

Deal 1

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

Pass

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



♠ Q J 10 7 3

♥ J 3

♦ 8 6 2

♣ J 9 5

♠ —

♥ 10 9 6

♦ K Q J 10 3

♣ A 8 7 4 2

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 2

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 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

N
W E
S

♠ 6 5
♥ 5 4 3 2
♦ Q 2
♣ K Q 9 7 3

20
6 7
7

♠ 7 4 2

♥ Q J 10 7

♦ 5

♣ A 8 6 4 2

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|------|-------|------|-------|

| | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| | 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ |
| Pass | 4 NT | Pass | 5 ♦ |
| Pass | 6 ♥ | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

6 ♥ by South

Lead: ♠ J

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.