

Deal 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q J 6

♥ K 5

♦ 7 6

♣ Q 10 9 7 3

♠ 5 3

♥ Q 10 8 4

♦ K Q J 10

♣ K 8 6

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

12
11 5
12

♠ K 10 8 7 4

♥ A 3

♦ 5 2

♣ A J 5 2

West North East South

1♣ Pass 1♣

Pass 2♠ Pass 4♠

Pass Pass Pass

4♠ by South

Lead: ♦ K

South is to play 4♠. West leads the ♦ K. East overtakes with the ♦ A and returns the ♣ 4.

Losers: ♠=0 ♥=0 ♦=2 ♣=1 Total = 3

This looks like a walk in the park. If East 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 West could win the ♣ K and return a ♣ which East ruffs. East could then play a ♦ back to West's ♦ Q, who could play another ♣ which East 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.

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 East seat overtaking his partner's opening lead just so he could then underlead his ♣ K into dummy's ♣ Q?

Deal 3

South Deals
None Vul

♠ J 10 5
♥ 9 7
♦ 9 3 2
♣ K J 9 6 4

8
5 11
16

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 9 6
♥ 8 6 4
♦ K Q 10 7
♣ Q 10 8

♠ K Q 4
♥ Q J 10 5 3 2
♦ A 5
♣ A 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♥
Pass	1 NT	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

4 ♥ by South
Lead: ♥ 7

South is to play 4 ♥. West leads the ♥ 7.

Losers: ♠=2 ♥=0 ♦=1 ♣=1 Total = 4

You need to find East 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 East 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.

Deal 4
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ J 6 5 2 ♥ 10 8 4 ♦ A 3 ♣ 10 9 8 3	♠ K Q 7 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ Q 10 6 4 ♣ Q J 5
	
	♠ A 10 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
			1 ♦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	5 ♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			
5 ♦ by South			
Lead: ♣ 10			

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.

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!

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

Deal 5
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ J 9 ♥ Q 10 6 5 ♦ Q 9 2 ♣ J 10 9 4	♠ 7 4 ♥ A K 4 2 ♦ A 8 5 4 ♣ Q 6 2
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♠ A K 6 5 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K J 7 3 ♣ A K 5	♠ Q 10 8 3 2 ♥ J 9 7 ♦ 10 6 ♣ 8 7 3
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West	North	East	South
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	6 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

6 ♦ by South
 Lead: ♣ J

The 4♣ and 4♥ bids were control-showing. South is to play 6♦. West 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 East 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 West. And further suppose that West 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 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 West 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 ♠. West can ruff in with the ♦Q at some point but he cannot prevent you from winning at least three of your trumps separately.