

Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

♠ K J 9 6

♥ J T 5 4

♦ T 6

♣ T 8 5

♠ A T 4 3

♥ 7 3

♦ K Q 8 7 4 2

♣ 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q

♥ Q 9 8 6 2

♦ 9 5

♣ K Q J 9 3

♠ 8 7 5 2

♥ A K

♦ A J 3

♣ A 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

4 ♠ by South

the time). You win the ♣A and play a small ♠ toward dummy. West puts on the ♠Q which you take with dummy's ♠A, East following with the ♠6.

Do you play ♠s again? or not?

Not. With both defenders following suit, the possibility of 4 ♠ losers is gone so you can lose at most 3. But that ♠Q from West is ominous. If you play another ♠ and they do split 3-2 you will make 11 tricks, losing only 2 trumps. But if East has 3 ♠s left he will win the trick, pull all the rest of the trumps, and lead a ♣ to West.

The guaranteed way to make the contract is to play no more ♠s, but to start playing ♦ winners. The defenders can make their 3 trump tricks but you maintain control of the hand.

But with a different distribution, (3-2), playing the second trump would have been great.

Considering probabilities it looks like this. If you play the second trump you will make 2 overtricks about 70% of the time, but you will go down 4 about 30% of the time.

If you stop with the ♠s and start running ♦s you will make your contract 10% of the time but will never make an overtrick.

Baker 100NT 93

It is tempting to just bid 3NT and hope the ♦s come in. But not when you have a 4-card Major suit. Instead you bid a Stayman 2♣. Partner says 2♠; what do you bid next?

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Well, he has 4 ♠s. That's why you used Stayman so you bid 4♠.

The contract would be 4♠ played by North.

To make South the declarer ROTATE.

South plays 4♠. West leads the ♣K. Seeing T top tricks sort of makes you wish you had just bid 3NT.

Missing 5 ♠s, the most likely split is 3-2, (68% of

the time). You win the ♣A and play a small ♠ toward dummy. West puts on the ♠Q which you take with dummy's ♠A, East following with the ♠6.

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Board 2
 West Deals
 N-S Vul
 ♠ Q J 3
 ♥ A 5
 ♦ A K 8 2
 ♣ Q 8 3 2

♠ 9 7 4
 ♥ J 9 7 2
 ♦ Q T
 ♣ A K 6 5
 N
 W E
 S
 ♠ K T 6 2
 ♥ K Q T 8 6 3
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 7 4
 ♠ A 8 5
 ♥ 4
 ♦ J 9 7 6 4 3
 ♣ J T 9

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	4♥	All Pass

4♥ by East

So after ruffing the third ♣ you play ♥A, then ♥Q. Aargh! South discards a ♦ on the second trump.

North has left the ♥J 9 while you have the ♥Q T 8. If only dummy had another ♥ you could finesse North's ♥J, but, alas, dummy has none. Can you see another way to accomplish the finesse?

If you could manage to be in dummy after trick 11, and have nothing in your hand but the ♥Q T, while North had nothing in his hand but the ♥J 9 you would have him. But to accomplish this you must use up your ♥8 beforehand.

You enter dummy with a ♦, then play a small ♦ and ruff with your ♥8. Then play your ♠K. South wins this and assume he plays another ♠.

Win the ♠ in dummy, then play ♦K, and the other ♠ winner. If North has to follow to all these then you will have accomplished your objective; North will be down to ♥J 9 and will have to ruff trick 12 with one of them - which you will over-ruff.

for the full layout.

When you played a third ♦ to ruff with your ♥8, North COULD have ruffed this. If he had, it would have handed you your contract since you could over-ruff and take care of your trump problem immediately.

By the way, ruffing a card to purposely shorten your trump holding is called a Trump Coup.

Baker 100NT 94
 Yes, you have a 6-card ♥ suit. But you also have 4 ♠s, so you start with a Stayman 2♣.

Partner says 2♦; what do you bid?

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Partner says 2♦; what do you bid?

OK, no 4-4 ♠ fit. But partner has at least 2♥ so you know you have an 8-card (or better) fit there. With 10 points you have to decide whether to invite or insist, and you like the looks of this hand so you bid 4♥.

You play low from dummy and South continues with ♣T, then ♣9 which you ruff.

You don't expect a trump loser, and obviously you cannot afford to have one.

Board 3

South Deals

None Vul

♠ K Q J 9 6 3

♥ J T

♦ Q T 9

♣ 9 4

♠ T 5

♥ A Q 6 3

♦ 8 5 4 2

♣ K J 8

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 4

♥ 9 8 7 4 2

♦ A 7

♣ T 6 5 3

♠ A 7 2
 ♥ K 5
 ♦ K J 6 3
 ♣ A Q 7 2

West	North	East	South
			1NT
2♠	3♠	Pass	3NT

All Pass

3 NT by South

Baker 100NT 95

Partner's cue-bid is the lebensohl version of Stayman, in this case promising 4 ♥s. Since it is an immediate cue-bid it denies a ♠ stopper.

You are forced to bid and you don't have 4 ♥s.

But you DO have a ♠ stopper so you decide bid 3NT.

You hold up your ♠A until the third round; West started with 6 ♠s.

You need just one more winner. It cannot come from either ♣s or ♠s. Unless a defender foolishly discards a ♥ it can't come from that suit. Which means you have to win a ♦ trick.

So after winning the ♠A, you play a ♣ to dummy's ♣K, then lead a small ♦ toward your hand and play . . . what?

At first this looks like the classic King / Jack guess situation where you try to figure out if West is more likely to have the Ace or the Queen.

But it isn't like that at all. If West has the ♦A then he will take it no matter which ♦ you play, and will defeat you with 1 ♦ and 5 ♠ tricks. Your ONLY chance to make this contract is for East to hold the ♦A. So you play the ♦K, then you . . .

. . . to see if you make the contract or not.

Smart you, if you had played the ♦J you'd be down 2.

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ A 8 7 6 3 2

♥ 8

♦ K T 5

♣ 9 8 2

♠ J 9

♥ Q J 9 7 3

♦ Q 8 4

♣ T 7 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 5

♥ A 6 4

♦ 9 6 2

♣ A K Q 6 3

♠ Q T 4
 ♥ K T 5 2
 ♦ A J 7 3
 ♣ J 5

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

4♠ by West

both defenders following to both leads but the ♠Q is still out there.

Do you play ♠s again or not?

Usually it is a good idea to leave a master trump un-pulled and go about your business winning tricks in other suits. The idea is to force them to ruff without using any more of your trumps. But that is only "usually". Here your big source of winners is going to be the ♣ suit - and there are zero outside entries to it. Suppose you do not force out the ♠Q, but start playing ♣ winners. A defender might ruff the third ♣ and you would be doomed.

So play one more ♠ and they are doomed.

Almost always the answer is "not to pull".

The big exception is when you have a running suit in one hand but with no outside entries to it. A hand exactly like this one.

Baker 100NT 96

You have an invitational strength hand with a 6-card Major suit. It's a no-brainer; you transfer with a 2♥ bid. Partner says 2♠; what do you bid next?

You have an invitational strength hand with a 6-card Major suit. It's a no-brainer; you transfer with a 2♥ bid. Partner says 2♠; what do you bid next?

Repeat: You have an invitational strength hand with a 6-card Major suit. So you invite with 3♠s. Partner accepts with 4♠.

The contract would be 4♠ played by West.

To make East the declarer ROTATE.

East plays 4♠. South leads the ♥Q. Of course you take the ♥A.

Missing 5 ♠s, the most likely split is 3-2, (68% of the time). You win the ♥A then play ♠K and ♠A,