

Board 1

South Deals

None Vul

♠ 9 2
♥ J 9 7 6 2
♦ A 9 8 4 3
♣ 4

♠ K T 8 7 4

♥ A 3

♦ 5 2

♣ A J 5 2

N
W E
S

♠ 5 3
♥ Q T 8 4
♦ K Q J T
♣ K 8 6

♠ A Q J 6
♥ K 5
♦ 7 6
♣ Q T 9 7 3

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

4 ♠ by North

So grab your ♣A at trick 2, pull trumps no matter how many pulls it takes, then establish the ♣s. The contract is cold.

Clear thinking is important, too. Can you imagine any Bridge player in the West seat overtaking his partner's opening lead just so he could then underlead his ♣K into dummy's ♣Q?

Baker Trumpmgmt 1
North is to play 4♠. East leads the ♦K. West overtakes with the ♦A and returns the ♣4.

Losers: ♠=0 ♥=0 ♦=2 ♣=1 Total = 3

This looks like a walk in the park. If West has the ♣K you can let that ♣4 ride around to dummy and end up making 12 tricks! What could go wrong?

What could go wrong is that East could win the ♣K and return a ♣ which West ruffs. West could then play a ♦ back to East's ♦Q, who could play another ♣ which West could again ruff. You could go down 2. That's what could go wrong.

Now, what should go right. Just because the lesson had many examples where you delayed pulling trumps, it is still true that MOST OF THE TIME you should pull trumps immediately. And this is one of those times.

Board 2

North Deals

None Vul

♠ 8 5 4
♥ K J 9
♦ J 9 5
♣ Q J T 4

♠ Q T 2

♥ 6 2

♦ A 8 7 4

♣ 8 6 5 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 7

♥ A 8 5 4 3

♦ Q T 3 2

♣ K 7 2

♠ A K J 9 6 3
♥ Q T 7
♦ K 6
♣ A 9

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

4 ♠ by South

So you must stay a jump ahead of them. In this Deal the only way they could have gotten the jump on you would have been with a trump opening lead.

Baker Trumpmgmt 2
South is to play 4♠. West leads the ♣Q.

Losers: ♠=0 ♥=3 ♦=0 ♣=1 Total = 4

You can't help the ♣ loser, but the ♥ loser can be ruffed in dummy. The most important question right now is how many rounds of trumps to pull before you give up a ♥?

None would be the correct answer. Suppose you decide to go over to dummy with the ♠Q so as to lead a ♥ toward your ♥ Q T 7. When West won the trick he would probably play another trump. Then when you gave up a second ♥ dummy's final trump might be removed.

Win the first trick and play a ♥ from your hand. If they play a ♠, win in your hand and play another ♥. If they play another ♠ it will be just the second and dummy will still have one ♠ left to ruff your ♥ loser.

Board 3

North Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A 9 6
♥ 8 6 4
♦ K Q T 7
♣ Q T 8

♠ K Q 4
♥ Q J T 5 3 2
♦ A 5
♣ A 2

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

♠ 8 7 3 2
♥ A K
♦ J 8 6 4
♣ 7 5 3

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

4♥ by South

Baker Trumpmgmt 3
North is to play 4♥. East leads the ♥7.

Losers: ♠=2 ♥=0 ♦=1 ♣=1 Total = 4

You need to find West with the ♠A to avoid two losers in the suit. But even if he has the card you must still be careful. You are in dummy right now, and you are only going to be in dummy once more.

Right now you must lead a ♠ toward your hand and put up the ♠K when West plays low. When this wins the trick return to dummy with a trump and play another ♠ toward the ♠Q. When this also wins you can pull trumps, not before.

Here there was no realistic hope of making this contract without playing twice toward your ♠ K Q.

Board 4

South Deals

None Vul

♠ J 6 5 2

♥ T 8 4

♦ A 3

♣ T 9 8 3

♠ K Q 7

♥ A 6 3

♦ Q T 6 4

♣ Q J 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A T 9 4 3

♥ J 9 7 2

♦ 7

♣ K 7 4

♠ 8

♥ K Q 5

♦ K J 9 8 5 2

♣ A 6 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	1♦
Pass	5♦	All Pass	3♦

5♦ by North

Instead, win the first trick and immediately play your ♠ toward dummy's ♠ K Q. A defender will probably take this trick but you don't care. They will play another ♣ to try to set up a trick in the suit but you can win the ♣, enter dummy with the ♥ A, and discard your "slow" ♣ loser on dummy's good ♠ honor.

And then, with that important job done, you can lead trumps.

for the full deal.

Suppose West's opening lead was a ♠, a ♥ or a ♦. You would have still had the same 3 losers, but now the ♣ loser would have been "very slow". So slow that you could start on trumps before working on the ♠s.

In other words, with one of these opening leads a mediocre player, one who had never read this lesson, would probably make the contract without any trouble. But with the ♣ lead only a skilled declarer would make it!

Baker Trumpmgmt 4
South is to play 5♦. West leads the ♣ T. You play dummy's ♣ J and East puts on the ♣ K.

