

## **Play of the Hand in a Trump Contract.**

The central question will always be, "Is this a hand where I want to draw out the opponents' trumps right away, or do I need to do something first?"

### **Reasons you might not pull trump right away:**

1. You need to ruff losers in the short hand.
2. You need to use those trumps for transportation between the two hands.
3. You can't afford to lose the lead because you need to take an immediate discard.
4. You are planning to cross ruff the hand.
5. If the only outstanding trump is the master trump, a winner anyway, you may want to leave it rather than use two of your trumps to draw it out.

### **Reason for drawing trumps right away.**

You have sure winners that you are afraid will be trumped and none of the five reasons for NOT pulling trump apply.

### **How will you know which is which?**

The answer starts with making sure you have a *complete and repeatable process* of evaluating the assets (winners) and deficits (losers) in every hand.

#### 1. Gather information:

- ✓ When the dummy comes down say the shape and count the number of HCP.
- ✓ Analyze the opening lead.
- ✓ Think about what you know from the information at hand: The points each player said they had and the meaning of the opening lead.

#### 2. Count your sure tricks.

3. If you don't have enough tricks to reach your goal look for opportunities to develop other tricks by promoting, finessing, ruffing, or developing tricks through length.

4. Count your losers and determine if they are immediate or eventual.

5. If you have too many losers, look for opportunities to find ways of getting rid of them.

6. Determine whether the trump suit will play a role in achieving any of these goals before making your first move.

If you have enough winners and not more losers than you can afford, pull trump!

However, if you don't have enough winners and/or have too many losers, you will need to figure out how to solve the problem before starting to pull trump.

The shape of the dummy can sometimes help!

The contract in the box below is 4 Spades: **Trump length and shortness in the dummy.**

Dummy: Jxxx
Jxxx
Axxx
x
AKQxxx
xxx
x
Axx

Notice **the singleton club** and **the four trumps** in dummy.

When you have length in a particular suit in declarer's hand and corresponding shortness in that suit in dummy, you probably need to think about ruffing cards in that suit in the dummy.

#### A. Trump length and a long side suit in dummy.

When you have a side suit to establish, combine the idea of pulling trump with setting up the secondary suit.

Dummy: QTx
xxx
AQJxx
xx
Declarer: AKJxxx
Axx
Kxx
x

The contract is 6S.

Counting winners:

6 spades + 5 diamonds + 1 heart = 12.

Draw trump as soon as you can.

#### B. Trump length and shortness in both hands.

##### The Cross Ruff.

Notice:

- Both hands have different short suits.
- There are not enough tricks for the contract to succeed and there is no side suit to establish.
- Pulling trump will leave declarer with too many losers.

Dummy: AQ9x
xxxx
x
xxxx
Dummy: KJTxx
x
Axxxx
Ax

In the example above, assume the contract is 4S.

On a club lead you, besides trumps, you have only two tricks, those two aces. You need to make eight tricks with those nine trumps. Win the ace of clubs and play a heart. Even if the opponents return a trump (which they should), you will still be able to cross-ruff eight times.