



### When to Draw Trumps

I. **Percentages:** Before discussing when to draw trump, let's review how suits tend to split:

a) 2 cards out: 52% of the time the cards will divide 1-1;

48% of the time the cards will split 2-0

b) 3 cards out: 78% of the time the cards will split 2-1

22% of the time the cards will split 3-0

c) 4 cards out: 50% of the time the cards will split 3-1

40% of the time the cards will split 2-2

d) 5 cards out: 68% of the time the cards will split 3-2

28% of the time the cards will split 4-1

e) 6 cards out: 48% of the time the cards will split 4-2

36% of the time the cards will split 3-3

f) 7 cards out: 62% of the time the cards will split 4-3

31% of the time the cards will split 5-2

g) 8 cards out: 47% of the time the cards will split 5-3

33% of the time the cards will split 4-4

(Thus except when there are but 2 cards outstanding, an even number of cards tend to divide unequally, while an odd number of cards tend to split as equally as possible)

II. **General** Playing in a trump contract gives a great feeling of security. A natural tendency is to draw trump and then pause to decide what to do. Unfortunately, this method can lead to needless losers. Instead, be particularly diligent to count your losers, at the start of the hand. If you determine drawing trump will cause "no problem", immediately draw trump so defendants will not ruff your winners.

**Note:** It is important to draw all trump, if you have a long entryless suit in the dummy. Let's assume you are in 4H and plan to throw losers on dummy's club suit. You hold Qx and Dummy has AKJxx and no outside entry. If you don't draw all trump prior to running the clubs, when defendant's ruff in you won't be able to get back to dummy. (Remember to avoid blocking when playing the clubs, 1st play the Queen in your hand and then an honor on the board.)

### III. When you should avoid Drawing Trump

- a) to ruff losers in dummy
- b) to get rid of a fast loser
- c) to keep control of the hand
- d) To use trump for communication
- e) When you intend to cross ruff hand

IV. **Ruffing Losers in Dummy** Assume you are in 4 spades and you hold A65 of hearts and dummy holds xx. In most instances we recognize it's important to play the heart Ace, lose a heart trick and then trump the remaining heart in dummy. Here is a hand, however, that you might draw trumps quickly and then find yourself with an unneeded loser.

Dummy: Qxx 765 AKxx xxx

Declarer: AKJ109 AK43 xx Qx Contract is 4 Spades

Opening Lead: K of Clubs, Ace of Clubs, and then 3rd round of clubs.

Counting losers we see four: 2 hearts and 2 clubs. (Remember there are 2 potential heart losers, as missing 6 cards the suit divides 3-3 approximately 1/3 of the time. That means declarer's 4th heart will probably be a loser) So what should we do? After trumping the 3rd club led by defendants, we should play the AK of hearts and then lose a heart. We will be able to win anything defendant returns, ruff the 4th heart in the dummy, and draw trump.)

**Note:** While ruffing in the dummy gains tricks, you do not usually gain by ruffing in declarer's hand except in special situations. (e.g., cross ruff, dummy reversal)

### V. Getting Rid of a Loser, (Slow and Fast Losers)

There are two types of losers slow and fast losers. A fast loser is a trick that can be lost as soon as opponents get the lead. A slow loser is one that can be lost eventually. If declarer holds AK5 of spades and dummy 987, the 3rd spade is a slow loser. If declarer holds A65 and dummy 743, the two low spades are fast losers if opponents lead the suit, but slow losers if they don't.

Dummy: xxxx Qxx AKx Axx Contract: 4S

Declarer: QJ109xx AKJ x xxx

Jack of clubs led

Counting losers you have 4 losers: 2 spades and two clubs. The clubs are fast losers, as defendants will take their club tricks as soon as they get in. Because they will get in when you lead trump, you must postpone drawing trump. Instead, immediately play the AK of diamonds discarding a club. Then draw trump. (If opponents had led a diamond initially you would have been able to draw one round of trump before discarding the club, as club initially would have been a slow loser.)

VI. **Avoiding the drawing all the trump to maintain control** Sometimes you must delay drawing trump or decline to draw the final trump(s) so that defendant's are not able to gain control of the hand by forcing you to ruff. This situation commonly occurs when you have a singleton in the suit opponents lead or when trump split 4-1. (Remember trump split 4-1 28% of the time.)

