

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 6 4
♥ A T 8 3
♦ T 9 8 2
♣ 9 6

♠ A T 8 5

♥ K Q 7 4

♦ A Q J

♣ K J

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 3
♥ J 9 5 2
♦ K 6 5
♣ A 8 5 2

♠ K 9 7 2
♥ 6
♦ 7 4 3
♣ Q T 7 4 3

West	North	East	South
	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

4 ♠ by North

No, of course not. Not when you have a play that offers almost a 10% chance. Win the ♦ A, play ♠ K, ♠ A, then ♥ K Q, discarding dummy's 2 ♦ losers.

With one master trump still out you start on the ♣s, playing first the ♣K, then overtake the ♣J with dummy's ♣Q. The defense is welcome to take their ♣A whenever they want, and they are also welcome to their trump trick. You are so gracious because you have your ten tricks!

But the other 50% of the time East will have the ♦ K. On those Deals you get your just reward.

Baker 100NT 91

When you have 4 cards in both Majors you respond 2♥ to a Stayman request. Partner now bids 3NT. What do you bid?

When you have 4 cards in both Majors you respond 2♥ to a Stayman request. Partner now bids 3NT. What do you bid?

Partner denies having 4 ♥s so he must have 4 ♠s (or he would not have used Stayman). You correct the contract to 4♠.

West grabs the opening lead with the ♥ A and plays the ♦ T.

The ♠, ♥ and ♣ losers are inevitable so you'd better not lose a ♦. Even though West has returned a ♦ it is still possible that he holds the ♦K so the finesse has a chance of working. Let's say a 50% chance. Do you take it?

Board 2

South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ Q J T 8
♥ J 7 3 2
♦ K 9 7 4
♣ K

♠ A K 5

♥ A 9 8 4
♦ A 8 6 3

♣ Q 5

N
W E
S

♠ 9 6 4 2
♥ K Q T
♦ Q T 5
♣ T 6 2

♠ 7 3
♥ 6 5
♦ J 2

♣ A J 9 8 7 4 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

3NT by South

Baker 100NT 92

You do have 9 points, of a sort anyway. Hoping your ♣ suit will be of use, you invite with 2NT. Partner says 3NT.

The contract would be 3NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 3NT. East leads the ♠Q, West following with the ♠2. Do you hold up or not?

No, don't hold up. At least you have ♠s stopped twice, your other suits are stopped only once.

Realizing that your only hope is for a bunch of ♣ tricks you win the ♠K and play the ♣Q. East covers with the ♣K. What do you do?

If you win with dummy's ♣A, and if the ♣s split 2-2, you can win 7 ♣ tricks and 4 other high cards. Wow!

But if it turns out that the ♣K was singleton you will win just TWO ♣ tricks because dummy has no other entries.

So if you feel like gambling, go up with the ♣A. But if you like the idea of a guaranteed contract let East hold the ♣K, and you make sure of the six other ♣s.

The play went exactly as shown above. When her LHO played the ♣K our declarer ducked in dummy and made the contract.

Board 3

North Deals

None Vul

♠ K J 9 6

♥ J T 5 4

♦ T 6

♣ T 8 5

♠ A T 4 3

♥ 7 3

♦ K Q 8 7 4 2

♣ 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q

♥ Q 9 8 6 2

♦ 9 5

♣ K Q J 9 3

♠ 8 7 5 2

♥ A K

♦ A J 3

♣ A 6 4 2

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

4 ♠ by South

the time). You win the ♣A and play a small ♠ toward dummy. West puts on the ♠Q which you take with dummy's ♠A, East following with the ♠6.

Do you play ♠s again? or not?

Not. With both defenders following suit, the possibility of 4 ♠ losers is gone so you can lose at most 3. But that ♠Q from West is ominous. If you play another ♠ and they do split 3-2 you will make 11 tricks, losing only 2 trumps. But if East has 3 ♠s left he will win the trick, pull all the rest of the trumps, and lead a ♣ to West.

