

COUNT LOSERS FROM THE LONG TRUMP HAND

	♠ QJ987	
	♥ 65	
	♦ 76	
	♣ K543	
♠ 654		♠ 32
♥ KQJ10		♥ 987
♦ QJ8		♦ AK109
♣ 876		♣ QJ109
	♠ AK10	
	♥ A432	
	♦ 5432	
	♣ A2	

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2H	P
2S	P	P	P

2S by South. West leads the HK. What is your best general plan?

Before we make a general plan, we count losers first. **YOU DO NOT NECESSARILY COUNT LOSERS IN YOUR OWN HAND. SOMETIMES YOU COUNT THEM FROM DUMMY'S HAND.**

The hand you count losers from is normally the hand with the longest trumps. In a transfer bidding sequence like the above, it will dummy's hand! So, counting losers from dummy's hand:

1. No trump losers
2. 1 heart loser
3. 2 diamond losers and
4. 2 club losers

We can't do anything about the diamond and heart losers, but we can ruff 2 clubs away in our own hand. **That is our plan – Ruff 2 clubs in our own hand, then draw trumps.** So:

1. Win the HK with the HA and play CA, CK and ruff a club with the SA
2. Play S10, overtake with SQ, and ruff the final club with the SK

You get CAK, HA, 5 trumps and 2 ruffs for 10 tricks.

What I frequently see with these sorts of hands is that the South declarer tries to trump hearts or diamonds in dummy. A moment's thought will tell you that this is pointless. Your 5 trumps are winners, you are not gaining any extra tricks. If you drew 3 rounds of trumps, your last 2 small trumps are winners anyway. You are also not setting up a heart or diamond suit as the opposition have more of these suits (and bigger cards).

In fact, what you are doing could be dangerous. If an opponent has 4 or 5 trumps, you are shortening your own trumps and could lose control of the hand.

REMEMBER TO SET UP YOUR LONG SUIT!

Dealer: S
Vul: Nil

	♠ A106		
	♥ Q732		
	♦ 43		
	♣ AJ82		
♠ 9		♠ J854	
♥ 9		♥ KJ4	
♦ KQJ10987		♦ A5	
♣ 10965		♣ Q743	
	♠ KQ732		
	♥ A10865		
	♦ 62		
	♣ K		

S	W	N	E
1S	3D	4S	P
P	P		

South is in 4S. West leads the H9. What is the best general plan?

As declarer, you should study the bidding and the opening lead to try to help work out what the defenders' hands look like. From the 3D pre-empt, we know West has 7 diamonds and is likely to be short in the other suits (and this could be dangerous in trumps).

When a defender pre-empt and leads another suit, the lead is likely to be singleton, and the H9 is not something you would lead if you held the K or J.

Counting losers from the South hand:

1. No clubs
2. 2 diamonds
3. 1 heart loser - the lead of the H9 will catch the HJ under the HA and later you will lose the HK but then the suit is good.
4. No trump losers if the trumps break 3-2, but a bad break is more than usually likely.

A diamond loser can clearly go away on the CA, but we need the third round of trumps as an entry. I would

1. Play SKQ getting the bad news of the 4-1 trump break,
2. Cash CK and go to dummy with the SA,
3. On the CA throw a diamond away, and
4. Just knock out HK.

Yes, East has the master trump, but you still have 2 trumps to get back in and run your hearts. You just lose 1 trump, 1 heart and 1 diamond.

The hand is simply get a diamond loser away on the CA using the 3rd round of trumps as an entry to dummy and then just set your long suit (hearts) up.