

Deal 1

West Deals
None Vul

♠ K 8 6 4 2	♠ —	♠ A 7 5 3
♥ —	♥ A K 9 6 5 4 2	♥ 10 7 3
♦ J 10 7 3	♦ A Q 4	♦ K 9 8
♣ Q J 10 2	♣ K 7 5	♣ A 9 6
	♠ Q J 10 9	
	♥ Q J 8	
	♦ 6 5 2	
	♣ 8 4 3	

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			
4 ♥ by North			
Lead: ♥ 3			

North is to play 4 ♥. East leads the ♥ 3.

Losers: ♠=0 ♥=0 ♦=2 ♣=3 Total = 5

If West has the ♦ K, one ♦ loser can be eliminated by a finesse. And, if West also has the ♣ A one more loser can be eliminated by leading toward your ♣ K. The chance of both cards being held by West isn't very good, only about 25%. But dummy has some nice ♠s. Can you use them?

Yes, you can establish 2 ♠ winners for discards, and most importantly, you can do it without letting West into the lead. This is important because if West gets in and plays a ♣ through your ♣ K 7 5 it might be a disaster.

So win the ♥ J in dummy. Uh-Oh, West discards a ♠. Now play the ♠ Q and when West plays low, discard a ♣. This is a loser on loser play and East takes the trick with the ♠ A.

East now leads the ♥ 7. You cover with dummy's ♥ 8 knowing the finesse will win. Next you play dummy's ♠ J, covered by West and ruffed by you (if West didn't cover you would throw another ♣ loser). Now enter dummy with the ♥ Q, pulling East's last trump at the same time. Discard your 2 ♣s on the ♠ T 9 and try the ♦ finesse for an overtrick.

Just the fact that you had to use the trump suit for entries to dummy, and therefore couldn't immediately pull trumps.

Deal 2

East Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 3
♥ K Q J 7
♦ 10 6 4
♣ A J 10 7

6
11 6
17

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 ♠
Pass	1 NT	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

4 ♠ by South
Lead: ♥ K

♠ K 6
♥ 8 5 4 2
♦ K 8 7 2
♣ 9 5 4



♠ A Q J 9 7 4
♥ A 6
♦ A Q
♣ 6 3 2

♠ 10 5 2
♥ 10 9 3
♦ J 9 5 3
♣ K Q 8

Losers: ♠=0 ♥=1 ♦=0 ♣=3 Total = 4

This is a very easy problem to be up here at number 18! Clearly you have to discard one of those 4 losers on the only card dummy has, the ♦ K.

Just as clearly you have to be able to enter dummy after you unblock the ♦ A Q so you can't pull trumps immediately.

So here's the Plan. Win the ♥ A. Pull one round of trumps with the ♠ A. Play the ♦ A Q to get them out of the way. Enter dummy with the ♠ K. Play the ♦ K, discard a loser, and hope nobody ruffs.

. . . except when you have a good reason not to, like here.

Deal 3

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 9 8
♥ Q 5 2
♦ 9 7 5 4
♣ Q 10 6

17
8 5
10

West	North	East	South
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	4 NT	Pass	6 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
6 ♥ by North			
Lead: ♠ Q			

♠ K 6 5 4 2
♥ A K 8 7 4
♦ A
♣ K 3



♠ —
♥ 10 9 6
♦ K Q J 10 3
♣ A 8 7 4 2

♠ Q J 10 7 3
♥ J 3
♦ 8 6 2
♣ J 9 5

South's 6 ♥ response to Blackwood showed one Ace and a ♠ void. North is to play 6 ♥. East leads the ♠ Q.

Losers: ♠ = ?? ♥ = 1 ♦ = 0 ♣ = 0
Total = 1 ??

Of course you ruff the ♠ in dummy. East wouldn't underlead an Ace at a slam contract, and since you have a certain trump loser you cannot afford to lose a trick to West's ♠ A.

Dummy has some great ♦s, but you can't expect to run them unless you have pulled all the trumps. But if you play ♥ A K 4 the defenders will take their trump trick and immediately set the contract with the ♠ A. There IS a way around the problem.

First off, you must get a 3-2 split in trumps because if they don't split 3-2 you will have two trump losers. So you assume that they are split just like you need them to be.

At trick two you duck a trump. That's right, you lose a trump trick early. Since you have to lose a trump sometime, you do it at a time when the defenders can't hurt you. So a defender wins the trump trick, but now a ♠ play won't hurt because dummy still has a trump to ruff with! In fact, whatever they play next you will win, pull the outstanding trumps, then run dummy's ♦ suit.

for the full deal.

When you have a trump loser but still need to pull their trumps, it may be better for you to lose an early trump trick rather than a later one.

Deal 4

North Deals

None Vul

♠ J 10 9 8 3

♥ 6

♦ K J 9 7 4

♣ J 10

 20
 6 7
 7

West

Pass

Pass

Pass

6 ♥ by South

Lead: ♠ J

♠ A K Q

♥ A K 9 8

♦ A 10 8 6 3

♣ 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 7 4 2

♥ Q J 10 7

♦ 5

♣ A 8 6 4 2

North

1 ♦

4 NT

6 ♥

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

1 ♥

5 ♦

Pass

Agreed that the bidding wasn't much. The final contract is still a good one. South is to play 6 ♥. West leads the ♠ J.

Losers: ♠=0 ♥=0 ♦=0 ♣=4 Total = 4

There really aren't 4 ♣ losers since they can be ruffed in dummy. In fact you should see that this is an ideal cross-ruff hand, ruffing ♣s in dummy and ♦s in your hand. Since neither hand can be over-ruffed you expect to make all 8 trumps.

Remember, when playing a cross ruff, you need to take any side suit winners first, otherwise a defender may be able to discard that suit while you are ruffing. So you win the ♠ A, then take the ♠ K, then . . . what?

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Well, if you win the ♠ Q, then the two Minor suit Aces, you'd be set up to cross-ruff the hand out for all 13 tricks. But here's what might happen if you try.

East might ruff the ♠ Q. OK, no disaster yet. But he might then play a trump. Your slam is now kaput. You can no longer make 8 trump tricks and will end up down 1.

The answer is to not be greedy for that overtrick. With West's opening ♠ lead there is an indication of possible length there. So, realizing that East could be short in the suit, take just the 2 ♠ tricks that you need for the slam, then play your Minor Aces and start the cross-ruff.

Don't jeopardize your contract trying to take too many.