




This series is about the choice of drawing trumps or ruffing in dummy. Part 2 of 2. SA version. Updated summer 2015.

VB#12 Y1 Ruff or draw trumps Part 2 SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

	North	
	♠ K8	
	♥ 653	
	♦ 986	
	♣ KQ973	
West		East
♠ QT6542		♠ J9
♥ T98		♥ 74
♦ AQ		♦ KT53
♣ 52		♣ JT864
	South	
	♠ A73	
	♥ AKQJ2	
	♦ J742	
	♣ A	

This set of deals follows on from its cousin, presented elsewhere in this edition of VBlue, and continues the theme of *draw trumps* or *ruff-in-the-dummy*.

Remember, when dummy goes down in a suit contract you have to decide whether to immediately pull the opponents' trumps or not. For some this is easy – they have been told, "Always draw trumps!"

However, it is unwise to play this game just using hard and fast rules with little regard to their purpose. On some deals it is important to draw trumps and on others you have more important matters to attend to first.

How can you tell?

The answer usually comes from *counting your tricks*. If you can see enough winners for your contract (and you have a sound plan) then go ahead and draw trumps. If, on the other hand, you have insufficient winners to fulfil your contract then you may well need to do something else and that "something else" may well be to ruff a loser in the dummy.

Note that ruffing losers should only be done in the *short trump hand*. It is a waste

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♥
P	2♥	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ T

Bidding.

After two Passes we open 1♥ and North raises that to 2♥. With 19 points and a lovely 5-4-3-1 pattern we can hardly bid less than 4♥.

A simple sequence of 1♥ – 2♥ – 4♥.

Play.

West decides a trump lead is called for and starts off with the ♥10. Naturally enough we pause to consider our prospects, having thanked partner and before playing a card. **Count – Plan – Execute.**

So, what is our **Plan**?

We can, should we wish, attempt to ruff a Spade on the table (♠K, ♠A, Spade ruff). Or we could just draw trumps. What is the right line of play and why is the alternative the wrong thing to do?

A count of tricks shows there to be ten (two Spades, five Hearts and three Clubs). This strongly suggests that the right play is to eschew any ruffs and to draw trumps.

When you have sufficient winners to land the contract – draw trumps.

Why is it not a good idea to take the two top Spades and ruff a losing Spade on table?

Firstly, we have ten easily available tricks so a ruff is unnecessary. Secondly (more subtly) the ♠K is necessary as an entry to the top Clubs (which are blocked – if we do take a Spade ruff how are we ever going to get to the ♠K Q?) Finally, there is a risk of an over-ruff if Spades break 6-2. Unlikely but possible – and here, on this lie of the cards, unlikely becomes reality.

So we should simply draw trumps (in three rounds), cash the ♣A (to unblock the suit), cross to the ♠K and take the ♠K Q. Two of our losers get *dumped* on the top Clubs; there is no need to *trump* any of them

Sometimes bridge can be a very simple game.

of time and effort to trump losers in the *long trump hand* – you are likely to make those tricks anyway.

It is important to keep an eye on your losers. There are only two ways of disposing of excess losers – we can *trump* them or we can *dump* them. Trumping them means ruffing them in dummy, dumping them means throwing them away on side-suit winners.

For Hand 1 it's a case of *Here we go again*.


Can you bid and make the right contract here? As usual, the right line of play succeeds and the wrong line of play... doesn't.

Good luck.



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Y1 VBlue #12 Take a ruff or draw trumps? Part 2 SA	Contract: 4S By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 2
Dealer: East	Vulnerable: N / S
Play this hand online!	

	North		
	♠ AT96		
	♥ J5		
	♦ J3		
	♣ A8652		
West		East	
♠		♠ 5432	
♥ Q643		♥ KT92	
♦ 9742		♦ KQT5	
♣ KQJT7		♣ 4	
	South		
	♠ KQJ87		
	♥ A87		
	♦ A86		
	♣ 93		

It's the same dilemma on each deal. You reach a reasonable contract and need to think about your **Plan**.

So... do you or don't you? (Draw trumps, that is).

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♠
P	3♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♣ K

Bidding.

We open 1♠ in second seat, after East Passes as dealer, and reach game after an invitational sequence of 1♠ – 3♠ – 4♠.

Play.

West leads the ♣K (presumably from a sequence).

Count and **Plan** before **Executing**. The \$64,000 question: Do we draw trumps? Yes or No?

As declarer, we would be ill-advised to draw trumps here, especially as the nasty 4-0 break means that dummy would run out of Spades.

We can count eight top tricks (five Spades and three Aces) with three obvious losers (a Heart, a Diamond and a Club), but what are we going to do with our extra losing Heart and extra losing Diamond? We actually have five losers: two Hearts and two Diamonds (as well as a Club) and the only way of ridding ourselves of the excess losers is to **trump** them on table as we can't **dump** them on anything.

