

Hi everyone – It’s Roger Heath-Brown here. There were lots of interesting hands last night. How does one choose which one to talk about? Krys suggested I take the easy option and select hand 15. (For those who don’t remember this was passed out at most tables!)

	♠AQJ5	
	♥AQ9	
	♦9843	
	♣A2	
♠K1097		♠6
♥J62		♥K105
♦AK6		♦QJ1075
♣954		♣10873
	♠8432	
	♥8743	
	♦2	
	♣KQJ6	

Instead I’ve chose board 16, which shows some nice play in the trump suit. It was played in spades at all tables bar one, with contracts everything from 1♠ to 4♠, and 8, 9, 10, or 11 tricks being taken. A top diamond was led at every table, but from then on various lines of play developed.

At our table, against two robots, West overtook the opening Diamond lead and led a heart. Paul, as declarer, took the losing Heart finesse, won the heart return, and crossed to ♣J for a trump finesse. He then cashed ♠A to reveal the bad break:-

	♠Q5	
	♥9	
	♦984	
	♣A	
♠K9		♠-
♥6		♥10
♦A6		♦J105
♣95		♣1083
	♠84	
	♥87	
	♦-	
	♣KQ6	

Declarer now played ♣A, followed by a Diamond ruff and ♣K, discarding ♥9 from hand. He could then cross-ruff a Heart and another Diamond, to leave this ending:-

	♠Q	
	♥-	
	♦9	
	♣-	
♠K9		♠-
♥-		♥-
♦-		♦J
♣-		♣10
	♠-	
	♥8	
	♦-	
	♣K	

With the lead in dummy, West was left with no good option – Declarer is due to score his ♠Q whatever West does, a situation dubbed a “coup en passant”.

Sadly, when West produced the ♠9 Declarer discarded his ♦9 as a result of a mislick!

	♠ AQJ5	
	♥ AQ9	
	♦ 9843	
	♣ A2	
♠ K1097		♠ 6
♥ J62		♥ K105
♦ AK6		♦ QJ1075
♣ 954		♣ 10873
	♠ 8432	
	♥ 8743	
	♦ 2	
	♣ KQJ6	

Another nice trump play was demonstrated by Ruth Kim. In this case the Diamond lead was followed by a Club, won by Declarer with the Ace. Dummy was then entered twice with diamond ruffs, taking the trump finesse twice on the way back, to reach this position:-

	♠ A5	
	♥ AQ9	
	♦ 9	
	♣ 2	
♠ K10		♠ -
♥ J62		♥ K105
♦ -		♦ J7
♣ 95		♣ 83
	♠ -	
	♥ 8743	
	♦ -	
	♣ KQJ	

Declarer has taken 5 tricks and needs 5 more for her 4S contract. Dummy's ♣KQ are cashed, Declarer throwing ♦9, and on ♣J West plays ♠10. What should North play from ♠A5, ♥AQ9? It's a situation we should all recognize when defending, but it is more unusual for Declarer – a trump promotion opportunity. North discards ♥9 rather than over-ruffing, and now takes ♥A, ♠A, and ♠5 for three more tricks. Nicely done!