

**Deal 1**

West Deals

None Vul

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

**16**  
 7 11  
 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

♠ —

♥ A K 9 6 5 4 2

♦ A Q 4

♣ K 7 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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**

North Deals

None Vul

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

6  
6 17  
11

N
W
S
E

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

♠ 8 3  
♥ K Q J 7  
♦ 10 6 4  
♣ A J 10 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

4 ♠ by East

Lead: ♥ K

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**

	♠ —		
South Deals	♥ 10 9 6		
None Vul	♦ K Q J 10 3		
	♣ A 8 7 4 2		
♠ Q J 10 7 3		♠ A 9 8	
♥ J 3		♥ Q 5 2	
♦ 8 6 2		♦ 9 7 5 4	
♣ J 9 5		♣ Q 10 6	
	♠ K 6 5 4 2		
10	♥ A K 8 7 4		
5 8	♦ A		
17	♣ K 3		
West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 NT
Pass	6 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			
6 ♥ by South			
Lead: ♠ Q			

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.

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

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

Of course you ruff the ♠ in dummy. West 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 East'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.

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**Deal 4**  
 East Deals  
 None Vul

♠ 7 4 2  
 ♥ Q J 10 7  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ A 8 6 4 2

6  
 7 20  
 7

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♥	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♦	Pass	6 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
6 ♥ by West			
Lead: ♠ J			

♠ J 10 9 8 3  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ K J 9 7 4  
 ♣ J 10

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

♠ 6 5  
 ♥ 5 4 3 2  
 ♦ Q 2  
 ♣ K Q 9 7 3

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

South 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 North's opening ♠ lead there is an indication of possible length there. So, realizing that South 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.