To pave the way for a couple of red-suit ruffs we have to concede tricks in both Hearts and Diamonds. Best is to win the ♣A and to play off the ♦A and another Diamond (oh, all right, we could play Hearts first – it really doesn't matter), before touching trumps.

East wins the second Diamond and hastens to play a trump (best defense) but as declarer we can win that, ruff a Diamond on table and play the ♥A and another Heart.

In time we score **seven** Spade tricks (five in hand and two ruffs on table) and three Aces for a total of ten tricks.


If we drew trumps, though, we'd be defeated as dummy would become fatally denuded of trumps.



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Y1 VBlue #12 Take a ruff or draw trumps? Part 2 SA	Contract: 4S By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 3
Dealer: South	Vulnerable: E / W
Play this hand online!	

	North		
	♠ A43		
	♥ A8		
	♦ KQ965		
	♣ 953		
West		East	
♠ 2		♠ T987	
♥ QJT432		♥ 75	
♦ 8742		♦ A	
♣ A4		♣ QJT876	
	South		
	♠ KQJ65		
	♥ K96		
	♦ JT3		
	♣ K2		

It's decision time again. Another game contract and another chance to put your declarer-play skills to the test.

Can you decide what the best line of play is on this deal?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
P	2♦	P	2NT
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

We open 1♠ as dealer on a 5·3·3·2 13-count and partner responds 2♦. We rebid 2NT to show a minimum, balanced hand (12 to 14 points) and this gives partner enough information to know that 4♠ is the right spot.

So the full bidding is 1♠ – 2♦ – 2NT – 4♠.

Play.

West kicks off with the ♥Q lead against 4♠. Naturally, we apply the maxim of **Count – Plan – Execute**.

Winners? Well, we've got a few – five Spades (assuming they aren't 5-0), two Hearts and four Diamonds once the ♦A has been knocked out. We may make a Club trick, but that depends on the whereabouts of the ♣A. That's eleven winners, you should note (you may think it's twelve but don't forget the opponents have two Aces...)

It might be possible to play three rounds of Hearts and ruff the last on the table, but is that sensible? No! We have just counted ten available tricks – in these circumstances it is best to **draw trumps**. We can *dump* our Heart loser (and maybe a Club, if we are lucky) on the long Diamonds.

With (at least) ten tricks available we don't need the risk of a Heart ruff – take what's rightfully ours. Draw trumps and knock out the ♦A. As a point of technique we should win the ♥K at trick one, preserving the ♥A as an entry to the long Diamonds.


So... Win the ♥K, draw four round of trumps and play the ♦J. As the cards lie, East takes it with the ♦A and the defenders cash two Club tricks. After that we can claim the rest.

If we were to attempt to ruff a Heart on table we would get a rude shock – East would over-ruff and the defenders would cash two Clubs and the ♦A. Oops!



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VB#12 Y1 Ruff or draw trumps Part 2 SA	Contract: 4H
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: All

	North	
	♠ K62	
	♥ JT8	
	♦ K84	
	♣ 7642	
West		East
♠ QT97		♠ J4
♥ 7432		♥ 6
♦ QJ		♦ T9652
♣ AT8		♣ KJ953
	South	
	♠ A853	
	♥ AKQ95	
	♦ A73	
	♣ Q	

Sometimes when you try to calculate winners and losers the total doesn't add up to thirteen.

On these occasions you may need more careful scrutiny of the cards.

Having made the right diagnosis you then need the correct medicine...

West	North	East	South
P	P	P	1♥
P	2♥	P	4♥
P	P	P	

Lead: ♦ Q

Bidding.

After three Passes we open 1♥ and North raises that to 2♥. With 19 points and a delightful 5-4-3-1 pattern we can hardly bid less than 4♥.

A simple sequence of 1♥ – 2♥ – 4♥.

Play.

Dummy's 4-3-3-3 hand is something of a disappointment (it's always nice to have side-suit shortages on the table). Not that 3NT would have stood much of a chance after a Club lead...

Anyway, as declarer we should ("must" would be a better word) study the dummy and **Count** our tricks after the ♦Q lead.

We can see two Spades, five Hearts, two Diamonds and no Clubs. That only comes to nine tricks. How about losers? At first glance there is a Spade loser, no Heart losers, one Diamond loser and one Club loser. Hmmm. Nine winners, three losers – this does not compute!

Look more closely at declarer's hand. With four Spades there are actually **two** Spade losers, not one. What would happen if we drew trumps? Now there would be two Spade losers so the arithmetic now balances – nine winners, four losers. Sure, Spades might break 3-3 in which case the long Spade would be boss but it would be unwise to bank on it.