The guaranteed way to make the contract is to play no more ♠s, but to start playing ♦ winners. The defenders can make their 3 trump tricks but you maintain control of the hand.

But with a different distribution, (3-2), playing the second trump would have been great.

Considering probabilities it looks like this. If you play the second trump you will make 2 overtricks about 70% of the time, but you will go down 4 about 30% of the time.

If you stop with the ♠s and start running ♦s you will make your contract 10% of the time but will never make an overtrick.

Baker 100NT 93

It is tempting to just bid 3NT and hope the ♦s come in. But not when you have a 4-card Major suit. Instead you bid a Stayman 2♣. Partner says 2♠; what do you bid next?

It is tempting to just bid 3NT and hope the ♦s come in. But not when you have a 4-card Major suit. Instead you bid a Stayman 2♣. Partner says 2♠; what do you bid next?

Well, he has 4 ♠s. That's why you used Stayman so you bid 4♠.

The contract would be 4♠ played by North.

To make South the declarer ROTATE.

South plays 4♠. West leads the ♣K. Seeing T top tricks sort of makes you wish you had just bid 3NT.

Missing 5 ♠s, the most likely split is 3-2, (68% of

the time). You win the ♣A and play a small ♠ toward dummy. West puts on the ♠Q which you take with dummy's ♠A, East following with the ♠6.

Do you play ♠s again? or not?

Not. With both defenders following suit, the possibility of 4 ♠ losers is gone so you can lose at most 3. But that ♠Q from West is ominous. If you play another ♠ and they do split 3-2 you will make 11 tricks, losing only 2 trumps. But if East has 3 ♠s left he will win the trick, pull all the rest of the trumps, and lead a ♣ to West.

The guaranteed way to make the contract is to play no more ♠s, but to start playing ♦ winners. The defenders can make their 3 trump tricks but you maintain control of the hand.

But with a different distribution, (3-2), playing the second trump would have been great.

Considering probabilities it looks like this. If you play the second trump you will make 2 overtricks about 70% of the time, but you will go down 4 about 30% of the time.

If you stop with the ♠s and start running ♦s you will make your contract 10% of the time but will never make an overtrick.

Board 4

North Deals

None Vul

♠ A 8 5

♥ 4

♦ J 9 7 6 4 3

♣ J T 9

♠ Q J 3

♥ A 5

♦ A K 8 2

♣ Q 8 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 7 4

♥ J 9 7 2

♦ Q T

♣ A K 6 5

♠ K T 6 2
 ♥ K Q T 8 6 3
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 7 4

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

4♥ by South

So after ruffing the third ♣ you play ♥A, then ♥Q. Aargh! West discards a ♦ on the second trump.

East has left the ♥ J 9 while you have the ♥ Q T 8. If only dummy had another ♥ you could finesse East's ♥J, but, alas, dummy has none. Can you see another way to accomplish the finesse?

If you could manage to be in dummy after trick 11, and have nothing in your hand but the ♥ Q T, while East had nothing in his hand but the ♥ J 9 you would have him. But to accomplish this you must use up your ♥8 beforehand.

You enter dummy with a ♦, then play a small ♦ and ruff with your ♥8. Then play your ♠K. West wins this and assume he plays another ♠.

Win the ♠ in dummy, then play ♦K, and the other ♠ winner. If East has to follow to all these then you will have accomplished your objective; East will be down to ♥ J 9 and will have to ruff trick 12 with one of them - which you will over-ruff.

for the full layout.

When you played a third ♦ to ruff with your ♥8, East COULD have ruffed this. If he had, it would have handed you your contract since you could over-ruff and take care of your trump problem immediately.

By the way, ruffing a card to purposely shorten your trump holding is called a Trump Coup.

Baker 100NT 94

Yes, you have a 6-card ♥ suit. But you also have 4 ♠s, so you start with a Stayman 2♣.

