



Declarer Play Drawing Trumps – The Rule of One

This is a guide for how many rounds of trumps to draw.

In general, you want to draw the opposition's small trumps but leave out any master trumps.

When to Draw Trumps

The usual plan in a suit contract should be to draw trumps. This protects your winners in other suits from being ruffed by the opposition.

For example, you are playing 4♠:

♠ J52 ♥ AK82 ♦ A43 ♣ 753

♠ KQT643 ♥ QJ63 ♦ 6 ♣ 62

Count your winners: (5 Spades, 4 Hearts, 1 Diamond = 10)

Count your losers: (1 Spade, 2 Clubs = 3)

You already have enough tricks for 4♠. The only thing that can go wrong is if the defence ruff a Heart. So draw trumps straight away before they can.

When to *not* Draw Trumps

The main reason *not* to draw trumps is so you can ruff in dummy. You are playing 4♠ again:

♠ J52 ♥ AK82 ♦ 8743 ♣ 73

♠ KQT43 ♥ QJ63 ♦ 6 ♣ A72

Count your winners: (4 Spades, 4 Hearts, 2 Clubs if you ruff one in dummy = 10)

Count your losers: (1 Spade, 1 Diamond, 1 Club if you ruff one in dummy = 3)

This is a harder contract, as it needs a ruff in dummy to get up to ten tricks. If you draw all the trumps, you will only get one Club trick instead of two. You have to ruff the Club first, then draw trumps.

Another, more subtle, reason to delay drawing trumps is if you have to discard a loser in your hand before letting the enemy in. In this 6♠ contract suppose you got a Club lead:

♠ J52 ♥ AK82 ♦ AK43 ♣ 73

♠ KQT643 ♥ QJ63 ♦ 6 ♣ A2

You risk losing a Club and a Spade. You must use dummy's ♦AK to throw a losing Club right away, and then draw trumps.

Partially drawing trumps

Suppose you are playing 6♠ and get a Diamond lead:

♠ A42 ♥ AKQJT ♦ 754 ♣ 73

♠ KJ7563 ♥ 62 ♦ A32 ♣ A2

If you can draw trumps successfully you have 13 top tricks (6+5+1+1)

But if you take the trump finesse and it loses, you will lose a Spade and two Diamonds.

You could try playing Hearts to discard a losing Diamond, but this could fail if the opposition ruff a Heart.

The solution is to play the Ace-King of trumps, rejecting the finesse.

If the trumps are 2-2 you are home (and make all 13 tricks).

If the trumps don't split, you leave the master Queen of Spades out there and start on Hearts. If the defender with the Queen of trumps ruffs, it will be with a master trump so won't cost you an extra trick.

The Rule of One

In general, it's a good idea to leave any defender's master trumps out there. Drawing a master trump will cost two of your trumps to only get one of theirs. Also, the defender who is left with the master trump will often end up having to 'waste' it by ruffing.

If the defence have one master trump left, leave it out

Suppose you are playing 4♠ again:

♠ Q874 ♥ A8 ♦ A7653 ♣ 73

♠ KJ9653 ♥ K632 ♦ 2 ♣ 82

Count your winners: (5 Spades, 4 Hearts if you ruff two in dummy, 1 Diamond= 10)

Count your losers: (1 Spade, 2 Clubs = 3)

You plan to ruff two Hearts in dummy. You can afford to draw one round of trumps only (as the defence might win and play another round, leaving you with just two trumps in dummy). Suppose that when you play one round of Spades, everyone ducks. The only trump out there is the Ace.

You are now safe from enemy ruffs, as if they ruff anything it will be with the Ace of trumps. You don't mind them ruffing with the Ace, as it's their trick anyway. You can take your two Heart ruffs in dummy at your leisure.

In fact, the expert plan would be to now try and establish dummy's Diamonds, which is risk free, and could lead to overtricks.

An exception

The only time you do want to draw the final master trump is when a defender could use it at the wrong time to cut you off from dummy.

For example, suppose Spades is trumps and one master trump is still out there:

♠ ♥ AKQJT9 ♦ x ♣ x
♠ 3 ♥ x ♦ Axx ♣ Axx

You plan to use dummy's Hearts to discard all your losers. But if you play Hearts now, they could get ruffed and you'll never get back to dummy.

The solution is to play your losing 3 of Spades to draw the master trump. Then you can win the return and claim the rest.

- [Play Quiz 7a - Drawing Trumps \(4S\)](#)
- [Play Quiz 7b – Drawing Trumps \(4S\)](#)
- [Play Quiz 7c - Drawing Trumps \(2H\)](#)
- [Play Quiz 7d - When to draw trumps](#)
- [Play Quiz 7e – When to draw trumps #2](#)