Dummy: Kxx AKJx Kx Jxxx Contract: 4S

Declarer: A10985 Qx QJ543 x

10 of clubs led

Here opponents led your weak suit. It initially appears you have 3 losers: one spade unless the QJ are doubleton, one club, and one diamond (after Ace is knocked out and small diamonds placed on Heart honors.) However, all is not as simple as it seems.

You ruff the 2nd club, draw 2 rounds of trump, and discover trump are 3-2 with the Q outstanding. What happens if you lead a 3rd trump? Defendants will play a 3rd club and you will ruff with your remaining trump. Then when you knock out the diamond Ace, they will lead a 4th club and you will not be able to ruff. You will have lost 4 tricks. This situation can be avoided by leaving the "master trump" out (don't knock out the trump Q. ) Yes, opponents will be able to ruff in with their 3rd trump, but when you knock out the diamond Ace you will have a trump to ruff with.

VII. **Cross Ruffs**: Cross ruffs are generally fun for declarer and unpleasant for defendants. When cross ruffing a hand 3 things are important to remember: a) First, in a cross ruff declarer must count winners in the suits she is planning to cross ruff. b) Secondly, prior to cross ruffing declarer should take the exact number of tricks in outside suits which when added to the tricks anticipated in the suits to be cross ruffed, will enable her to make the contract. 3) Third, declarer must avoid being greedy to prevent defendants from ruffing her good tricks or drawing trump.

Dummy: KQ98 Axxxx AKQ x

East: xxxx KQ10xx KJ xx

Declarer: AJ107 x xxx Axxxx

Contract 6S: Jack of Clubs led

This is an ideal example of a hand in which you should crossruff. Note each hand has a singleton. Also each hand has good trump and minimal trick taking power in the suits to be ruffed. Looking at declarer's hand we count 4 losers, however, as we plan to cross ruff we must also count winners.

In planning a cross ruff we should 1st count winners (including ruffs) in the suits we are planning to ruff and then add to that the number of outside tricks we need to make the contract. Here we have 10 winners in the suits we plan to ruff and need 2 more from diamonds to make 12 tricks. The technique in a cross ruff is to 1st cash the outside winners we need to make the contract AND then cross ruff. We cash the outside winners needed 1st, to prevent defendants from ruffing in.

Here we cash the AK of diamonds and then cross ruff. (Had we cashed the AKQ of diamonds 1st, East would have been able to ruff the 3rd diamond and draw trump. Had we started the cross ruff before playing the diamond AK, East would have been able to throw away diamonds on the 3rd and 4th club and later ruff 2 diamonds.)

Quiz questions: All Hands Contract 4S Opening lead: Heart Q

Fill in the blanks making sure to state the number of losers in each suit.

1) Dummy 2) Dummy 3) Dummy 4) Dummy

AQ86 Q108 109x Q109x

A95 A3 Axx Ax

742 J8542 QJ109 xxx

K54 KQJ KQJ AQJ10

Declarer Declarer Declarer Declarer

KJ954 KJ976 QJxxxx AKJ85

1083 984 K62 xx

Q A9 AKx Kxx

AQJ2 A82 x xxx

Quick Losers? \_\_\_\_\_

Slow Losers? \_\_\_\_\_

Total Losers? \_\_\_\_\_

Draw trumps? \_\_\_\_\_

Reason(losers) \_\_\_\_\_

How are you expecting these suits to split?

5) Dummy: 5 2 6) Dummy: 6 7) Dummy: 9 4 2 8) Dummy: AK 9 6 9) Dummy: 5 4 3

Decl: AK 8 6 4 Decl: AQ 7 8 5 Decl: AK J 3 4 Decl: 4 3 2 Decl: AK x

Finish all problems above before checking the answers, you will remember the answers for a longer time if you do. :)

Answers to When to draw Trump

1. Quick losers: 2H 1D

slow losers 0

total losers 3

draw trump? yes

Reason: No problem hand

2.) Quick losers: 1S, 2H

slow loser: 1D

total losers: 4

Draw Trump: no

reason: Need to play a 2nd heart & ruff a heart. Don't want

them to draw all dummy's trump until after we ruff

heart. (We lack trump Ace)

3) Quick Losers: 2S, 1C

slow losers: 1H

total losers: 4

Draw trump: no

Reason: Need to set up a club so we can get a heart toss.

We lack control of trump suit, as missing AK.

4) Quick losers: 1H, 3D

slow losers: 1C

draw trump: no

Reason: To make contract we need the club finesse to work.

We need to be able to get to declarer's hand with

the trump to finesse clubs.

5) 4-2

6) 4-3

7) 3-2

8) 4-2

9) 4-3