

## KEEPING CONTROL

Lots of hands involve keeping trump control. In some instances, you have to establish an outside suit before your trump suit suffers too much damage from a long suit held by the defence. On other occasions, you want to do a specific amount of trumping, therefore you must ensure that the opponents cannot draw more rounds of trumps than you want. You must control how many rounds of trumps are led.

	♠ Q J 10 9 5 ♥ K 10 8 5 ♦ 8 2 ♣ J 9		
♠ A 8 3 ♥ 3 2 ♦ A Q 6 3 ♣ 10 8 7 3	♠ K 7 6 4 ♥ J 7 ♦ J 9 5 4 ♣ K Q 2	♠ 2 ♥ A Q 9 6 4 ♦ K 10 7 ♣ A 6 5 4	♠ 2 ♥ A Q 9 6 4 ♦ K 10 7 ♣ A 6 5 4
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♥	Pass
1NT (1)	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT (2)	Pass	3♦ (3)	Pass
5♣ (4)	All Pass		

- (1) Playing 2 over 1 game forcing, the 1NT response shows 6-11 HCP.
- (2) Some debate about whether to invite with a 3♣ bid or via 2NT. With all those values in the other suits, I chose to rebid 2NT (and otherwise there would be no story, because we would have played in 3♣).
- (3) Worried about the singleton spade opposite a maximum of 3 spades, partner chose to bid out his shape. This is usually excellent bidding practice – but it is game forcing! Partner was simply too weak for this bid, this time. *This bid, whilst a good bid, shows 15+ HCP opposite partner's 10-11 HCP rebid.*
- (4) In a regular partnership, I would have rebid 4♣, because I considered we were in a game forcing auction, where 4♣ would show a 'better' hand than my 5♣ bid. All my cards looked good to me – till I could see partner's hand.

This ambitious contract requires delicate handling! Firstly, clubs must break 3-2, but you also need the heart finesse. All this means that the entries need to be managed very carefully, with the spade ruffs being put on the back-burner for now.

South leads the ♠4, won with the Ace. Since the heart finesse is required, lead a heart and finesse immediately. When that works, declarer should duck a round of clubs. The reason that you duck the first round of clubs is that you want to draw precisely two rounds of trumps – allowing you to ruff spades (and, perhaps hearts in dummy).

South wins the club and tries the ♠K. You ruff, then cash your ♣A, just as planned. Now you can proceed to make your small trumps in both hands.

Lead a diamond to dummy's  $\heartsuit Q$ , then trump the other spade loser. Having done that, you can lead a small heart and ruff in dummy. If hearts break 3-3, you can cross back to your  $\heartsuit K$  to lead hearts (discarding a diamond from dummy). Whatever the defence does, you have 11 tricks, losing two clubs only.

If hearts don't break, as in the actual hand, South has to find a discard. A spade discard has no impact on your plan, whilst a diamond discard establishes dummy's fourth diamond as a winner. So, South has to discard their spade, and you ruff. Now you can lead a diamond to the King to lead the fourth heart, eloping with dummy's last trump – if South ruffs, you discard the diamond loser; if South discards a diamond, you ruff and your eleventh trick is dummy's  $\heartsuit A$ .

Ducking the first club gave you control of the trump suit, determining exactly how many rounds of trumps were drawn.

	$\spadesuit$ A K 8 7 $\heartsuit$ 10 9 4 3 $\diamondsuit$ A J $\clubsuit$ K Q 7		
$\spadesuit$ Q J 4 2 $\heartsuit$ J 7 $\diamondsuit$ K 10 6 3 $\clubsuit$ 10 6 3		$\spadesuit$ 9 6 $\heartsuit$ K Q 8 $\diamondsuit$ Q 5 4 $\clubsuit$ J 9 5 4 2	
	$\spadesuit$ 10 5 3 $\heartsuit$ A 6 5 2 $\diamondsuit$ 9 8 6 2 $\clubsuit$ A 8		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1NT	Pass	2 $\clubsuit$
Pass	2 $\heartsuit$	Pass	3 $\heartsuit$
Pass	4 $\heartsuit$	All Pass	

I'm not convinced that I would even move over partner's 1NT opening bid, with that rather bare 8-count. However, the hand improved when partner held 4 hearts, and North-South rapidly reached the heart game.

East led the  $\clubsuit 4$ . Declarer won the first trick with dummy's  $\clubsuit A$  to lead, and duck, a heart. The plan was to draw only two rounds of trumps, allowing for ruffing later in the play. If you cashed your  $\heartsuit A$ , then ducked a heart, East could draw two more rounds of trumps, and the contract will fail should spades break 4-2.

East won the second trick, continuing clubs. North won the  $\spadesuit Q$ , then cashed the  $\heartsuit A$  – drawing exactly the two rounds of trumps she wanted to play. Now she could cross back to hand with a top spade, cash the  $\clubsuit K$ , discarding a spade, then embark on a cross-ruff to ensure her contract.

She cashed the other top spade, then ruffed a spade in the South hand. If spades had divided 3-3, she now had only three losers: 2 trumps and a diamond. However, when spades proved to be 4-2, she could cross back to the  $\diamondsuit A$  in hand to ruff another spade. If either hand trumped, they were simply using their winning trumps on declarer's spade loser.

With this line, declarer scored 2 heart tricks, 2 spade tricks, 2 spade ruffs, 3 clubs and the ♦A for 10 tricks. If the defence had been able to draw the extra round of trumps, then declarer only manages one spade ruff and will fail.

By ducking the first round of hearts, then cashing the ♥A on the second round, declarer controlled how many rounds of trumps were drawn.

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