Losers: ♠=1 ♥=0 ♦=1 ♣=1 Total = 3

The ♠ loser and ♦ loser are "fast" losers, meaning your opponents can take them whenever they are in the lead. The ♣ loser is a "slow" loser, meaning you might have some time to dispose of it.

But here is the problem. If you start to draw trumps, a defender will take the ♦ A and play another ♣, forcing out your ♣ Q. Then, when you play a ♠ they will jump in with the ♠ A and take their ♣ trick. Anything you can think of to do about that?

Once you recognize the problem, the solution is easier to see. Don't play trumps next!

Instead, win the first trick and immediately play your ♠ toward dummy's ♠ K Q. A defender will probably take this trick but you don't care. They will play another ♣ to try to set up a trick in the suit but you can win the ♣, enter dummy with the ♥ A, and discard your "slow" ♣ loser on dummy's good ♠ honor.

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ Q T 8 3 2
♥ J 9 7
♦ T 6
♣ 8 7 3

♠ A K 6 5

♥ 8 3

♦ K J 7 3

♣ A K 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 9
♥ Q T 6 5
♦ Q 9 2
♣ J T 9 4

♠ 7 4
♥ A K 4 2
♦ A 8 5 4
♣ Q 6 2

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

6♦ by North

even trying the finesse. If the ♦Q falls that's good, but if it doesn't, no problem, just leave it out there. Then start on your other high cards. Take 2 more ♣s, 2 ♠s, and 2 ♥s. Then start cross-ruffing the last 4 ♠s and ♥s. The ♦Q guy can trump in whenever he likes but you will make 12 tricks.

again to see what would have happened if you had finessed in trumps.

You need the rest of the tricks but the best you can do now is to take the two high ♣s, the two high ♥s, the two high ♠s, one ♥ ruff in your hand and one ♠ ruff in dummy. Letting East pull that third round of trumps did you in.

Leaving the master trump out, you would now proceed to take your two high ♣s, two high ♥s and two high ♠s.

Needing just three more tricks, and with two trumps in each hand you just cross-ruff ♥s and ♠s. East can ruff in with the ♦Q at some point but he cannot prevent you from winning at least three of your trumps separately.

Baker Trumpmgmt 5

The 4♣ and 4♥ bids were control-showing. North is to play 6♦. East leads the ♣J.

Losers: ♠=2 ♥=0 ♦=2 ♣=0 Total = 4

That loser count may be technically correct but actually it's wonky. As long as ♦s split 3-2 like they should you only have 1 loser in the suit. And if West has the ♦Q you can finesse and have no losers. Also, those 2 ♠ losers could be ruffed in dummy.

Suppose you tried it like this: Win the ♣, play ♦A, then a ♦ to the ♦J, then pull the last trump with your ♦K. That would only leave one trump in dummy for ruffing ♠ losers, but you could make the slam.

But suppose the ♦ finesse lost to East. And further suppose that East then played another ♦. Since only 1 ♠ could be ruffed you'd be down 1. Try something else.

Win the ♣. Play the ♦A and ♦K, forgetting about

Board 6

North Deals

None Vul

♠ J T 5 3
♥ Q J T 3
♦ T 8 3
♣ 9 3

♠ A 8 2

♥ K 6 5

♦ K 4 2

♣ Q J 7 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6
♥ A 8 7 2
♦ Q J 9 7
♣ T 8 5 2

♠ K Q 9 7 4
♥ 9 4
♦ A 6 5
♣ A K 6

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

4 ♠ by South

Back to the Plan. Having ruffed the ♥ you are down to just 4 trumps in your hand. You play ♠A, ♠K, ♠Q, noting that East discards on the second round. Therefore West will get a trump trick.

But don't give it to him now! Leave West with his master trump and switch to ♣s. If West doesn't ruff at all you will run 4 ♣ tricks and discard your ♦ loser. If he does decide to ruff it will be with a trick you were going to lose anyway. You win his return, ruffing a ♥ with the last trump, and continue playing ♣ and ♦ winners.

But you don't have to lose anything else as long as you don't lose trump control. So leave the master trump with West and just cash your minor suit winners. Let West ruff whenever he wants to because that will establish your ♠9 to control any more ♥ leads. If he decides not to ruff at all then he can have the final trick with his high trump.

Baker Trumpmgmt 6
South's 2♦ bid was New Minor Forcing, asking if North has 3 ♠s. North's 2♠ response said "Yes, I have." South is to play 4♠. West leads the ♥Q.

Losers: ♠ = ? ♥ = 2 ♦ = 1 ♣ = 0 Total = 3?

If the ♠s split 3-2 as they should, you have no ♠ loser and your plan will merely be to pull trumps and play winners. So what you do in that case is start figuring how to deal with a 4-1 split.

But first you should deal with the ♥K situation. Do you cover the ♥Q or not?

Competent defenders do not underlead Aces at suit contracts. So if you are playing against a competent West you certainly don't cover. You play low on this trick and on the ♥J continuation, hoping East started with a doubleton ♥A. But he didn't, and he plays it on the third ♥ which you ruff.

Back to the Plan. Having ruffed the ♥ you are down