you play trumps first, a heart will come back taking out your second heart cover and after losing to the AC, you will lose a heart trick. Best plan is to win the heart lead with the king and immediately set up the clubs by playing the king from hand. You can then throw your losing heart on dummy's third club winner then draw trumps and establish the diamonds.			