

PULLING TRUMP

This is a lesson that new players should love, because they love to draw trump. Several of my lessons have dealt with crossruffs, or using trump for other reasons. But here is a very strange variation, one that even very good players get wrong. I watched an experienced player misplay this hand in a recent on line game.

A 6 5 4 2	He opened one spade, and South passed. The hand
A 2	swished out, and he had to play one spade. They led
J 4 3	a club, and he did not plan out the hand. He wanted
K Q 9	to trump hearts with a small spade, but did not
	consider where he could go from there. GO BACK TO
	BASICS. COUNT WINNERS AND LOSERS. FIGURE OUT
9	YOUR MISSION. If he had stopped to consider these
5 4 3	issues, his reasoning should have gone as follows.
7 6 2	
A 8 6 4 3 2	

I am vulnerable. I have to lose three diamonds a heart and some spades. But they can make at least three, and perhaps four hearts. If I can hold this to down one, I will get a very good score, maybe even a top. All that I have to do is limit my spade losers to three tricks. So, this should be a new player's favorite hands. Cash the ace of spades and play a second spade. Four of their trump are gone. When they get around to playing hearts, win the ace and play another spade. Now they only have one left. You can get in and play your clubs. No matter how they defend, you will get one heart, two spades and three clubs, or if they trump a club with the fourth spade, you will get one heart, two clubs and three spades, for down one. At the other tables, E/W made two, three and four hearts. If they slip up, cash the last spade, and try to cash three hearts, your diamond losers will go away on long clubs.

You will actually make overtricks. This declarer went down 3, minus 300, for a zero. REMEMBER, MAKE A PLAN BEFORE YOU PLAY TO TRICK TWO.

Oddly enough the worse your suit is, the more important it is that you pull trump. If you hand had been

7 6 4 3 2

A 2

A 4 2

K Q 9

You would play the same way. Win the club, play trump. When you win a heart or a diamond, play trump, and when you win again, play trump a third time, It is fun to watch their five and eight fall together, more fun to see the ten and Jack fall, then the King and Queen on the third play, and the ace will get wasted none of your clubs.

I once played a hand that looked something like this.

5 4 3 2	I was in four spades, missing the ace, king, queen, jack,
A Q 10 6	and the ten. Scary. Not really. All that I have to do
9 8	is make sure that they do not get their trumps separately.
A J 10 9	They led a heart. I won the king, and played trump. Two
	fell. Then they led a diamond, and I won and played trump.
	The king and queen fell. They led a diamond. I just kept
9 8 7 6	playing my side suit winners. They could take the last
K 3 2	spade at any time. Making four. Sometimes you just need
A K 3	a little luck. Always, you need a plan.
K Q 5	