

Declarer Play in Suit Contracts

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Once dummy goes down, **count your losers** and **make a plan**.

You may need to employ different techniques to make your contract.

Counting Losers

Check each suit for immediate winners in this example.

Contract: 4♠

Lead: ♦J

Declarer	Dummy	Losers
♠ Q J 5 4 2	♠ A K 6 3	0 losers
♥ 5 4	♥ A 7 6	1 loser
♦ A K 9 8	♦ Q 5 3	0 losers
♣ Q J	♣ 10 9 5	2 losers

- In the above hand, with only three losers you can draw trumps immediately.
- If diamonds don't break 3-3, you can ruff the 4th diamond with dummy's last trump.

Quick Discard(s) when it is dangerous to draw trumps first

Check each suit for immediate winners in this example.

Contract: 4♠

Lead: ♠K

Declarer	Dummy	Losers
♠ Q J 5 4 2	♠ K 10 6 3	1 losers
♥ K 7	♥ A Q 5	0 loser
♦ K J 7	♦ Q 5 3	1 losers
♣ A 3 2	♣ 10 9 5	2 losers

- On the lead of the ♠K, declarer can see there are 4 losers.
- You must eliminate one of the losers in clubs by a quick discard before drawing trumps.
- Avoid blocking the heart suit by first playing the honour (♥K) from the short hand.

Managing Trumps

1. Drawing trumps

In a suit contract it is usually correct to draw trumps **first** before you play anything else. Stop drawing trumps when your opponents have none left, but if the only trump remaining is the best one, don't continue the suit.

2. Ruffing in dummy

Declarer may be able to use the power of the trump suit to ruff losers in the dummy. If you need to ruff loser(s) in dummy, do so first before drawing trumps.

Managing Trumps continued...

3. **Do not ruff in the long hand** (unless you are forced to do so)
It is usually correct to look for ruffs in the dummy, rather than declarer's hand. Declarer's hand is sometimes called the "long hand" because it generally has more trumps.

Continuation of Play after Drawing Trumps

Extra tricks can be developed by the following:

- Promoting honours
- Playing towards honours
- Finessing
- Developing a long side suit. This may be made easier by using your remaining trumps

See Improvers' Lesson 3, Play Techniques

Example: Trumping Losers in Dummy

Contract: 6♠ **Lead:** ♣Q

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

You can count 3 losers (the ♥3, ♥2 and the ♠A)
You must ruff the 2 small hearts before you draw trumps.

The play will progress:

- win ♣K
- play ♥5 to the ace
- ruff the ♥2 with a small trump in dummy
- back to hand with ♣A
- and ruff the ♥3 in dummy
- now you can set about drawing the opponents' trumps

NB: This hand is a rare example of a slam making with less than 30 HCP!