

**Deal 1**      ♠ K Q 9 8 6 4

South Deals      ♥ A J 2

None Vul      ♦ 8

♣ 6 5 4

♠ A 2

♥ Q 9 8 3

♦ 7 6 5 3

♣ 10 9 7

10  
6 10  
14



West      North      East      South

Pass      1 ♠      Pass      2 ♠

Pass      4 ♠      Pass      Pass

Pass

4 ♠ by North

Lead: ♣ K

North is to play 4 ♠. East leads the ♣ K.

Losers: ♠=1 ♥=0 ♦=1 ♣=2 Total = 4

The ♣ lead was terrible for you as it exposes your 2 ♣ losers before you can establish a ♦ for a discard. If you start to pull trumps now the defense will grab their ♠ A, their 2 ♣s and their ♦ A.

If you try to establish a ♦ they will do the same thing, just in a different order. What does that leave you?

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It leaves you trying the only possible way you can make this contract, finessing West for the ♥ Q to get a ♣ discard from dummy.

You win the ♣ A in dummy, play the ♥ K, then return a ♥ to your ♥ J. You then discard a ♣ from dummy on the ♥ A.

This time it worked, another time it might not.

**Deal 2**

North Deals	♠ K 8 6 4 2
None Vul	♥ —
	♦ J 10 7 3
	♣ Q J 10 2

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

6 7	♠ A 7 5 3
11	♥ 10 7 3
	♦ K 9 8
	♣ A 9 6

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

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

Losers: ♠=0 ♥=0 ♦=2 ♣=3 Total = 5

If North has the ♦ K, one ♦ loser can be eliminated by a finesse. And, if North also has the ♣ A one more loser can be eliminated by leading toward your ♣ K. The chance of both cards being held by North 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 North into the lead. This is important because if North gets in and plays a ♣ through your ♣ K 7 5 it might be a disaster.

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

South now leads the ♥ 7. You cover with dummy's ♥ 8 knowing the finesse will win. Next you play dummy's ♠ J, covered by North and ruffed by you (if North didn't cover you would throw another ♣ loser). Now enter dummy with the ♥ Q, pulling South'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 3**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 NT      Pass      4 ♠  
Pass      Pass      Pass  
4 ♠ by South  
Lead: ♥ K

**♠ K 6**  
**♥ 8 5 4 2**  
**♦ K 8 7 2**  
**♣ 9 5 4**

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**♠ 10 5 2**  
**♥ 10 9 3**  
**♦ J 9 5 3**  
**♣ K Q 8**

**♠ A Q J 9 7 4**  
**♥ A 6**  
**♦ A Q**  
**♣ 6 3 2**

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 4**  
 West Deals  
 None Vul

<b>♠ K 6 5 4 2</b> <b>♥ A K 8 7 4</b> <b>♦ A</b> <b>♣ K 3</b>	<b>♠ Q J 10 7 3</b> <b>♥ J 3</b> <b>♦ 8 6 2</b> <b>♣ J 9 5</b>	<b>♠ —</b> <b>♥ 10 9 6</b> <b>♦ K Q J 10 3</b> <b>♣ A 8 7 4 2</b>
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N  
W E S

<b>5</b> <b>17 10</b> <b>8</b>	<b>♠ A 9 8</b> <b>♥ Q 5 2</b> <b>♦ 9 7 5 4</b> <b>♣ Q 10 6</b>
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<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
4 NT	Pass	6 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
6 ♥ by West			
Lead: ♠ Q			

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

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

Of course you ruff the ♠ in dummy. North 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 South'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.

<b>Deal 5</b>	♠ 7 4 2		
South Deals	♥ Q J 10 7		
None Vul	♦ 5		
	♣ A 8 6 4 2		
♠ 6 5	♠ J 10 9 8 3		
♥ 5 4 3 2	♥ 6		
♦ Q 2	♦ K J 9 7 4		
♣ K Q 9 7 3	♣ J 10		
	♠ A K Q		
7	♥ A K 9 8		
6	♦ A 10 8 6 3		
20	♣ 5		
West	North	East	South
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♦	Pass	6 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
6 ♥ by North			
Lead: ♣ J			

Agreed that the bidding wasn't much. The final contract is still a good one. North is to play 6 ♥. East 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.

West 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 East's opening ♣ lead there is an indication of possible length there. So, realizing that West 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.