

DRAW TRUMPS

Folklore has it that those who forget to draw trumps end up sleeping on the Embankment. So why is it vital to draw trumps? Why did you choose a trump suit in the first case? You think you can make extra tricks by ruffing opposing winners. At the start of play, the defender's have trumps as well – so they might ruff your winners. However, if you have chosen your trump suit wisely, you will have more trumps than they do and after a few rounds you will have the only trumps left. Ruffing then becomes the exclusive privilege of the declaring side. “If in doubt get them out”

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| <p>♠ 8 7 ♥ 10 4 ♦ A Q 3 2 ♣ K 9 8 5 4</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div> | <p>♠ 9 6 3 ♥ A K 6 ♦ J 9 8 ♣ A J 7 3</p> | <p>♠ K Q 4 2 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ Q 10 6 2</p> |
| <p>♠ A J 10 5 ♥ Q J 9 7 5 ♦ K 10 7 6 ♣ Void</p> | | | |

You play in 4♥. West leads the eight of spades and East plays the queen.

To make the contract you must win at once and play three rounds of hearts. After that you can knock out the king of spades and West's diamond winners. This way the trump suit works for you – your two long trumps will help to stop the defenders from making any club tricks once they switch to that suit. If you delay you will find that West ruffs a spade or East a diamond - or Both.

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| <p>♠ A 9 8 3 ♥ J 6 ♦ K 6 5 ♣ 8 5 4 3</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div> | <p>♠ Q 7 ♥ 8 3 ♦ J 9 8 3 ♣ K Q J 10 9</p> | <p>♠ K 10 4 2 ♥ Q 10 4 ♦ 10 7 4 2 ♣ 6 2</p> |
| <p>♠ J 6 5 ♥ A K 9 7 5 2 ♦ A Q ♣ A 7</p> | | | |

You are in 4♥ and West leads the five of clubs.

This deal, too calls for drawing trumps with gusto. Do you see why?

You only have one entry to dummy – in clubs – so you must pull the trumps before you try to run the suit. If not, you will have no way back to the clubs if someone ruffs the third round.

You win the club in hand and, after cashing the A-K of trumps to confirm the 3-2 split, give up a trump. You lose at most two spades and a trump.

Is it ever right not to draw trumps? Yes, here are common reasons not to:

1. If you want to ruff in dummy but dummy is quite short in trumps.
2. If you need some trumps as entries.
3. You need short trumps as stoppers.

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| <p>♠ 8 7 2 ♥ A 10 6 4 ♦ J 4 3 2 ♣ J 5</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div> | <p>♠ K 6 3 ♥ Void ♦ K Q 9 8 ♣ K Q 9 7 3 2</p> | <p>♠ 9 4 ♥ Q 8 3 2 ♦ 10 6 5 ♣ A 10 8 6</p> |
| <p>♠ A Q J 10 5 ♥ K J 9 7 5 ♦ A 7 ♣ 4</p> | | | |

You are in 6♠ and get a trump lead.

All the above exceptions apply. If you draw trumps, you will lose a heart or two as well as the club ace (trump needed as a stopper). You will also be short of entries to set up the clubs (trump needed as an entry) and a trick short (ruff in short suit needed). If in doubt get out the cards and try it!

Correct play is to win in hand and play a club to the king. Win the trump return in dummy, ruff a club, ruff a heart and another club. Now you draw the last trump and enjoy dummy's winners.

The rule about whether to draw trumps is that you draw them unless you can find a reason not to.

“If in doubt get them out”