

Trump Suit Contracts

After the opening lead has been made and dummy comes down, declarer must now count losers in **declarer's hand**. (**Dummy** never has any losers.) Declarer must look at the dummy to see how dummy can help him/her with losers in terms of high cards only, **not** in terms of singletons and voids, etc: (for now). In trump suit contracts, we count losers.

We are actually counting **potential losers**. When in doubt about whether a card is a loser or not, call it a loser. You must make a plan. If you just play cards and don't make a plan, you will never be a star as declarer.

DISPOSING OF LOSERS

Usually the first thing declarer does is to draw trumps, taking the trumps away from his opponents so that they cannot use their trump to ruff declarer's & dummy's high cards.

However, we **do not draw trumps** when we need to have trumps in dummy to ruff losers from declarer's hand over in the dummy.

There are five main ways of disposing of losers:

1. RUFFING LOSERS FROM DECLARER'S HAND WITH DUMMY'S TRUMP

K987

4

QJ43

A432

AQ543

A754

A87

K

Contract 4 spades – Lead king of hearts

Declarer You counted four losers but you can now reduce your losers by **creating a void** in the Dummy in hearts & ruffing two losing hearts from declarer's hand with dummy's trumps (spades)

2. DO WE HAVE EXTRA WINNERS IN DUMMY?

K987
AKQ7
A432
Q

AQ543
6
Q76
KJ32

Declarer You can throw away two diamond losers on extra heart winners

3. DO WE HAVE EXTRA WINNERS IN DECLARER'S HAND?

K987
6
A432
Q

AQ543
AKQ7
Q76
KJ32

4. LONG SUIT ESTABLISHMENT:

Can we set up a long suit in dummy or in declarer's hand to provide extra tricks?

A
K
5
4
3

6
2

Most of the time, the missing six cards in this suit will divide 4 - 2.

Play ace and the king of this long suit and then ruff a small club in declarer's hand.

Cross over to dummy and trump another club in declarer's hand.

Now the fifth club in dummy is now high (it is the 13th card) and will provide a parking place for a loser from declarer's hand.

CAUTION: Make sure that dummy has enough entries for this project to be successful. Often you will find that dummy's trumps may be the only entries to dummy and thus you may not be able to pull trump first. Watch out for this.

5. FINESSING:

A finesse is an attempt to win a trick with a card that is not as high as one held by the opponents.

K10432

J975

You have two potential losers . To finesse here, lead the jack (only because your side owns the “next door neighbors”).

You will note therefore that after dummy comes down, it is imperative to count your losers and then decide how many extra losers you have in excess of what you can afford. (You will usually have too many losers.) You must now play detective and decide which of the above method(s) you must employ in order to make the contract. Decide what your project will be and then decide if it is safe to pull trumps now or later.