In these cases it is usually wise to try to ruff a loser in the dummy. There is nothing in dummy on which to **dump** the Spade loser so we should try to **trump** it.

The trump pips are such that a Spade ruff cannot be over-ruffed. So... we win the Diamond lead (it doesn't matter where), cash the ♠A K and concede a Spade to the enemy. Win the return (a Diamond, as it happens), ruff a Spade on the table and now (and only now) draw trumps.


Our ten winners are two Spades, **six** Hearts and the ♦A K.



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VB#12 Y1 Ruff or draw trumps Part 2 SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: N / S

	North		
	♠ K75		
	♥ 4		
	♦ 8632		
	♣ QJT75		
West		East	
♠ T98		♠ J3	
♥ AKJT9		♥ 7652	
♦ AQ7		♦ JT4	
♣ 63		♣ 9842	
	South		
	♠ AQ642		
	♥ Q83		
	♦ K95		
	♣ AK		

This deal, whilst similar to the other deals in this set, needs you to reflect on the possibility/probability of decent breaks.

West	North	East	South
-	P	P	1♠
2♥	2♠	P	4♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ A

Bidding.

After two Passes we open 1♠, West overcalls 2♥ and partner supports us with 2♠. We now decide to overbid a little and take a punt at 4♠.

This is called "making a game try". (That is: Bid a game and then try to make it...!)

4♠ is a little ambitious with so many losers but we do have a good hand.

Play.

West, on our left, cashes the ♥A before shifting to a trump. So what should we do? Ruff Hearts on the table? Draw trumps? Let's return to basics. **Count – Plan – Execute**. We can see five Spade tricks (assuming a 3-2 break) and five Clubs. So there seem to be enough tricks but the Clubs are blocked.

What if trumps are 4-1? Well it's hard to see how 4♠ can ever make if that were the case. We would have a certain Spade loser, a Heart loser and at least two Diamond losers as the ♦A is surely over the ♦K (West has overcalled, remember, and surely has all the missing high cards).

If we cash the ♣A K how can we make use of the remaining ♣Q J 10? The answer is that we can't if we have no entry to the table – and the only entry is in trumps!

The conclusion is that we should attempt to *draw trumps* ending in dummy. So, we win the trump shift in hand at trick two, unblock the ♣A K, play the ♣Q and finally cross to the ♠K and run the Clubs. Ruffing Hearts on table is the wrong play – we should aim to dump our losers on the long Clubs.


How would you play this one if West continues with the ♥K at trick two? That is left as an exercise for the reader.



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Y1 VBlue #12 Take a ruff or draw trumps? Part 2 SA	Contract: 6S By: South
Date: 24/03/2016	Board #: 6
Dealer: East	Vulnerable: N / S
Play this hand online!	

	North		
	♠ KQJ		
	♥ Q		
	♦ AJ64		
	♣ KQJT3		
West		East	
♠ 6		♠ T982	
♥ JT987		♥ K52	
♦ Q83		♦ KT752	
♣ 9862		♣ 4	
	South		
	♠ A7543		
	♥ A643		
	♦ 9		
	♣ A75		

Here, your enthusiastic partner propels you into a high-level contract.

That must be because he is entirely confident about your card-playing skills...

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♠
P	2♣	P	2♥
P	6♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ J

Bidding.

We open 1♠ after East has Passed as dealer and rebid 2♥ over partner's quiet 2♣ response.

To our alarm, partner, having been bitten by the slam bug, makes an exuberant leap to 6♠.

Play.

North's bidding might have been wild but the final contract is quite sound.

How should we play the hand after West's ♥J lead is covered by dummy's ♥Q and East's ♥K?

We can see a Heart shortage in the dummy and might, therefore, be tempted to ruff a Heart at trick two. Is that the right play or should we be drawing trumps (and denuding dummy of Spades?)

If we pause to plan the play (**Count – Plan – Execute**; the old mantra) we should see that we have five Spade tricks (assuming trumps aren't 5-0) one Heart, one Diamond and five Clubs. 5+1+1+5 makes twelve (or the arithmetic did when we were at school!) so that means an extra trick via a Heart ruff is unnecessary. We don't need to trump our losers, we can dump them

In fact, on this layout, ruffing a Heart at trick two is fatal. The 4-1 trump split means that East would make a trump trick (because we'd be forced to ruff with a Spade honor) and the deal would get very difficult and messy.

We should go for the simple line: Take the ♥A, play off the ♠K Q J (noting the 4-1 break) cross to hand either with the ♣A or by playing the ♦A and a Diamond ruff (the second of these is marginally better), cash the ♠A to remove East's last trump and cash five Club tricks. The defenders are welcome to the last trick in Diamonds.

Our Heart losers, you should note, are *dumped* on the Clubs.

