

Trump-Suit Management

As Declarer in a Trump Contract

- One of your first thoughts should be how to handle the trump suit.
- In general you should extract the opponent's trump as soon as you can.
- However, if you don't have the ace of trump, you should think carefully before you give the opponents the lead.

You May Have Some Work to Do Before You Pull Trump

♠ 7 4 2
♥ K 9 7
♦ K 9 3
♣ Q J 4 3

♠
♥ Q J 10 8 5
♦ A 7 4 2
♣ A K 4 3

Another Hand Where You Delay Pulling Trump

♠ A 7 4 2

♥ 7 3

♦ A K 6 5

♣ J 7 2

♠ K 8 6 3

♥ A 6 5 2

♦ 4 3

♣ A 4 3

When You Need Trump for Transportation

♠ 5 4 2
♥ AKJ5
♦ J65
♣ 963

♠ A Q J 10
♥ Q 8 7 6 2
♦ AK
♣ A 4

When You Need a Dummy Reversal

♠ J 5 4 2

♥ K J 10

♦ A K 5

♣ A 6 3

♠ K

♠

♥ A Q 9 6 2

♦ 9 6 2

♣ J 7 5 4 2

You must also be concerned with how to pull trump

A
9
7
3

In isolation, I know you know how to play this suit.

K
J
8
5

But, consider two different hands, with the same trump holding.

Hand 1 “Eight Ever, Nine Never”

♠ 10 9 6
♥ A 9 7 3
♦ 5
♣ K J 10 4 3

South	West	North	East
1nt	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♥	pass	4 ♥	all pass

♠ 5

♠ Q 3 2
♥ K J 8 5
♦ A J 4
♣ A Q 6

Hand 2 “Eight Ever, Nine Never”

♠ 7 6 4 3
♥ A 9 7 3
♦ A 8 3
♣ J 10

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	1 ♠	double	2 ♠
4 ♥	all pass		

♠ A

♠ 2
♥ K J 8 5
♦ 7 5
♣ A K Q 9 8 4

You must also be concerned with how to pull trump.



A

9

7

6

3

In isolation, I know you know how to play this suit.

But the difference between the finesse and the drop is only about 3 percentage points.



K

J

8

5

Now, suppose you were to know that west had started with 6 spades and east had only 2.

Hand 3 “Eight Ever, Nine Never”

♠ 6
♥ K J 10 9
♦ A 10 8 3 2
♣ A 7 4

South	West	North	East
1 nt	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♦	pass	3 ♦	pass
3nt	all pass		

♠ K

♠ A 8
♥ Q 5 2
♦ K J 5 4
♣ K Q J 10

Hand 4 “Eight Ever, Nine Never”

♠ 5 2
♥ A K 3 2
♦ A 10 8 3 2
♣ 7 4

South	West	North	East
1 nt	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♦	pass	3 ♦	pass
3nt	all pass		

♠ 6

♠ K Q 4
♥ Q J 9
♦ K 9 5 4
♣ A 5 2

Consider this Situation

♠ 5 2
♥ A K 3 2
♦ A 10 8 3 2
♣ K Q

South	West	North	East
1 nt	pass	2 ♣	pass
2 ♦	pass	6nt	all pass

♠ 6

♠ K Q 4
♥ Q J 9
♦ K 9 5 4
♠ A 5 2

East wins the spade ace and continues spades, which you win with your queen. You play a diamond toward dummy. West plays the queen.

Safety Plays

- A safety play can sometimes insure a contract when a suit splits in an adverse way.
- However, a safety play often gives up a trick that would not be lost if the suit split in a normal manner.
- In matchpoint scoring, that can produce a sub-par result.

Safety Play Hand 1

	South	West	North	East
♠ A 2	----	-----	1 nt	pass
♥ A 10 3 2	2 ♦	pass	3 ♥	pass
♦ A 10 8 3	4nt	pass	5 ♦	pass
♣ K Q 4	6 ♥			

♠ 6

♠ K Q 4
 ♥ Q 8 7 6 5 4
 ♦ K 4
 ♠ A 5

You have 6 ♥ made with no problem, unless one defender has all 3 (K, J, 9) missing trump. To guard against that possibility, lead a low heart from north toward dummy, covering any thing east plays, except of course the king. If either opponent has all three hearts, you will lose only one.

Safety Play Hand 2

	South	West	North	East
♠ 7 5 3 2	----	3 ♦	dbld	pass
♥ K Q 3 2	4 ♠	all pass		
♦ A 3				
♣ K Q 4				

♦ 6

♠ A Q 10 9
♥ A J 5
♦ Q J 2
♣ A J

You arrive at 4 ♠, after a preemptive 3 ♦ bid by west. How will you play the hand?