Partner says 2♦; what do you bid?

Yes, you have a 6-card ♥ suit. But you also have 4 ♠s, so you start with a Stayman 2♣.

Partner says 2♦; what do you bid?

OK, no 4-4 ♠ fit. But partner has at least 2♥ so you know you have an 8-card (or better) fit there. With 10 points you have to decide whether to invite or insist, and you like the looks of this hand so you bid 4♥.

You play low from dummy and West continues with ♣T, then ♣9 which you ruff.

You don't expect a trump loser, and obviously you cannot afford to have one.

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 8 4
♥ 9 8 7 4 2
♦ A 7
♣ T 6 5 3

♠ A 7 2

♥ K 5

♦ K J 6 3

♣ A Q 7 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K Q J 9 6 3
♥ J T
♦ Q T 9
♣ 9 4

♠ T 5
♥ A Q 6 3
♦ 8 5 4 2
♣ K J 8

West	North	East	South
	1NT	2♠	3♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3NT by North

At first this looks like the classic King / Jack guess situation where you try to figure out if East is more likely to have the Ace or the Queen.

But it isn't like that at all. If East has the ♦ A then he will take it no matter which ♦ you play, and will defeat you with 1 ♦ and 5 ♠ tricks. Your ONLY chance to make this contract is for West to hold the ♦ A. So you play the ♦ K, then you . . .

. . . to see if you make the contract or not.

Smart you, if you had played the ♦ J you'd be down 2.

Baker 100NT 95

Partner's cue-bid is the lebensohl version of Stayman, in this case promising 4 ♥s. Since it is an immediate cue-bid it denies a ♠ stopper.

You are forced to bid and you don't have 4 ♥s.

But you DO have a ♠ stopper so you decide bid 3NT.

You hold up your ♠ A until the third round; East started with 6 ♠s.

You need just one more winner. It cannot come from either ♣s or ♠s. Unless a defender foolishly discards a ♥ it can't come from that suit. Which means you have to win a ♦ trick.

So after winning the ♠ A, you play a ♣ to dummy's ♣ K, then lead a small ♦ toward your hand and play . . . what?

Board 6

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ J 9
♥ Q J 9 7 3
♦ Q 8 4
♣ T 7 4

♠ K 5
♥ A 6 4
♦ 9 6 2
♣ A K Q 6 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q T 4
♥ K T 5 2
♦ A J 7 3
♣ J 5

♠ A 8 7 6 3 2
♥ 8
♦ K T 5
♣ 9 8 2

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

4 ♠ by South

still out there.

Do you play ♠s again or not?

Usually it is a good idea to leave a master trump un-pulled and go about your business winning tricks in other suits. The idea is to force them to ruff without using any more of your trumps. But that is only "usually". Here your big source of winners is going to be the ♣ suit - and there are zero outside entries to it. Suppose you do not force out the ♠Q, but start playing ♣ winners. A defender might ruff the third ♣ and you would be doomed.

So play one more ♠ and they are doomed.

Almost always the answer is "not to pull".

The big exception is when you have a running suit in one hand but with no outside entries to it. A hand exactly like this one.

Baker 100NT 96

You have an invitational strength hand with a 6-card Major suit. It's a no-brainer; you transfer with a 2♥ bid. Partner says 2♠; what do you bid next?

You have an invitational strength hand with a 6-card Major suit. It's a no-brainer; you transfer with a 2♥ bid. Partner says 2♠; what do you bid next?

Repeat: You have an invitational strength hand with a 6-card Major suit. So you invite with 3♠s. Partner accepts with 4♠.

The contract would be 4♠ played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 4♠. East leads the ♥Q. Of course you take the ♥A.

Missing 5 ♠s, the most likely split is 3-2, (68% of the time). You win the ♥A then play ♠K and ♠A, both defenders following to both leads but the ♠Q is