



When (Not) to Draw Trumps



1. **Drawing Trumps:** It is often correct to draw the opponents' trumps early in the play. "Get the children off the street."

Count your winners and losers. If you have enough tricks to make your contract, draw trumps, play out the hand and go on to the next deal.

Ex.:	<u>Declarer</u>	<u>Dummy</u>
	♠ KQJ103	♠ 864
	♥ AQ5	♥ K10
	♦ 94	♦ 8753
	♣ 863	♣ A752

Contract: 2 ♠, Opening lead: ♣ K

You are looking at five losers, one in spades and two each in diamonds and clubs. You can handle five losers, so start drawing trumps. Yes, you will give up the lead once, but you will still make your contract.

2. However, you should postpone drawing trumps when there is more pressing business to take care of. There are three major reasons to postpone drawing trumps:
 - You have to do some ruffing of losers in dummy,
 - You have to take a quick discard, or
 - You have to set up a side suit and may need dummy's trumps as entries.

3. A partial drawing of trumps may be acceptable, as long as:
- You have the high trumps and don't have to give up the lead,
 - And you can save the necessary number of trumps in dummy.
4. Do not draw trumps when you must ruff a loser or two in dummy.

Ex.:	<u>Declarer</u>	<u>Dummy</u>
	♠ AKQJ6	♠ 1075
	♥ 97	♥ A843
	♦ AK6	♦ 9874
	♣ A83	♣ J6

Contract: 4 ♠, Opening lead: ♥ K

Count your losers--there appear to be four losers outside of the trump suit. However, you can take advantage of the uneven distribution of the club suit and ruff a club in the dummy. But to do this, you need to retain at least one trump in dummy. So win the opening lead with the ace of hearts, then play the ace of clubs and another club. (Or you can take the club loser first.) When you regain the lead, play your third club and ruff it in dummy. Finally, it is OK to draw trumps.

5. Do not draw trumps when you must take a quick discard.

Ex.:	<u>Declarer</u>	<u>Dummy</u>
	♠ KQ1076	♠ J83
	♥ 853	♥ A107
	♦ KQJ	♦ 963
	♣ K5	♣ AQ76

Contract: 4 ♠, Opening lead: ♥ K

Count your losers before doing anything. You can see that you will easily lose two hearts and the two missing aces. But there is something you can do to prevent this. Look at the club suit—if you play three rounds of clubs right away, you can make a useful discard of one of your heart losers. This is the play that must take priority. If you start drawing trumps too early, the opponents will be happy to win the ace of trumps, then take their two heart tricks.

6. Do not draw trumps when you plan to set up a side suit in dummy and then draw trumps, ending in dummy.

Ex.:	<u>Declarer</u>	<u>Dummy</u>
	♠ AKQ107	♠ J83
	♥ 94	♥ J7
	♦ A1042	♦ 763
	♣ K5	♣ AQ762

Contract: 4 ♠, Opening lead: ♦ K

It looks as though the only way to make this contract is to set up that long club suit in dummy. When the opponents hold six cards in the club suit, the probabilities say that those cards will split 4-2 more often than any other way. So you will have to ruff one round of clubs in order to establish the suit. The correct play is to win the diamond ace (trick 1) and start in on the club suit first before touching the trump suit. Play the king of clubs (trick 2), then cross to the ace of clubs (trick 3) and play a low club, ruffing it with the ace of trumps (trick 4). Now it is safe to draw three rounds of trumps, saving the jack for the third round. Finally play your queen of clubs and another, discarding diamond losers. Contract made.

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ K 4 3 2			
♥ A 6 4			
♦ A Q 7 4 3			
♣ J			
♠ Q			♠ J 10 9
♥ 10 7 5 2			♥ 9 8 3
♦ J 9			♦ K 10 8 2
♣ A K Q 10 9 8			♣ 7 6 5
			♠ A 8 7 6 5
			♥ K Q J
			♦ 6 5
			♣ 4 3 2

14
12 4
10

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K 6			
♥ A 10 8 5			
♦ 8 4 3			
♣ 9 8 6 5			
♠ Q 10 4 3			♠ J 9 8 7 2
♥ K Q J			♥ 4 3
♦ A 6 5			♦ K 7 2
♣ Q 7 2			♣ A K 10
			♠ A 5
			♥ 9 7 6 2
			♦ Q J 10 9
			♣ J 4 3

7
14 11
8