

Drawing trumps

Trumps should be an advantage to you, not to the opposition. Draw trumps first, unless you have a good reason not to, for example: -

- you need to cross-ruff to make extra tricks
- you don't want to lose the lead
- you must discard your losers first

If you want an Ace to win, don't let it be trumped! If you can't see the tricks you need, count your losers and plan to discard them.

NORTH

♠ 9 8 2
♥ Q J 3 2
♦ A K Q J
♣ J 4

SOUTH

♠ J 10 6
♥ A K 7 6 4
♦ 9 8 5
♣ A 2

Contract: 4♥ by South

♣K led

1. Count top winners: 9 ♥AKQJ, ♦AKQJ, A♣
2. Count length winners: 1 ♥7
3. Extra tricks needed: 0
4. Losers: possible: 4 You can discard a club on your last diamond trick

Winners and losers don't always add up to 13. You may have 10 winners but if the opposition can take 4 tricks you will never have a chance to make yours. If this is likely you must plan to get rid of your losing cards by discarding or trumping them.

PLAN: You have 7 diamonds, so the opposition have 6. If they break 4:2, after the second round they will start to trump your diamond winners. Win with the A♣, play trumps until the defenders show out, then win your diamond tricks.

Drawing the last trump

When drawing trumps and the opponents have one left, draw the last trump if it's lower than yours. If it's higher than yours, it is often better to leave it. They will win a trick with it anyway, and it will cost you one or two trumps to remove it. Remember it's still out there!

Trump losers in your short suit

It is unlikely you will gain from trumping losers in the hand that holds the longest trumps, so plan to trump in the hand with the shorter holding.

♠ AKQJ109



♠ 876

With Spades as trumps, declarer can lead them to win 6 tricks. If declarer trumps cards with the 9 and 10 from the long holding, the maximum number of tricks available is still only 6. If declarer can trump other cards from the short suit holding, however, then up to 3 extra tricks can be made.